

(Translation)

**Motion on  
“Returning a happy childhood to students”  
moved by Hon Michael TIEN  
at the Council meeting of 5 November 2014**

**Motion as amended by Dr Hon Helena WONG, Hon Alice MAK,  
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG and Hon Charles Peter MOK**

That ‘joyful learning’ is a learning guideline issued to schools by the Education Bureau, but the majority view of society has all along held that ‘pressure leads to progress’; nowadays, there are many books and discussions available at the market about ‘tiger moms and dads’, ‘helicopter parents’ and ‘monster parents’, etc. for boosting children’s learning, but excessive boosting may likely increase pressure on children and dampen their learning interests; the results of a survey conducted by the Programme for International Student Assessment show that some Hong Kong parents excessively intervene in children’s learning and drill them by being over-anxious for results, rendering a decline of children’s motivation to learn and a negative impact on their academic results; quite a number of media reports have also pointed out that some Hong Kong students have emotional problems because of heavy study pressure, and they become easily anxious and have symptoms such as insomnia, loss of appetite and irritability, etc.; all these problems are attributable to the education system which emphasizes solely on examination results; at the stage of kindergarten education, parents have already enrolled their children in many types of interest classes and request them to do dictation and spelling exercises, etc.; at the stage of primary education, students need to participate in the Territory-wide System Assessment, the Internal Assessments for Secondary School Places Allocation purpose that take place at the end of Primary Five and both in mid-year and at the end of Primary Six, and the Pre-Secondary One Hong Kong Attainment Test; at the stage of secondary education, students are faced with a shortage of university places and the ‘die or live’ pressure from the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination; in contrast, the education systems and teaching modes in many advanced places are better able to provide students with room for exploring their interests to enhance their creativity development; in this connection, this Council urges the Administration to:

- (1) assess afresh the pressure and psychological impact of the existing education system on students, and comprehensively review the examination system, the curriculum contents and the mechanism for progression in education;

- (2) enhance parental education to avoid parents from excessively boosting children's learning;
- (3) enhance the support for school social workers and teachers to facilitate them to early identify whether or not students are under excessive pressure; and
- (4) review the assessment contents of the Territory-wide System Assessment to avoid the need for students to undergo mechanical drills on examination questions, and study whether the Territory-wide System Assessment should be abolished, so as to reduce students' study pressure;
- (5) allocate additional resources to assist students with learning difficulties and those with special learning needs, including identifying such students as early as possible and providing them with training and support on all fronts, so as to reduce their study pressure;
- (6) streamline the existing curriculum contents of primary and secondary education, so that teachers and students will not come under pressure for catching up with the curricula, and students can use the spare lesson time to cultivate their personal learning interests;
- (7) encourage schools to invite experts from different industries to hold workshops and experience programmes, so as to broaden students' horizons and enable their understanding of potentials, thereby cultivating the relevant interests and developing their careers in the future; and
- (8) sort out the negative impacts of study pressure on students and give comprehensive care to students' physical and mental development, including increasing the support services provided by clinical psychologists and medical social workers in schools to offer emotional and psychological counselling to students, and expanding the school dental care service and the student health service to ensure that they have good physical health for learning; and
- (9) enhance the education on building students' self-confidence and the promotion of diversified career pathways, so as to avoid taking examination results as the sole objective of learning by students;
- (10) develop a diversified education system, including strengthening vocational education, arts education and physical education, so as to reduce the pressure of public examinations on students, and assist those

students who are unable to adapt to conventional education in choosing study pathways according to their abilities and interests; and

- (11) increase the number of tertiary education places, especially the degree programme places offered by institutions funded by the University Grants Committee, so as to alleviate students' pressure arising from the need to compete for such places.