

For discussion  
on 2 March 2018

## Legislative Council Panel on Education

### Promotion of Moral and Civic Education (Values Education) in Schools

#### Purpose

This paper is to report to Members on the implementation and strategies adopted for the promotion of moral and civic education (MCE) (values education) in schools.

#### Background

2. Among the five domains of moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic development, moral development is regarded as the most important one. It is the main goal of the school education in Hong Kong to nurture positive values and attitudes in students through MCE, which has been one of the four key tasks in the school curriculum since the curriculum reform in 2001. It is an essential element of whole-person education which emphasises cultivating students' positive values and attitudes through learning of various subjects and diverse learning experiences. It also develops students' ability to identify the values embedded, analyse objectively and make reasonable judgement on different issues so that they could take proper action and make commitment when dealing with issues or challenges related to oneself, family, society, the country and the world. Among the different values, "perseverance", "respect for others", "responsibility", "national identity", "commitment", "integrity" and "care for others" are the seven priority values and attitudes that schools should nurture in their students<sup>1</sup>. The Secondary Education Curriculum Guide updated in 2017 also stresses that "values education" is one of the major development emphases of the ongoing renewal of the school curriculum, which will help students achieve one of the seven learning goals, i.e. "to become an informed and responsible citizen with a sense of national and global identity, appreciation of positive values and attitudes as well as Chinese culture, and respect for pluralism in society".

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<sup>1</sup> According to the recommendations of the Basic Education Curriculum Guide - Building on Strengths (Primary 1 – Secondary 3) (2002), schools should adopt the nurturing of the five priority values and attitudes, i.e. "perseverance", "respect for others", "responsibility", "national identity" and "commitment" as the direction for promoting MCE. Under the Revised Moral and Civic Education Curriculum Framework implemented in 2008, the priority values and attitudes have been increased to seven to cover the newly introduced "integrity" and "care for others".

## **Implementation Strategies**

### ***Primary and secondary curricula***

3. Since the introduction of the curriculum reform, the Education Bureau (EDB) has been advocating students' holistic learning experiences and encouraging schools to plan their curricula and other learning activities holistically and systematically for implementing values education. Taking cultivation of students' positive values and attitudes as the direction, schools should co-ordinate the values education embedded in the curricula of various subjects and diverse life-wide learning experiences, including moral and ethical education, civic education, Basic Law education, human rights education, national education, anti-drug education, life education, sex education, education for sustainable development, etc. for strengthening their connections, so as to promote the whole-person development of students. For example, topics such as learning about the Basic Law as well as civic rights and responsibilities, abiding by the law, adopting a green lifestyle, and appreciating the physiological and psychological changes during puberty, etc. are closely related to the curriculum of General Studies in primary schools. The Chinese Language subject helps students develop positive values through reading good literary works. The sports training in Physical Education and participation in social services can cultivate perseverance in students. Aligned with the developmental needs and characteristics of students, the Revised Moral and Civic Education Curriculum Framework (2008) listed out the learning objectives at various key learning stages. Schools are advised to select appropriate life events and issues from the five domains (i.e. personal development and healthy living domain, family domain, school domain, social life domain and community and national domain) to plan their curricula systematically and strengthen MCE. Schools may sustain the promotion of MCE systematically by making reference to the curriculum framework, school contexts and the students' needs.

4. MCE should be implemented through the integration of cognition, affection and action. The enrichment of cognition can help students identify the values and attitudes from life events and issues for making rational analyses and judgements. The nurturing of affection can develop students' empathy, which empowers them to uphold their values against challenges with perseverance and courage. Through action, students can build up and reinforce positive values and attitudes in real life situations.

5. MCE should be student-centred. Authentic and interesting learning contents with reference to students' developmental characteristics are used to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge of related topics. Such learning contents also enable students to actively explore and consider the issues involved, clarify the values embedded, handle value conflicts, and nurture their moral qualities and values. In this connection, we encourage schools to select

appropriate life events from the five domains stated in paragraph 3 for establishing a meaningful connection with the daily life of students. Through learning activities such as discussion, sharing and reflection, schools can deepen students' understanding of the issues, enhance their ability to analyse, make judgement and deal with such issues, and encourage them to apply positive values and attitudes. The EDB has produced a series of learning and teaching resources<sup>2</sup> for students to discuss various issues such as integrity, civic awareness, civic responsibilities, etc. through social and global events and natural disasters. Students can also reflect on the meaning of participating in disaster relief /charity activities, which will build up their empathetic and caring attitudes, inspire thoughts on meaning of life and enhance their commitment to society and responsibilities of being global citizens as well as develop their positive values system.

6. There are a number of controversial social issues, such as those related to sex education, which usually touch on values stance. Before the community has reached a consensus on these issues, it will be difficult to rigidly require schools to incorporate controversial values into their curricula. The EDB encourages schools to include these issues into their curricula for developing students' positive values and attitudes such as inclusiveness and respect. We will also continue to enhance support to schools, including developing learning and teaching resources and organising professional development programmes for teachers to keep them abreast of the development of MCE, such as the latest issues and pedagogy. The EDB keeps in view public opinions about MCE and conduct timely reviews as appropriate.

### ***Professional development***

7. In the light of the needs of schools and society, the EDB has collaborated with tertiary institutions, non-government organisations and other government departments in providing various professional development programmes for principals and teachers continuously to enhance their professional capacity in MCE curriculum planning, learning and teaching, organising support programmes as well as use of learning and teaching resources. In recent years, children and youth problems such as drug abuse, compensated dating, internet addiction and suicide are a cause of concern. In view of this, the EDB has organised some professional development programmes for teachers, including 'Programme

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<sup>2</sup> For example, "Moral Education - Authentic Indigenous Stories", "Handbook of Moral Education Teaching Resources" website, Learning and Teaching Resources Package on Values Education: "Choices of Life", Life Education Resources on Facing Adversity, Series of Learning Activities on 2004 South Asian Tsunami Catastrophe, Learning and Teaching Resources website on the Japanese Earthquake 2011, etc.

on Planning Life Education in Primary/Secondary Schools’ for strengthening students’ ability to cope with adversity and nurturing their positive outlook on life, as well as some thematic seminars/workshops such as ‘Developing Students’ Positive Values and Attitudes through Video-based Learning’, ‘Designing and Making Effective Use of Learning and Teaching Resources on Values Education’ and ‘Developing Students’ Proper Attitudes in Using IT’. These activities were well-received by participants who generally agreed that the expected learning objectives could be achieved.

8. To enhance the professional leadership of teachers in implementing values education, the EDB has introduced the Learning Circle of Values Education since the 2012/13 school year, under which on-site support on curriculum planning and teaching is provided to schools by EDB staff. To facilitate teachers’ professional development, a sharing session is also organised annually for participating schools to share their experience.

9. Since the 2016/17 school year, the EDB has been organising the Outstanding Teaching Award for Moral Education which aims at encouraging schools to plan and implement moral education at the school level through effective leadership and learning and teaching with a view to facilitating the promotion of moral education in schools to nurture students’ positive values and attitudes. Outstanding and excellent awardees will be invited to participate in an overseas professional study tour. Awardees are required to share their successful experience in the promotion of moral education after the tour to facilitate professional exchange.

### ***Learning resources***

10. For the effective implementation of MCE, the EDB has continuously provided schools with various learning and teaching resources relevant to social or global issues or events. For example, we have set up the “Handbook of Moral Education Teaching Resources” website offering teaching resources on ethical stories, questions for reflection and discussion, and recommended extension activities as well as sharing of experience in implementing values education by schools. In response to the setting up of the “Team Clean” by the Government, we initiated the “My Pledge to Act” campaign in 2003 which aimed to empower students to set goals and take actions to develop a healthy lifestyle through collective commitment and cultivate in them positive values and attitudes. Running since 2003, the campaign has a different theme every year that is chosen in the light of social issues and the needs of students. For instance, the theme of the 2016/17 school year - “Love and Care · From Self to Others” was chosen in response to the problem of students committing suicide. The theme of the 2017/18 school year is “To Live a Healthy and Green Life” which aims at arousing students’ awareness about the latest environmental protection issues and encouraging them to go green. Resources such as “My Pledge to Act” Handbook and life

event exemplars have been produced for the reference of schools. To promote values education and the use of information technology for interactive learning, we have produced the Learning and Teaching Resources Package on Values Education: “Choices of Life”. Through short video clips featuring real life scenarios of a moral dilemma and relevant lesson plans, the resources package teaches students how to clarify values, resolve value conflicts, make reasonable judgement and act responsibly. To help students develop positive values and attitudes, the EDB has continuously produced various life event exemplars to keep teachers abreast of the development of MCE, such as the latest issues involved in life education, sex education and information literacy. We encourage schools to select suitable learning resources for developing learning and teaching resources that meet their vision and the needs of students.

### *Subsidies and grants*

11. The EDB offers various subsidies and grants for flexible use by schools to promote MCE. For example:

- (i) Starting from the 2003/04 school year, the EDB disbursed the ‘Moral and Civic Education Grant’ to schools for conducting activities related to values education. The grant has been subsumed under the Operating Expenses Block Grant or the Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant. Details of these are set out in the Education Bureau Circular Memoranda No. 137/2017, No. 100/2009 and No. 111/2012.
- (ii) Schools can apply for the Quality Education Fund for assistance to enhance, adjust, complement and/or supplement their existing practices in order to meet their school contexts and developmental needs. In the past three years, 103 MCE related projects were approved with a disbursement of about HK\$67.6 million.
- (iii) Schools and Parent-Teacher Associations can also apply for the Home-School Co-operation Grant to organise activities for promotion of home-school co-operation and parent education. Examples of such activities include those promoting positive values and lifestyles, including moral and national education, family core values, healthy life, awareness of tragedy from drug abuse, caring culture and environmental education, etc.

## **Implementation**

12. In the light of their vision, school contexts, students' needs, and the EDB's latest curriculum guides and documents, schools has a duty to make appropriate MCE curriculum planning professionally, and develop students' positive values and attitudes through learning activities such as weekly assemblies, talks and service learning, etc. Schools will constantly review and improve their school-based curriculum and related contents.

13. To further strengthen MCE for the whole-person development of students, schools can complement classroom learning with other relevant learning experiences through life-wide learning activities in order to deepen students' understanding of various life issues from different perspectives so that they can apply what they have learned. For example, through service learning, students can learn how to serve and care for members of the community, such as singleton elderly, inpatients and other minority groups, so that they can gain a better understanding of social issues from authentic real life experience which is conducive to the development of positive values such as empathy, thankfulness, respect, responsibility and commitment. The EDB will continue to enrich the learning experiences of students through diversified ways and strategies. For instance, the Sister School Scheme has been launched to provide a platform for strengthening exchange between students of Hong Kong and the Mainland. In addition to broadening students' learning space and horizons, the scheme can also enhance their understanding of the nation's development in education. The positive, conscientious and self-disciplined learning attitude of Mainland students will have a positive impact on Hong Kong students and facilitate their personal development.

14. When discussing controversial social issues, if students are found to hold misguided or extreme views, teachers should clearly state the facts and guide them to explore issues and clarify values from multiple perspectives. Also, teachers should guide students to make an unbiased and rational analysis basing on facts and evidence in an objective and open manner so as to develop their critical thinking skills, instill in them positive values such as respect and tolerance, and developing them to be informed and socially responsible young adults.

15. Effective feedback is one of the essential elements of learning. Hence, schools should adopt diversified assessment strategies (e.g. questioning, teachers' observation, self or peer assessment and project learning) to understand students' learning performance and outcomes. Teachers should also provide timely and appropriate feedback and encourage students to reflect actively so as to deepen their self-understanding and enhance their judgement. Students can also learn from reflection, thereby reinforcing the effectiveness of learning and teaching.

16. Parents are important stakeholders of school education. To enhance the effectiveness of MCE, schools should engage parents in school activities, such as talks, parent-child activities and exhibitions, through various means to help them understand the importance of MCE.

17. Through different channels such as inspections and school visits, the EDB learns about the implementation of MCE in schools and collates good practices for dissemination and sharing. We will also offer advice on areas for improvement as necessary. From our observation, schools attach great importance to and are actively promoting values education. They have generally implemented the seven priority values through a whole-school approach. Among these priority values, “care for others”, “perseverance” and “responsibility” are often chosen as major concerns or annual themes for the school development cycle in recent years. In addition to implementing values education systematically through school-based moral education and personal growth curricula, schools have also incorporated elements of values education into various subjects such as General Studies in primary schools and the Humanities subjects in secondary schools. A range of life-wide learning activities such as morning assemblies, weekly assemblies, flag raising ceremonies, talks and visits, is also organised to provide students with holistic learning experiences. In general, schools would review and evaluate the progress of implementation of values education at the end of a school year. Plans will be made on the basis of the evaluation. The EDB collects views on the implementation of the school curriculum from schools on a regular basis for reference.

## **Conclusion**

18. The EDB will continue to review and refine the curriculum as appropriate and adopt a “multi-pronged and mutual support” approach to support the implementation of MCE in schools. On top of the curriculum, we will also strengthen parent education, home-school cooperation and partnership with government departments and non-government organisations to bring about synergy in enhancing the effectiveness of values education. The objective is to develop our students into informed and responsible citizens who uphold positive values and attitudes, and are committed to making contributions to the family, society, the country and all humankind. The EDB needs to rally the support of the sector, parents and members of the public for effective promotion of MCE. For example, the development of a knowledge-based economy has given rise to an over-abundance of cyber information, the veracity of which may not be readily verifiable, and it may not be as easy to hold people accountable. This poses a tremendous challenge for MCE in schools and of nurturing students’ good judgment and personal sense of responsibility. We shall need the efforts of the sector, parents and members of the public to counter and contain the negative effect of cyber culture on our young people.

## **Views Sought**

19. Members are invited to note the background, strategies and implementation in respect of MCE in schools.

Education Bureau

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