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**Panel on Education**

**Meeting on 3 September 2021**

**Background brief on the promotion of values education in schools**

**Purpose**

This paper summarizes the deliberations of members of the Panel on Education ("the Panel") on issues related to the promotion of moral and civic education ("MCE") (values education) in schools.

**Background**

2. Values education is an essential element of whole-person education which aims at fostering students' positive values and attitudes through the learning and teaching of various Key Learning Areas/subjects and the provision of relevant learning experiences. It develops students' ability to identify the values embedded, analyze objectively and make reasonable judgement on different issues so that they could take proper action to deal with the challenges in their future life.

3. According to the Education Bureau ("EDB"), "Perseverance", "Respect for Others", "Responsibility", "National Identity", "Commitment", "Integrity", "Care for Others", "Law-abidingness" and "Empathy" are the nine priority values and attitudes that schools should nurture in their students through values education. Taking cultivation of positive values and attitudes as the direction, schools should make use of everyday life events to strengthen the coordination of learning activities, and enhance the connection, among various cross-curricular domains in values education, including moral and ethical education, civic education, Constitution education and Basic Law education, human rights education, national education, anti-drug education, life education, sex education, education for sustainable development, etc. so as to provide students with all-round learning experience conducive to their whole-person development.

## **Major views and concerns**

4. At the meeting held on 2 March 2018, the Administration briefed the Panel on the implementation and strategies adopted for the promotion of MCE in schools. The major views and concerns expressed by members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

### Implementation and promotion of moral and civic education

5. Some members pointed out that the prevalence of bad influences in society, such as bullying, compensated dating, twisted sense of justice, etc. had reflected the distorted values of young people, and enquired how the Administration could develop students' empathy, inclusiveness, respect for others and respect for the rule of law under the existing education system. There was a suggestion that EDB should enhance the support to the uniformed groups in schools which would train students to be responsible citizens.

6. The Administration advised that among the five domains of moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic development, moral development was regarded as the most important one. It was the main goal of the school education in Hong Kong to nurture positive values and attitudes in students through MCE, which had been one of the four key tasks in the school curriculum since the curriculum reform in 2001. The Secondary Education Curriculum Guide updated in 2017 also stressed that values education was one of the major development emphases of the ongoing renewal of the school curriculum, which would help cultivate students' positive values and attitudes, and develop their independent thinking to analyze objectively and make reasonable judgement on bad influences in society. Apart from school education, family and society played important roles in nurturing positive values in students. EDB would closely liaise with different stakeholders in promoting moral education.

7. Some members considered that instead of setting quantitative indicators for implementing MCE, it would be more desirable to incorporate elements of MCE into relevant curricula and related learning activities. Schools should make use of interesting learning materials which concretely present positive values and attitudes, such as stories of famous people, to motivate students to learn MCE. The Administration shared members' views that setting lesson time for the implementation of MCE was inappropriate and advised that teachers were encouraged to make use of life events, current issues and interesting topics as learning materials for MCE. In addition, EDB had continuously produced various life event exemplars to assist schools in guiding students to think from different perspectives and make reasonable judgements.

8. While some members considered implementation of MCE/values education necessary, some other members were worried that MCE/values education would turn out to be "brainwashing education". The Administration emphasized that MCE should be implemented to help students become informed and responsible citizens with critical thinking skills.

9. There were concerns as to how EDB had assisted teachers in developing students' awareness of national identity and whether teachers would place much emphasis on ethnic identity when delivering national education to ethnic minority students. The Administration advised that developing students' national identity was an important element in MCE. To cultivate students' moral and national qualities, diversified learning experiences/activities such as weekly assemblies would be provided. Teachers' guidance was also conducive to deepening students' understanding of their roles and responsibilities as members in the family, the society and the nation. As Hong Kong was a pluralistic society, it was important to help students become informed and responsible citizens with appreciation of positive values and attitudes as well as diverse culture, and respect for pluralism in society.

#### Discussion on controversial social issues

10. Some members pointed out that some school sponsoring bodies ("SSBs") would not include certain social issues, such as sexual minorities and sexual orientation, into their curricula due to their own established values stance. There was a suggestion that legislation should be introduced to make those issues legitimized so that EDB could require schools to include them into school curricula for developing students' inclusiveness and respect for others. The Administration explained that SSBs would develop school policies on the basis of their mission and vision. Nevertheless, schools were advised to help students explore and consider controversial issues, clarify the values embedded, handle value conflicts, and develop positive values and attitudes such as inclusiveness and respect towards controversial social issues.

11. Some members raised concern that according to the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study, MCE in Hong Kong had not touched on some issues of specific importance, such as participation in the decision-making of the school policies and resolving of disputes, which were covered by civic education in overseas countries. Also, as mentioned in the Study, one of the key learning goals of civic education was to equip students with independent and critical thinking skills. Question was raised as to whether guiding students to make an unbiased and rational analysis on controversial issues would be contrary to the learning goal set out in the Study.

12. The Administration advised that while EDB had set out the priority values that schools should nurture in their students through MCE, schools could select the learning contents to meet the needs of students. For controversial social issues, teachers should guide students to explore issues from multiple perspectives and make an unbiased and rational analysis basing on facts and evidence in an objective and open manner so as to develop their independent thinking.

### **Latest position**

13. The Administration will brief the Panel on the promotion of values education in schools at the meeting on 3 September 2021.

### **Relevant papers**

14. A list of the relevant papers on the website of the Legislative Council is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 4  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
27 August 2021

**List of relevant papers**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Paper</b>
Panel on Education	2.3.2018	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a> <a href="#">CB(4)1024/17-18(01)</a>
Legislative Council	26.5.2021	<a href="#">Official Record of Proceedings</a> <a href="#">Pages 94-100 (Question 13)</a>

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