

For discussion
on 27 January 2026

Legislative Council Panel on Education

Major Policy Initiatives of the Education Bureau in 2026

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the major policy initiatives of the Education Bureau (EDB) in 2026.

Advancing the Development of Leading Country in Education and Promoting the Integrated Development of Education, Technology and Talents

2. To tie in with the country's goal to develop into a leading country in education as outlined in the Recommendations for Formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan and the "2024-2035 Master Plan on Building China into a Leading Country in Education", the Government strives to develop Hong Kong into an international hub for education and high-calibre talents; foster mutual reinforcement between technological innovation and talent cultivation; promote the integrated development of education, technology and talents, and enhance the overall efficacy of the national innovation systems. In line with the national strategy of invigorating the country through science and education, we will continue to consolidate and develop the unique advantages of Hong Kong's highly internationalised and diversified education system under "One Country, Two Systems", as well as strengthen high-quality development of education in Hong Kong. The major policy initiatives of the EDB in 2026 include:

- (1) Develop an International Education Hub and Talent Hub
- (2) Expand Vocational and Professional Education and Training for Nurturing a Diversified Talent Pool
- (3) Promote Digital Education Systematically to Cultivate a New Generation of Talents
- (4) Cultivate Values and Strengthen Sense of Belonging to Our Country
- (5) Promote Whole-person Development and Enhance Physical and Mental Health
- (6) Strengthen Professionalism of Teachers and Nurture a High-quality Teaching Force

Major Policy Initiatives in 2026

(1) Develop an International Education Hub and Talent Hub

3. Hong Kong's overall education competitiveness ranked second globally and our post-secondary institutions are highly internationalised and diversified, boasting five of the world's top 100 universities, and achieving new heights in the newly published 2026 Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings, particularly in academic influence, research standards, and internationalisation. Four universities ranked among the world's top ten most international universities, with six subjects also securing spots in the global top ten.

Further Relax the Restrictions on Admission of Self-financing Students

4. In the 2024/25 academic year (AY), the number of non-local students enrolled in University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded programmes increased from 23 100 in the 2023/24 AY to 26 600, representing an increase of around 15%, with students coming from over 100 countries and regions. To support the post-secondary education sector to continuously expand capacity and enhance quality, starting from the 2026/27 AY, the Government will raise the enrolment ceiling for self-financing non-local students for taught programmes of each funded-post-secondary institution from the level equivalent to 40% of local student places to 50%; and the over-enrolment ceiling of self-financing places of funded research postgraduate programmes from 100% to 120%. The post-secondary institutions will continue to take into account their own circumstances to progressively attract more non-local students (from Belt and Road countries in particular) and Mainland students to study in Hong Kong.

Attract More International Teaching and Research Talents and Students

5. To further promote higher education in Hong Kong to the world and attract top talents and scholars from around the globe, the EDB has established the Task Force on Study in Hong Kong, bringing together the UGC, the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau, the Hong Kong Talent Engage, post-secondary institutions, Economic and Trade Offices, Mainland Offices etc. to achieve synergy and step up promotion of higher education in Hong Kong. The Task Force convened its first meeting on 10 November 2025 to discuss its work plan. Meanwhile, the EDB fully supports the Chinese University of Hong Kong to co-host the Asia Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE) Conference and Exhibition in Hong Kong from 23 to 27 February 2026 with the other seven universities funded by the UGC, to bring together international renowned educators, university leaders, relevant industry representatives and experts etc., to jointly discuss important

topics and emerging trends in higher education.

6. To promote internationalisation, UGC has all along been funding the Heads of Universities Committee's Standing Committee on Internationalisation (HUCOMSCI) which involved the eight UGC-funded universities to promote the universities' participation in and organisation of various activities outside Hong Kong, including jointly setting up a Hong Kong pavilion to promote the "Study in Hong Kong" brand in the annual NAFSA Association of International Educators Annual Conference & Expo, the annual conference of the European Association for International Education and the annual Asia Pacific Association for International Education Conference and Exhibition. UGC provided a funding of around \$40 million to HUCOMSCI in the 2025-28 triennium to undertake relevant work.

Implement the Amended Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320)

7. The major provisions of the amended Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320) will commence operation on 1 August 2026. The EDB is working closely with the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications and relevant institutions to ensure smooth and orderly implementation of the enhanced regulatory framework, while continuing to further support the healthy and sustainable development of the self-financing post-secondary education sector through targeted measures, with a view to making more proactive contributions to Hong Kong's development into an international post-secondary education hub.

Northern Metropolis University Town

8. For two consecutive years, the Chief Executive has put forward in his Policy Address the goal of developing Hong Kong into an international education hub and a cradle for future talent, and making good use of the Northern Metropolis, with new land, new population, excellent connectivity, development opportunities of different industries and close connections with the Mainland, to provide space for the post-secondary education sector to develop and enhance its quality and capacity.

9. The Government has set up the Working Group on Planning and Construction of the University Town, which is led by the Chief Secretary for Administration, under the Committee on Development of the Northern Metropolis. It will set up a study task force and explore the possible way forward to deeply integrate industry development with the academic sectors where Hong Kong has an edge, alongside the strategies for attracting leading Mainland and overseas universities and research institutes to establish a base in Hong Kong. In planning the Northern Metropolis University Town, we will

further explore reserving space for the development of various campuses, as well as shared support and ancillary facilities for institutions, including student accommodation, so as to attract world-class scholars and outstanding students to Hong Kong, facilitating Hong Kong's development into an international education hub.

Enhance Teaching Environment

10. Assisting the UGC-funded universities in enhancing their teaching environment has been a vital component in establishing Hong Kong as an international post-secondary hub. For the proposed upgrade of The University of Hong Kong (8070EG – Transformation of K.K. Leung Building into Research and Development Hub) and The Chinese University of Hong Kong's (8066EF – Engineering Building at Central Campus) campus development projects to Category A works, the two universities consulted the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Education on 3 May 2024 through a combined discussion item. Subsequently, owing to the Government's decision to re-prioritise public works projects in line with the review of fiscal expenditure, it was resolved to temporarily shelve the relevant projects. After due consideration, the Government has determined that now is an appropriate time to reconsider the aforementioned project proposals. As certain aspects of the proposals require further adjustments, we will invite both universities to consult the new term of the Education Panel on the aforementioned works proposals again. We plan to submit the relevant proposals to the Public Works Subcommittee and Finance Committee of the LegCo for approval within 2026.

Expand International Education Hub to Basic Education

11. To progressively expand the development of Hong Kong into an international education hub to cover basic education, the EDB has launched a scheme allowing all Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools to apply for increasing the number and size of classes to expand their intake of non-local students with student visas. We are maintaining close contact and collaboration with DSS schools to understand their needs as well as to promote the scheme to overseas parents through participating in international education expos and arranging duty visits, etc.

12. Apart from publicly-funded schools, private schools are also an essential component of Hong Kong's education system. To further promote the development of the international education hub, the EDB will soon announce the "Code of Practice for Private Schools", which will provide clear and practical management and operational guidelines for private schools to continuously enhance their educational quality and management standards in

safeguarding students' well-being.

(2) Expand Vocational and Professional Education and Training for Nurturing a Diversified Talent Pool

13. To enhance the quality and image of vocational and professional education and training (VPET) and strengthen synergy, the EDB has been supporting the Vocational Training Council (VTC) in continuously improving its VPET facilities. VTC established the Hong Kong Institute of Information Technology (HKIIT) on 1 November 2023, specialising in the provision of information technology (IT) and other technology-related programmes to further strengthen Hong Kong's capabilities in the field of IT. As VTC's 14th member institution, HKIIT's programmes cover in-demand and emerging IT skills, aiming at nurturing all-round IT talents for the digital transformation of various industries.

14. HKIIT admitted its first cohort of students in the 2024/25 AY, with programmes covering areas such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence (AI), software engineering, augmented reality, virtual reality, cross-platform mobile applications development, game software development, cloud and data centre administration, data science and predictive analytics. In response to market needs and technological development trends, HKIIT launched in the 2025/26 AY a new Higher Diploma (HD) in Applied AI, and two three-year programmes, namely the Diploma of Vocational Education (Drone and Entertainment Technology) and Diploma of Vocational Education (Esports Technology). In the 2025/26 AY, a total of 2 160 new intake students were admitted across 16 full-time HD and Diploma programmes.

15. To address HKIIT's vocational training development needs, HKIIT plans to convert VTC's existing School of Business and Information System Building at the Tsing Yi campus into HKIIT's main campus. This will equip the Department of AI & Data and the Department of Media Technology with a new and diverse range of teaching facilities, including Robotics and Internet of Things Innovation Training Centre, Drone Training Hub, Malware Analysis Centre, Interactive Game Development Centre, and Digital Twin Innovation Centre. VTC plans to submit the proposed works to the Public Works Subcommittee and Financial Committee of the LegCo for approval within 2026.

(3) Promote Digital Education Systematically to Cultivate a New Generation of Talents

16. The EDB has been stepping up efforts to promote digital education in primary and secondary schools. We will release the Blueprint for Digital

Education Development in Primary and Secondary Schools in 2026, which covers optimising the interface between primary and secondary curricula of Information Technology and Innovation and Technology education, an “AI literacy” learning framework, enhancing AI training for teachers, and collaboration with professional bodies to create a digital education atmosphere on campus and enhance students’ AI literacy. The EDB is currently actively soliciting views from various stakeholders regarding the Blueprint.

17. The EDB has earmarked \$2 billion under the Quality Education Fund (QEF) to implement digital education development measures. Approximately \$500 million of this amount will be allocated to the three-year “AI for Empowering Learning and Teaching Funding Programme”, which will be implemented starting from the 2025/26 school year. Successful publicly-funded school applicants will receive a one-off funding of \$500,000 to initiate and promote school-based AI education programmes. QEF will also launch the project deliverables under the e-Learning Ancillary Facilities Programme in phases, for schools to subscribe to and use. In addition, the EDB, the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research, and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University will co-organise the “International Summit on the Use of AI in Language Learning and Teaching (AlinLT 2026)” to create a global platform convening leading experts and educators to share insights on how artificial intelligence is reshaping language education for tomorrow.

18. Innovation and technology development is inextricably linked with mathematics and science education. The EDB will strengthen senior secondary mathematics and science education, and has established an ad hoc committee to review the curriculum structure (such as university admissions related issues and the combination of elective subjects in senior secondary levels), with an aim to encourage more senior secondary students to study multiple science subjects and the Extended Part (M1/M2) of Mathematics as a combination, thereby providing talent support for scientific research and innovation and technology development in Hong Kong.

(4) Cultivate Values and Strengthen Sense of Belonging to Our Country

Promulgate the Values Education Curriculum Framework

19. Since the publication of the Values Education Curriculum Framework (Pilot Version) (the Pilot Version) in 2021, the EDB has been continuously collecting practical experiences and views from schools, and is now preparing the Values Education Curriculum Framework (VECF), which is planned to be promulgated in the middle of the 2025/26 school year.

20. The school curriculum should keep pace with the times, the VECF is

based on the Pilot Version, incorporating schools' practical experiences and views, and aligning with updates of various curricula of primary and secondary education. It sets the overarching direction of "Taking root in Chinese Culture, Connecting with the World, Embracing the Future", upholding Chinese culture as its backbone. Schools are advised to continue to strengthen the learning of Chinese culture, deepen national education, life education, sex education, health education (including anti-drug education) and education for sustainable development, while cultivating students' media and information literacy (including AI literacy), international perspective, and a sense of "A Global Community of Shared Future". This provides a clear direction for schools to further enhance values education.

Update the Curriculum Framework of National Security Education in Hong Kong and the Curriculum Frameworks for Subjects

21. It is the responsibility of schools to implement national security education through the school curriculum. The Curriculum Framework of National Security Education in Hong Kong and the curriculum frameworks for 27 subjects were updated in 2025. These updates aim to keep national security education abreast of the times, emphasise the learning of a holistic approach to national security and align with the implementation of patriotic education.

22. The EDB continues to provide professional training for teachers and develop different learning and teaching resources related to national security education. Meanwhile, the EDB continually organises a wide variety of territory-wide activities and competitions on national education and national security education to enrich the learning experiences of primary and secondary students.

Optimised Senior Secondary Chinese History and History Curriculum Frameworks

23. In October 2025, the EDB promulgated the Optimised Senior Secondary Chinese History and History Curriculum Frameworks and issued questionnaires to collect opinions from all secondary schools in Hong Kong. Responses from schools were positive and feedbacks have been provided on aspects such as public assessment and support measures to facilitate the EDB in formulating directions for the development of teacher professional programmes and learning and teaching resources.

24. To align with the implementation of the optimised senior secondary curriculum starting from Secondary 4 in September 2027, and to address the diverse learning needs and abilities of students, the Hong Kong Examinations

and Assessment Authority is currently working on optimising the assessment frameworks and preparing sample examination questions.

25. To support the implementation of the optimised senior secondary Chinese History and History curricula, the EDB will conduct a review of senior secondary textbook. In collaboration with tertiary institutions and experts/scholars, no fewer than 1,500 teacher training places will be offered in the 2026/27 school year. The training will cover various aspects, including curriculum interpretation, knowledge enrichment, strategies for learning, teaching and assessment, as well as curriculum leadership and planning. The EDB will continue to provide learning and teaching resources and enhance teacher networks to promote professional exchange among teachers.

(5) Promote Whole-person Development and Enhance Physical and Mental Health

26. The EDB attaches great importance to the healthy growth of students, and is committed to promoting student mental health from a multi-pronged approach, and continues to strengthen the synergy through cross-departmental and cross-sector collaboration to enhance schools' efforts in promoting student mental health. The EDB has implemented the 4Rs Mental Health Charter (4Rs Charter)¹ since the 2024/25 school year, with more than 800 schools having joined the 4Rs Charter thus far. In the 2025/26 school year, "Resilience" is the core theme, providing schools with more services, activities and courses, and encouraging more school personnel to receive training related to mental health first aid to strengthen their capacity in providing appropriate support for students with mental health needs. Furthermore, the EDB has launched the "Mental Health Literacy Resource Packages" suitable for students at different learning stages, and also provides school-based training and consultation to facilitate primary and secondary schools in utilising the resource packages according to school-based needs through a collaborative mode in the 2025/26 school year, assisting schools in mastering the content of the resource packages as well as the techniques in implementation. Besides, the Government put in place the Three-tier School-based Emergency Mechanism (the Mechanism) in all secondary schools in Hong Kong for early identification of and support for students with higher suicidal risk in December 2023. Through continuous cross-departmental collaboration, the EDB, the Health Bureau and the Social Welfare Department, regularised the implementation of the Mechanism in secondary schools, and extended it on a trial basis to the Primary Four to Six in the 2025/26 school year, to help the early identification of students in need in primary and secondary schools and strengthen support for them.

¹ The "4Rs" in the 4Rs Charter, which aims to promote mental health, encompasses the four elements and objectives, including Rest, Relaxation, Relationship, and Resilience.

27. Parents are key stakeholders in the school education process, playing crucial roles in supporting students' learning as well as fostering their positive values and whole-person development. The Government has all along been adopting a multi-pronged approach to promote home-school co-operation and parent education. In the 2025/26 school year, the EDB launches the Workplace Parent Education Programme to encourage working parents to participate in parent education activities. Besides, following the launch of the Parent Education Resource Package for Primary Schools in 2024, the EDB also launched the Parent Education Resource Package for Secondary Schools in early January 2026 to further support schools in implementing school-based parent education programmes.

(6) Strengthen Professionalism of Teachers and Nurture a High-quality Teaching Force

28. To safeguard the well-being of students and provide quality education, the EDB strives to enhance the quality of teachers and strengthen their professional conduct. The EDB will continue to implement various measures, including continuing the collaboration with Mainland education experts and institutions to organise systematic training for teachers and principals, and providing them with opportunities to participate in overseas training and exchange activities to enhance their professional capacity; continue to strengthen the spirit of cultivating values and nurturing people among teachers, facilitate teachers' integration of their pursuit of professionalism and commitment to upholding high moral standards, strengthen teachers' cultivation of morality and ethics, as well as to update the Guidelines on Teachers' Professional Conduct as and when appropriate and support activities that promote teachers' professional ethics.

29. In response to the society's high expectation on teachers' professionalism, with a view to enhancing teachers' professional status, the 2025 Policy Address announced that the EDB will enhance the teacher registration mechanism and explore amending the Education Ordinance (EO) to introduce the practising certificate and regular renewal requirements, so as to ensure that all school teachers in Hong Kong are fit and proper persons, thus upholding professionalism of the teaching force. To this end, the EDB has commenced working on amending the EO, which includes collecting views from the education sector and seeking advice from the Department of Justice on the legislative content of the practising certificate. The EDB will consult the LegCo Panel on Education in February 2026, with a plan to submit the amendment bill to the LegCo for deliberation in the second half of 2026.

(7) Systematic Planning to Promote Quality Development in Education

30. In face of the structural decline in the school-age population, the Government has taken multifaceted measures with a soft-landing approach, taking into account the actual circumstances of Hong Kong in the long-term planning for the future supply of school places. We take timely actions to reduce the surplus of school places in a steady and orderly manner, so as to tie in with the evolving education ecosystem and facilitate the healthy and sustainable development of schools. We capitalise on the opportunity to optimise and integrate various school subsidies from time to time for schools' more effective and flexible deployment. Schools should also generate revenue and manage costs, focusing on improving and optimising the quality of education in seizing the opportunity. On the other hand, we encourage and support the school sector to review its services and school-based features as early as possible, and advance with the times while proactively paying heed to the needs of the community, parents and students, leveraging school-based advantages, thereby delivering more appropriate and quality services, and formulating the long-term sustainable development direction for schools.

Views Sought

31. Members are invited to note and comment on the content of this paper.

Education Bureau

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