

CE's speech in delivering "The Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address" to LegCo (10)

IX. Nurturing Talents and Youth Development

Nurturing Talents

Vision for Education

148. Education is the key to nurturing talents. My vision for education is to nurture our young people into quality citizens with a sense of social responsibility and national identity, an affection for Hong Kong as well as an international perspective. Education is also about building a good character, and the cultivation of moral virtues is the most essential. As a matter of fact, students must be law-abiding, able to respect different opinions and adapt to social life, in order to become a responsible member of the civil society.

Quality Education

149. After my assumption of office, I have been actively providing additional resources for the education sector in order to create favourable conditions for implementing reforms necessary for enhancing the quality of education. Over the past three years, the current-term Government has increased the recurrent expenditure on education by a total of \$13.5 billion. Many of the measures implemented are meeting the long standing aspirations of practitioners from the education sector, including implementing the all-graduate teaching force policy and increasing the teacher-to-class ratio. Nevertheless, I would like to stress that the role of the Government in education is not merely a provider of resources, but also a policy maker, administrator and regulator.

150. To enhance the quality of education, we have set up eight task forces at different times and invited professionals to conduct studies and consultations, and to present their reports to the Government. Seven task forces have completed their work and the EDB has joined hands with the related organisations to implement the task forces' recommendations. The last task force on review of school curriculum submitted its report in September and the EDB will provide the Government's response in due course. Besides, the 39 new initiatives announced since July 2017 have been completed or are progressing on schedule, and their progress has been set out in this year's Policy Address Supplement.

151. Nevertheless, the social incidents last year led many to question again the effectiveness of Hong Kong's education. It is indeed heartbreaking that, among the more than 10 000 arrestees suspected of violating the law in connection with the opposition to the proposed legislative amendments to the

Fugitive Offenders Ordinance, 40% are students, of which nearly 2 000 are primary and secondary students. We cannot bear to see that with the infiltration of politics into school campuses, students are drawn into political turbulence or even misled to engage in illegal and violent acts, for which they have to take legal responsibilities that will impact on their lives. The social incidents also reveal that the law-abiding awareness of some young people is weak and that positive values such as mutual understanding and mutual respect are lacking. In the face of the complicated political environment in Hong Kong and the proliferation of misinformation in social media, it is the shared responsibility of the Government, society, education sector and parents to find a way to protect our students.

Moral and National Education

152. Among the five domains of moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic developments, moral development is regarded as the most important one and the foundation of education. In fact, deepening students' understanding of the history, culture and developments of our country, and strengthening education on the Constitution and the Basic Law are the fundamentals for fostering their sense of national identity and awareness of national security. The current-term Government has made Chinese History an independent compulsory subject at the junior secondary level, and the new curriculum of the subject has been rolled out progressively from Secondary One in the current school year. The EDB will provide opportunities for students to join study tours that integrate with the curriculum, and encourage primary and secondary students to learn more about the essence of Chinese culture for nurturing their moral character and cultural identity. Moreover, the EDB will, through diversified activities, cultivate primary and secondary students' comprehensive understanding of the nation's development, the Constitution and the Basic Law, the implementation of "One Country, Two Systems" and the importance of national security, and teach them to respect and preserve the dignity of the national flag and the national anthem as symbols of our country, to foster positive values among students as well as develop in them a sense of identity, belonging and responsibility towards the nation, the Chinese race and our society.

Liberal Studies

153. There has been ongoing controversy over the subject of Liberal Studies under the senior secondary curriculum in the society. Hence, the direction of reform in future should focus on rectifying the previous deviation from the subject's objectives, and reinstating it as the platform to help students establish a sound foundation of knowledge, make connection between the knowledge across different subjects, develop critical thinking skills, analyse contemporary issues in a rational manner and learn about the development of our nation, the Constitution, the Basic Law, the rule of law and so forth.

154. The reform of curriculum should tie in with the work of examination and assessment. In the previous school year, a wrong question in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination has generated heated discussions in the community. I expect that the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment

Authority will improve its question moderation mechanism continuously to prevent the recurrence of similar problems.

Promoting Applied Learning

155. In line with the goals of promoting whole-person development and catering for student diversity, we will further promote Applied Learning as a senior secondary elective subject, and provide students with subsidies and more diversified courses to broaden their studies and learning experience to facilitate their diversified development.

e-Learning

156. Although face-to-face classes in schools were temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 epidemic, students were still able to learn during the class suspension with the concerted efforts of the EDB and schools by flexibly using different innovative means. To further support schools and teachers in implementing this blended mode of teaching and learning, the EDB will set aside \$2 billion in the Quality Education Fund to launch a three-year programme. This will, on the one hand, support the provision of ancillary facilities for e-learning, such as setting up a platform for sharing learning and teaching resources as well as encouraging the sharing of quality teaching materials by teachers and, on the other, ensure that all students will have equal opportunities in accessing e-learning, including through subsidising schools to purchase mobile computer devices for loan to needy students and to provide Wi-Fi routers and mobile data cards for students who do not have access to appropriate internet services because of their living environment. To cater for the immediate needs of students from disadvantaged families, the EDB also provided a one-off Top-up Grant for Supporting Online Learning of Financially Needy Students to public sector schools early this month.

Quality of Teachers

157. Teachers have far-reaching influence on the whole-person development of students and play a vital role in passing on knowledge and nurturing students' character. I hope that they will nurture students into persons of great ability and integrity, who will also become the pillars of our country in safeguarding "One Country, Two Systems". As the authority responsible for the registration of teachers, the Government will enhance the quality of teachers through measures in respect of entry to the profession, training and management. We will discuss with teacher education institutions in ensuring the ethics, character and conduct of teachers. We will also strengthen the training of teachers and principals upon their appointment, during their service and before their promotion. The EDB will take stringent actions against teachers who are incompetent or found misconducted, including cancelling the registration of those who are found seriously misconducted, for the well-being of students.

Supporting Students with Special Education Needs

158. The On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services (OPRS), a new type of cross-disciplinary and cross-bureau services, aim to support students with

special educational needs to help them grow up healthily by “Early Identification and Immediate Intervention”. As the pilot project has proved the services effective, the OPRS were regularised in October 2018. In the current school year, the service places have been increased substantially from 3 000 to 8 000, and will be further increased to 10 000 in the 2022/23 school year with the aim of achieving zero-waiting time. To provide earlier support to children awaiting assessments by the Child Assessment Centres under the Department of Health and those assessed as having only mild developmental problems, we have launched a 20-month pilot scheme for kindergartens participating in the OPRS in this school year.

Supporting the Provision of New Teaching Facilities and Student Hostel for the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts

159. The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) is the only higher education institution in Hong Kong that provides education and training in the performing arts and related technical arts. In the QS World University Rankings for Performing Arts 2020, the HKAPA continued to rank first in Asia and seventh globally. The Government supports the provision of new teaching facilities and a student hostel for the HKAPA in the Eastern District on Hong Kong Island to enrich teaching and learning infrastructure and experience, and to foster the healthy development of tertiary education in the performing arts.

Attracting Talents

160. To expand the talent pool of Hong Kong, not only do we need to make our best endeavour to nurture local talents, we also need to proactively attract non-local talents to come to Hong Kong. InvestHK will work in partnership with various bureaux, ETOs and organisations promoting I&T, financial and cultural development to adopt a strategic approach in actively promoting around the world the facilitation measures and development opportunities available in Hong Kong for high-quality talents, with the focus on attracting those in demand in various areas.

Youth Development

161. As a diverse group, young people have different goals for their life. In my 2017 Policy Address, I proposed new directions for youth development, namely addressing young people’s concerns about education, career pursuits and home ownership, and encouraging their participation in politics as well as public policy discussion and debate. Considerable progress has been made. However, the social unrest, unstable epidemic situation and prolonged class suspension over the past year have affected the lives and learning patterns of young people. Some feel confused and helpless about their future and the way society is developing. In view of these situations, the Government will consider how to create an environment that enables young people to grow healthily, build a stable home, pursue a good career and unleash their full potential. We also hope that our young people can set their sights on our country, seizing the opportunities to study, work and live in the GBA, so as to broaden the scope for realising their dreams.

Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme

162. Taking into account Hong Kong's economy and market scale, the youth unemployment rate may remain at double-digit for some time. On the other hand, with a population of 70 million and huge development potential, the GBA can provide career development opportunities for our young people. During the Policy Address consultation exercise this year, many enterprises indicated that with subsidy from the Government, they could offer job opportunities to young people of Hong Kong in the GBA with vibrant economic growth. To encourage and support young people to work and pursue their career in the Mainland cities of the GBA, the HKSAR Government will launch the Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme to encourage enterprises with operation in both Hong Kong and the GBA to recruit and deploy local university graduates to work in the Mainland cities of the GBA. The scheme will provide 2 000 places, of which some are I&T positions as I have mentioned earlier.

Youth Entrepreneurship

163. More and more young people wish to demonstrate their ability by starting their own businesses and finding an alternative path to working in traditional sectors. Last year, the Youth Development Commission introduced the new Funding Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area under the Youth Development Fund to render better entrepreneurial support and incubation services to Hong Kong young people who intend to start their businesses in Hong Kong and the Mainland cities of the GBA, and to further address their initial capital needs. Once the epidemic situation has become stable and cross-border travel resumed, the Home Affairs Bureau will launch the scheme to subsidise over 10 NGOs to implement youth entrepreneurship projects. It is estimated that about \$100 million will be provided for nearly 200 youth start-ups and supporting services to about 4 000 young people. Guangdong and the Mainland cities of the GBA have agreed to support the scheme by providing co-working bases and letting Hong Kong young people enjoy the same treatment and support as their peers on the Mainland. In addition, the HKSAR Government will establish the Alliance of Hong Kong Youth Innovative and Entrepreneurial Bases in the Greater Bay Area to serve as a one-stop information, publicity and exchange platform to further support innovation and entrepreneurship by Hong Kong youth in the GBA.

Member Self-recommendation Scheme for Youth

164. To provide more opportunities for young people to participate in policy discussions and understand government operation, we have regularised the Member Self-recommendation Scheme for Youth launched by the current-term Government and expanded it to cover more boards and committees. Young people aged between 18 and 35 may self-nominate to become members of specified government advisory committees through the scheme. So far, around 340 posts are currently held by young people who have been appointed directly or indirectly to the advisory and statutory bodies through the scheme. The overall ratio of appointed youth members in the advisory and statutory bodies has increased from 7.8% in 2017 to 13% at present, gradually approaching the

target of 15% set by the current-term Government.

X. Closing Remarks: Renewed Perseverance

165. Building on our steadfast determination to implement “One Country, Two Systems”, “Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong” and a high degree of autonomy, and capitalising on Hong Kong’s traditional strengths and the opportunities for integration into the overall national development, this some 24 000-word Policy Address manifests the Central Government’s staunch support for the HKSAR and embraces my determination to strive for the best for Hong Kong with my team. As long as we stay true to our aspiration in implementing “One Country, Two Systems”, safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests, maintain our confidence in Hong Kong, refrain from politicising matters, maintain communication in a rational manner and seek common ground while putting aside differences, we will surely be able to deal with the problems that arise in the course of implementing “One Country, Two Systems” and address some deep-seated conflicts in Hong Kong.

166. I made some sentimental remarks at the reception in celebration of the 23rd anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR on 1 July this year. I said, “I have faced the toughest challenge in my 40 years of public service in the past year. Not only have I faced unprecedented personal attacks, I am also deeply worried about the future of Hong Kong. However, I am extremely grateful to the Central Government for its trust in me, to my family and close friends for their unreserved love and to colleagues at all levels for their staunch support. Their care and concern have given me hope that there will be an end to the difficult times and the rainbow will emerge after the storm.”

167. In the coming year, the HKSAR Government will double its efforts to put the epidemic under control, revive the economy, restore social order, rebuild Hong Kong’s international reputation and people’s confidence in the Government, with a view to relaunching Hong Kong.