

LCQ1: Implementation of environmental, social and governance education

Following is a question by the Hon Chu Kwok-keung and a reply by the Under Secretary for Education, Mr Sze Chun-fai, in the Legislative Council today (June 28):

Question:

It is learnt that various sectors of society are actively exploring the integration of environmental, social and governance (ESG) concepts into the education curriculum. However, some members of the education sector have relayed that primary and secondary schools will face challenges in the process of implementing ESG education, including the allocation of education resources, curriculum design and teacher training, etc. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the specific policies and measures in place to promote ESG education; whether it will incorporate ESG concepts into the curricula of primary and secondary schools and kindergartens, and commence the relevant teacher training; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it will collaborate with various sectors of society and make reference to overseas experience to promote the innovation and development of ESG education, so as to achieve the best use of resources; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will include the performance of schools in teaching ESG in the Performance Indicators for Hong Kong Schools and take the performance of schools in teaching ESG into consideration when evaluating their performance, as well as ensure that education institutions at various levels are provided with sufficient resources and support in the process of implementing ESG education; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In kindergarten, primary and secondary education, concepts and proper values related to environmental education, social responsibility and principles of governance, etc, have been embedded in different learning areas or subjects as well as moral, civic and national education in accordance with students' learning progression and developmental needs, enabling kindergarten, primary and secondary students to learn the concepts and values in basic education. Post-secondary institutions also offer a range of degree programmes related to these aspects, such as sustainable development and green finance, for students who wish to develop in these areas.

Our reply to the Hon Chu Kwok-keung's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) At the kindergarten stage, schools nurture in children the values and attitudes to respect, appreciate and cherish the environment and nature through learning activities with real-life themes. At the primary level, students are taught in General Studies environmental conservation and resources saving, effects of climate change on people and individuals' responsibilities in environmental conservation. At the junior secondary level, the subject of Citizenship, Economics and Society helps students understand social systems and their operational procedures, and realise the significance of the rule of law and public order. As for the subject of Geography, topics such as sustainable development, energy, ecological conservation and climate change are covered. Both subjects cover the learning elements of nurturing among students the commitment to making contributions to our country and society in the aspect of environmental conservation. As for Science Education at the junior secondary level, the curriculum content encompasses fossil fuels, alternative energy sources, saving energy and balance of carbon dioxide and oxygen in nature. At the senior secondary level, topics taught in the subject of Biology include biodiversity, conservation of the ecosystem, and global environmental issues, e.g. acid rain. The curriculum of Business, Accounting and Financial Studies covers topics of business management functions, business ethics and social responsibilities, in which learning elements include how business ethics and social responsibilities affect business decisions. As for the subject of Citizenship and Social Development, the topic on the roles and responsibilities of the business sector in promoting environmental conservation is covered. In addition, some Applied Learning courses, such as Innovation and Entrepreneurship and AI in Business, include learning elements related to innovation and sustainable development, as well as ethics, sustainability and responsibility.

With regard to values education, the Values Education Curriculum Framework (Pilot Version) lists "actively practising green living as well as encouraging and supporting joint efforts from people around" and "possessing a global perspective as well as being concerned about global environmental issues and the challenges in attaining sustainable development" as learning expectations on primary and secondary students respectively, so as to nurture in them proper values and attitudes, such as treasuring what we have, commitment, common good and diligence.

The Education Bureau (EDB) has been collaborating with other government departments and different sectors of the community, including the Environment and Ecology Bureau, the Hong Kong Green Building Council and so on, to organise diversified professional development programmes for teachers. Topics such as sustainable development and mitigating climate change in Hong Kong, standards and requirements with respect to business sustainability, energy saving and green buildings, assist teachers in teaching the related concepts, as well as nurturing proper values and attitudes among students. From the 2020/21 to 2022/23 school years, over 80 relevant training activities have been organised with the participation of about 6 700 teachers. To support learning and teaching in schools, we continue to develop different learning and teaching resources including worksheets, life event examples and educational multimedia resources and upload them onto the EDB website for

teachers' reference and deployment. In addition, we have organised a range of students activities, for instance, slogan and poster design competitions, online quiz competitions and online courses, to help students understand the rationale and importance of sustainable development as well as enrich their learning experiences.

All along, the EDB has adopted a "multi-pronged and co-ordinated" approach to facilitate student learning of the concepts and knowledge related to care for the environment and society, as well as governance structure and principles, etc, within and beyond the classroom in a progressive manner and nurturing of proper values and attitudes among them, such as care for others, commitment, responsibility, diligence, being grateful and treasuring what we have, as well as practising green living. It is noted that similar approaches are also adopted in the Mainland and Singapore in teaching relevant knowledge and skills, and nurturing values and attitudes in students in basic education. While curriculum development is an on-going process, the EDB will constantly review the secondary, primary and kindergarten curricula and make reference to the global trends of curriculum development, so as to keep our curricula abreast of the times to cater for the learning needs of students.

(3) The EDB has developed the "Performance Indicators for Hong Kong Schools" (PIs), with the aim of promoting school self-evaluation, in response to the implementation of school-based management. School self-evaluation, complemented by external school reviews and focus inspections, enhances the transparency of school-based management and school accountability. The PIs comprise the four domains of "Management and Organisation", "Learning and Teaching", "School Ethos and Student Support" and "Student Performance", all of which can be used to assess school performance in delivering related curricula, discharging social responsibility and practising good governance, etc. The domains are intertwined, with mutual impact on each other. Among them, the indicators under the domain of "Management and Organisation" assess whether school management and professional leadership have facilitated learning and teaching and student development so as to promote students' whole-person development. The indicators under the domain of "Learning and Teaching" cover the school performance in implementing the curricula recommended by the Curriculum Development Council for various Key Learning Areas at the primary and secondary levels, including the concepts and positive values related to environmental education, social responsibility and principles of governance. The indicators under the domain of "School Ethos and Student Support" measure the school effectiveness in the arrangement of learning experiences and provision of support measures in accordance with students' developmental and learning needs, and the school performance in collaborating with parents and external organisations. As for the domain of "Student Performance", apart from putting emphasis on students' learning attitudes and moral character, the indicators of this domain also cover students' academic and non-academic performances. The EDB will update the PIs in a timely manner when necessary to facilitate schools' continuous improvement, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of school governance and student learning.

Thank you, President.