

LCQ13: Cultivating sense of belonging towards country and sense of national identity among students

Following is a question by the Hon Leung Che-cheung and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (April 28):

Question:

The Secretary for Education indicated last month that the Education Bureau (EDB) was cultivating among students a sense of belonging towards the country and a sense of national identity through multiple means, such as revising school curriculum, providing guidelines on teaching materials, and implementing extra-curricular activities. The EDB will also distribute a set of books entitled My Home is in China to all primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong for use as teaching materials. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) how the EDB ensures that teachers will make good use of the various means to help student foster correct values and acquire the relevant knowledge, as well as build up a strong sense of belonging towards the country and a strong sense of national identity;

(2) whether the EDB will gain an understanding, through inspections, of how teachers teach the relevant knowledge within and outside the classroom, so as to ensure that teachers use the teaching materials appropriately and accurately; and

(3) whether the EDB will formulate key performance indicators for evaluating the performance of teachers in the relevant educational work?

Reply:

President,

The Education Bureau (EDB) attaches great importance to cultivating students' positive values, attitudes and behaviour, and designates "National Identity" as one of the education goals and priority values. It is the responsibility of schools to help students cultivate positive values and acquire knowledge, and foster a strong sense of belonging to the country and national identity. The EDB has been adopting a "multi-pronged and co-ordinated" approach to support schools in promoting values education, national education and national security education. Through various means, such as issuing guidelines to schools, updating the curriculum, developing diversified learning and teaching resources, providing training for teachers, as well as organising activities and exchange programmes for students, schools are enabled to cultivate students' sense of belonging towards the

country within and outside the classroom, help students acquire an understanding of our country and a sense of national identity so that they will be concerned about society, the nation and the world, and become citizens who are responsible, appreciative of Chinese culture and committed to society and the country.

Our reply to the questions raised by the Hon Leung Che-cheung is as follows:

(1) Different subjects in primary and secondary schools, such as General Studies for the primary level, Life and Society, Chinese History, History and Geography for the secondary level contain curriculum content illustrating the development of our country, which enables students to deepen their understanding of the national conditions and the status of Hong Kong as an inseparable part of China and enhances their sense of belonging to the nation. To strengthen Chinese History education, the EDB has offered Chinese History as an independent compulsory subject at the junior secondary level from the 2018/19 school year onwards. The revised Junior Secondary Chinese History subject curriculum has been implemented progressively starting from Secondary One in the 2020/21 school year, enabling all students to learn Chinese history and culture holistically and systematically. To further cultivate the atmosphere for learning Chinese history and culture, the EDB distributed complimentary copies of the book series "Take a Spark, Pass it on: The First Territory-wide Primary Schools Quiz Competition on Chinese History and Culture" (Chinese version only) to all primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong (two sets for each primary school; one set for each secondary school and special school) in March this year. The series can serve not only as one of the reference reading materials for the competition "Take a Spark, Pass it on: The First Territory-wide Primary Schools Quiz Competition on Chinese History and Culture" held from April to July this year, but also as support materials for promoting Chinese history and culture education. This arrangement was welcomed by the education sector.

The EDB continues organising training programmes, workshops, seminars, online self-learning courses and experience-sharing sessions to enable teachers and school leaders to have a better understanding of how to promote Constitution and Basic Law education, national education and national security education through various subjects, learning activities, adoption of learning and teaching resources as well as effective, diversified teaching strategies. The EDB also continues updating/enriching the learning and teaching resources and organising life-wide learning activities (including exchange activities for teachers and students to the Mainland) to let them have a comprehensive understanding of the country's history, culture and development in various aspects, and facilitate students' correct understanding of the Constitution, the Basic Law and the "one country, two systems" concept, as well as strengthen their understanding of the rule of law and national conditions, thereby strengthening their sense of national identity.

As the National Security Law has come into effect, the EDB has issued EDB Circular No. 3/2021 "National Security: Maintaining a Safe Learning Environment Nurturing Good Citizens", EDB Circular No. 2/2021 "National Security Education in School Curriculum – Implementation Mode and Learning

and Teaching Resources" and EDB Circular No. 4/2021 "National Security Education in School Curriculum – Curriculum Documents" to provide schools with guidelines on school administration and education in relation to the implementation of the National Security Law, and inform schools about matters relating to the implementation mode of national security education as well as the relevant learning and teaching resources. These guidelines aim to support schools in implementing related measures and discharging their responsibility of maintaining a safe and orderly learning environment in schools, and facilitate schools' coordination and planning in promoting national security education within and beyond the classroom through various learning activities in different subjects.

The EDB will continue to adopt the aforesaid "multi-pronged and co-ordinated" approach in supporting schools' promotion of national security education within and beyond the classroom via individual subjects, cross-curricular topics in moral and civic education, as well as organising life-wide learning activities. Through these means, schools can nurture students into good citizens who have a strong sense of nationhood and national identity, are aware of their common responsibilities to safeguard national security, show respect for the rule of law, and abide by the law.

(2) and (3) The EDB's various policies, including curriculum, learning and teaching and student support cannot be implemented in schools without the concerted efforts of the school management and teachers. In addition to the professional accountability for the quality of teaching, teachers demonstrate their professionalism through teaching in line with the curriculum, selection and adaptation of teaching materials, as well as catering for student diversity with the application of appropriate teaching methodology. As "National Identity" is an education goal and one of the priority values to be cultivated among students, teachers have the responsibility to implement it both within and outside the classroom.

Incorporated Management Committees/School Management Committees have the responsibility to manage schools. There are both empowerment and accountability in school-based management. For the benefits of students, the school management has the responsibility to understand and monitor teachers' teaching quality and remind teachers that they should not promote in class or incorporate into teaching/learning materials content or information that is biased/unsubstantiated/inconsistent with curriculum aims and objectives, or else they are in breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable. As the employers of teachers, Incorporated Management Committees/School Management Committees have the responsibility to establish a fair and open appraisal system to evaluate teachers' performance in accordance with the mutually accepted indicators, so as to promote teachers' professional development and ensure the quality of school education.

EDB officers have always been seeking to understand and monitor the quality of learning and teaching of schools through inspections and curriculum development visits. During inspections, through scrutinising the teaching materials and samples of students' assignments, observing lessons and relevant learning and teaching activities as well as discussing with school personnel, inspectors get to understand and evaluate the

implementation of the school curriculum. Inspectors will, according to schools' performance in learning and teaching, provide concrete professional advice to schools.