

LCQ17: Values education on national identity

Following is a question by the Hon Tang Fei and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (April 6):

Question:

There are comments pointing out that the "anti-national education" incident, the illegal "Occupy Central" Movement and the illegal incidents of serious violence that took place in Hong Kong in the past all involved the participation of a large number of young students, reflecting that there was a serious problem with values education in Hong Kong. With the further implementation of "patriots administering Hong Kong" in Hong Kong, the Education Bureau (EDB) has introduced the Values Education Curriculum Framework, proposing to nurture in students 10 values, including "national identity", and encouraging schools to implement national education to help students learn about the country's Constitution, the Basic Law and the National Security Law for Hong Kong, etc. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the specific measures adopted by the EDB for changing the situation where national education cannot be fully rolled out in schools in the past; how it ensures that such measures are effective in reversing the seriously distorted values of students;

(2) whether the EDB has considered consolidating the learning elements relating to national education currently embedded in different subjects and teaching them as an independent subject, so as to resolve the problem of "fragmentation" of national education, thereby enabling students to receive national education in a more systematic manner and foster a stronger value of national identity; and

(3) how the EDB will further enhance national education, including whether it will design syllabuses and teaching contents that cater for the characteristics of students of different age groups, so as to elevate students' learning interest and sense of national identity?

Reply:

President,

Apart from school education, cultivating young people's positive values including respect for Chinese culture, national awareness and sense of belonging to the country also requires public education, family education, media education, as well as a patriotic atmosphere in society. A wide range of aspects is covered, including accurate understanding of our country's

history and development, constitutional education on the Constitution and the Basic Law (BL), national security education (NSE), and media and information literacy to differentiate true information from false. Therefore, it is important that different stakeholders in our society should understand the complexity of the deviant values and behaviours displayed by some students, so that we can unite our efforts to reverse the situation. Broadly speaking, various bureaux and departments of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government share the responsibility of promoting national education. In the school aspect, fostering students' sense of national identity has been a key learning goal of primary and secondary education in Hong Kong. Teaching by words and examples is important in values education. The influence of the words and deeds of teachers and parents should not be underestimated in shaping their children's values during their growing years.

Our consolidated reply to the Hon Tang Fei's question on school education is as follows:

(1) to (3) National education is an important component of values education in schools. It covers such areas as education on our country's development, Chinese history education, the Constitution and the BL, as well as NSE, which are closely interrelated. National education is integral to our school curriculum, and it is the responsibility of schools to implement it. With a "multi-pronged and co-ordinated" approach, the Education Bureau (EDB) has been adopting diversified and specific measures, including providing curriculum guides, developing learning and teaching resources, offering training for teachers, and organising life-wide learning activities for students (e.g. Mainland exchange programmes for teachers and students) to support schools in promoting national education on all fronts. These efforts, together with holistic and systematic planning and promotion, enable schools to fully implement national education within and beyond the classroom, which helps increase teachers' and students' understanding of the country's development and foster their sense of national identity, national security awareness and positive values including law-abidingness and sense of responsibility.

Curriculum Guides

In 2021, the EDB launched the Values Education Curriculum Framework (Pilot Version), making it clear that it is necessary to nurture in students national awareness from an early age, helping them develop an accurate understanding of Chinese history, appreciate Chinese culture and traditional values, respect the national symbols and signs (including the national flag, the national emblem and the national anthem), and understand the importance of the Constitution, the BL and national security, so as to cultivate a sense of national identity among students and help them understand their responsibility to protect our country as Chinese nationals. The Framework also states that relevant learning elements are included in the key learning areas, relevant subjects, values education curriculum and life-wide learning activities, and provides specific examples for schools' reference to facilitate their planning of national education for students in a holistic and systematic manner.

In General Studies for primary schools, "National Identity and Chinese Culture" is one of the six learning strands, which helps students understand Chinese history, our nation and culture as well as the national development from an early age. As for secondary schools, the EDB has implemented the new junior secondary Chinese History curriculum, starting with Secondary 1 from the 2020/21 school year. The new curriculum, which has been implemented in Secondary 2 from the 2021/22 school year, enables students to learn about our country's history and development in a holistic and systematic manner. In parallel, learning contents on Chinese culture and Chinese geography will be continuously enriched under subjects like Chinese Language and Geography. The senior secondary Citizenship and Social Development (CS) has been implemented starting from Secondary 4 in the 2021/22 school year. The content of the CS curriculum is closely related to our country's development, enabling students to develop a comprehensive and accurate understanding of topics relating to our country's development, the Constitution, the BL and national security, thereby cultivating their sense of national identity.

In support of the implementation of NSE, a supplement on national security is incorporated into the existing standalone module on the "Constitution and the BL" at the junior secondary level. To facilitate the holistic planning of and whole-school involvement in promoting NSE in schools, the EDB issued the Curriculum Framework of National Security Education in Hong Kong and respective subject curriculum frameworks on NSE in 2021 for primary and secondary schools' reference. From the above, it can be seen that schools can promote national education through relevant subjects and cross-subject curricula. The curriculum guides, including curriculum frameworks and teaching contents, are devised according to the characteristics and learning needs of students of different age groups. They provide reference for teachers to enhance students' interest in learning and their sense of national identity.

Learning and teaching resources

As an ongoing effort, the EDB has been providing a wider variety of learning and teaching resources on national education. These include "Teaching Resources on the Constitution of the People's Republic of China", online self-learning programmes on the BL, the audio picture book entitled "Let's Learn about National Security", online games, and the theme-based resources webpage of "Getting to Know the National Flag, the National Emblem, the National Anthem and the Regional Flag". Moreover, the newly developed "National Education One-stop Portal", which is a self-learning platform for students, incorporates themes such as the Constitution and the BL, NSE, national symbols and signs (including the national flag, the national emblem, the national anthem), Chinese history and culture, and museum learning to facilitate the use of relevant learning and teaching resources by teachers and students. Relevant learning and teaching materials are also provided for different subjects. Examples include the learning and teaching materials on Chinese classic literature and classic sayings for Chinese Language, resources webpage on the Constitution, the BL and NSE for General Studies for primary schools, a learning and teaching kit titled "China Goes Global" for

Life and Society, "Learning and Teaching Materials on Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area" for Geography, "Learning and Teaching Package on History of War in China" and "Discovering and Exploring Chinese Culture in Hong Kong – Field Trip Guide Book for Teachers and Students' Portfolio" for Chinese History, and the presentation slides and teaching exemplars on different topics for CS. All these have already been uploaded to the EDB's website to facilitate students' learning of national history and affairs.

Training for teachers

The EDB continues to arrange different modes of training activities for teachers, such as the Constitution and BL Knowledge Enrichment/Advanced Online Courses for teachers, Online Knowledge Enrichment Programmes on "Understanding Our Country" and "NSE", and workshops on national flag raising ceremony. Onsite Teacher Workshop on National Security Education, open for all teachers at all schools in the territory, was also held for all primary and secondary schools implementing the local curriculum. Starting from the 2020/21 school year, the core training programmes for newly-joined teachers, serving teachers and teachers aspiring for promotion have already covered contents pertinent to the Constitution, the BL and the National Security Law.

Life-wide learning activities

The EDB also organises diversified student activities on an ongoing basis to raise students' interest in learning about topics relating to our country, and enhance their sense of national identity. The activities include the Inheritance & Innovation: School of the Year Award for Promoting Chinese History and Culture, Territory-wide Primary Schools Quiz Competition on Chinese History and Culture, Chinese Classic Sayings campaign, Territory-wide Inter-school BL Competition, Online Quiz Competition on the Constitution Day, Slogan and Poster Design Competition on National Security, Online Quiz Competition on National Security, as well as BL Student Ambassadors Training Scheme, under which thematic seminars, visits, and workshops on national flag raising ceremony are arranged for student ambassadors. The response to these activities was overwhelming. In addition, the EDB has compiled the "National Education – Event Planning Calendar" to facilitate schools in organising school-based national education activities on important days. Through the funding schemes under the Quality Education Fund (QEF), schools may apply for additional funding to organise school-based activities for enhancing students' sense of national identity. In November 2021, the QEF implemented enhancement measures for publicly-funded primary and secondary schools (including special schools) to apply for additional funding of not exceeding \$300,000 to conduct pertinent project activities for about 24 months for further strengthening of measures in promotion of national education and NSE.

Administration and Education Guidelines

In addition, the EDB has provided schools with detailed administration and education guidelines on safeguarding national security and promoting NSE. Schools are required to submit annual reports and work plans every year to report the implementation situations of measures on safeguarding national

security and promoting NSE in their schools. The EDB continuously reviews the reports and plans submitted by schools, and monitors and provides support for implementation of relevant work through school visits and daily communication with schools. We will also hold sharing sessions to encourage professional sharing and experience exchanges among schools to enhance the effectiveness in planning and implementing measures to safeguard national security and promote NSE in schools.

All in all, the EDB has been stepping up the support to facilitate full implementation of national education in schools and the fostering of correct and positive values among students. The EDB reiterates that national education is a shared responsibility of all staff in schools and should be implemented in a holistic and integrated approach with participation of all school members. The EDB does not require schools to implement national education as an independent subject to avoid overlapping of learning contents in different subjects and giving out a wrong message that promoting national education is the sole responsibility of teachers of the subject concerned, which may discourage whole-school participation. At present, schools generally agree with the adoption of an integrated and holistic approach in the promotion of national education. Schools will also arrange diversified learning activities such as visits and exchange programmes, voluntary services and uniform groups to provide students with comprehensive and real-life learning experience to foster their positive values, attitudes and behaviours. Nevertheless, individual schools may choose to implement moral and national education as an independent subject under the current curriculum framework according to their school contexts. The EDB will share the successful experiences of these schools for other schools' consideration.

To learn about our country, it is essential for teachers and students to gain first-hand experience, and exchange activities to the Mainland are, therefore, indispensable and important. Upon the ease of the epidemic situation and resumption of quarantine-free travel, the EDB will continue to organise Mainland exchange programmes for students, covering diverse themes and different destinations, and subsidise those organised by schools to enable students to gain first-hand experience of our country's rapid developments in such aspects as history, culture, economy, education, science and technology from multiple perspectives, deepen what they have learnt in class and enhance their sense of national identity. Schools may also restart exchange activities for their teachers and with their sister schools in the Mainland.

The EDB will continuously strengthen its support to schools in promoting national education at system level. School visits and inspections will also be conducted to shed light on and support the implementation of related work in schools, and to offer feedback for improvement. However, the implementation of national education at school level relies on holistic planning, active promotion, effectiveness evaluation and continuous refinement by school sponsoring bodies and school management. There are both empowerment and accountability in school-based management. Schools may promote patriotic education in school in ways they see fit. In parallel, the school management has the responsibility to understand and monitor its

learning and teaching, the quality of the teaching materials used and the appropriateness of the student activity arrangements. The education sector in general acknowledges that teachers, as members of the teaching profession, should demonstrate professional accountability for the quality of teaching and be a role model for their students. From the above, it can be seen that national education does not only involve school education, but it also requires the consensus of all sectors, the creation of a conducive atmosphere and the concerted minds and efforts of different stakeholders to foster a strong sense of national identity among students.