

LCQ8: Enhancing students' sense of national identity

Following is a question by Ir the Hon Lee Chun-keung and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (January 19):

Question:

There are comments that by increasing students' exposure to Chinese culture, the Government can enable them to build a solid foundation of knowledge about the country from childhood, thereby enhancing their sense of national identity. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the new measures that the Education Bureau (EDB) has put in place to enhance students' interest in Chinese culture and their sense of national identity;

(2) given that children have very strong learning abilities even during their pre-primary years, whether the EDB will enrich the relevant pre-primary learning elements, including allowing pre-primary children to read more books with contents on Chinese fables as well as traditional Chinese culture and arts, and allowing them to listen to more Chinese nursery rhymes and music, so as to nurture their interest in Chinese culture from childhood; and

(3) as it is learnt that at present, the quintessence of Chinese culture such as paper cutting, Chinese painting and calligraphy is rarely taught in the curricula of primary and secondary schools, whether the EDB will encourage schools to organise more extra-curricular activities relating to Chinese arts and crafts, so as to deepen students' understanding of Chinese culture?

Reply:

President,

It is an important goal and objective of school education and the responsibility of schools to help students learn, understand and inherit the splendid Chinese culture, develop positive values and attitudes as well as cultivate in them a sense of nationhood and national identity. At present, the curricula of all key stages at the primary and secondary levels have already covered learning elements such as Chinese culture, national history and national identity. The Education Bureau (EDB) has adopted a "multi-pronged and co-ordinated" approach to support schools in developing students' interests in Chinese culture and cultivate their sense of national identity through continuously updating curriculum guides, organising diversified student activities, providing training courses for teachers, organising Mainland exchange programmes, as well as developing learning and teaching resources, in order that teachers and students will have an all-round understanding of the development of our country and Chinese culture, and

become a new generation with an affection for Hong Kong, a sense of national identity and an international perspective.

Our reply to Ir the Hon Lee Chun-keung's question is as follows:

(1) and (3) The EDB introduced the Values Education Curriculum Framework (Pilot Version) (the Framework) in 2021, which emphasises that schools should nurture among students a sense of belonging towards our country from an early age, help them develop a correct 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 and the Basic Law through learning both inside and outside the classroom, so as to cultivate in students a sense of national identity and foster the development of positive values and attitudes. The Framework also provides schools with guidelines and examples as reference for holistic planning. Through relevant subjects and life-wide learning activities, students can learn Chinese history and culture in a holistic and systematic manner.

The current school curriculum covers learning elements of Chinese culture and national identity. One of the curriculum aims of Chinese Language Education is "to identify with Chinese culture and develop students' affections for their country and nationality". Meanwhile, it is necessary for primary and secondary school students to learn Chinese history. One of the learning strands of General Studies for primary schools is "National Identity and Chinese Culture", which covers Chinese culture and history. As for the junior secondary level, Chinese History has become an independent compulsory subject since the 2018/19 school year. The revised curriculum has been implemented progressively starting from Secondary One in the 2020/21 school year. In addition, senior secondary subject Citizenship and Social Development (CS) has replaced Liberal Studies starting from Secondary Four in the 2021/22 school year. The content of the CS curriculum is closely related to the national development, with a view to enabling students to have a comprehensive and accurate understanding of our country and developing their sense of national identity. Learning elements of Chinese culture are also incorporated in different subjects, for instance, in Physical Education, students will learn about Chinese folk dance and its traditional customs during dancing activities; in Music, they will listen to music pieces featuring Chinese culture, such as Chinese opera and folk songs; and in Visual Arts, the curriculum covers appreciation and making of Chinese art, such as calligraphy, ink painting and crafts, with a view to deepening students' appreciation for and recognition of Chinese culture and promoting cultural heritage.

The EDB continuously organises student competitions or activities to provide more opportunities for students to appreciate Chinese culture outside the classroom, so as to help them cultivate an interest in and understanding of Chinese culture. Starting from the 2020/21 school year, we have launched the "Chinese Classic Sayings" campaign, organised the "Quiz Competition on Chinese History and Culture" and the "Territory-wide Inter-school Basic Law Competition", set up the "School of the Year Award for Promoting Chinese History and Culture" as well as launched the "Chinese History Student Self-

learning Platform". In addition, the "National Education One-stop Portal" web-based resource platform, which covers the themes of the Constitution, the Basic Law and national security education, the national symbols, Chinese history and Chinese culture, and museum learning, has been set up.

The EDB has disbursed the recurrent Life-wide Learning Grant and Promotion of Reading Grant to subsidise schools to organise diversified experiential or reading activities on topics including Chinese culture. Schools will also organise activities both inside and outside the classroom, such as the Chinese Culture Week, as well as interest classes on chess, paper-cutting, Chinese painting and calligraphy, with a view to enhancing students' interest in and understanding of Chinese traditional art and culture. Since the 2017/18 school year, the EDB has provided about 100 000 exchange quotas every year, enabling students to gain first-hand experience of the developments of our country in such aspects as history and culture.

The EDB will continue to develop diversified learning and teaching resources, offer teacher training programmes and organise a wide range of activities for teachers and students to gain an all-round understanding the developments of our country and learn Chinese culture, while publicity work will also be stepped up to create a social atmosphere.

(2) Understanding of the Chinese culture and cultivating national identity in children has always been one of the learning objectives in the kindergarten education curriculum. The Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide revised in 2017 continues to list "having a basic understanding of the Chinese culture and their national identity" as one of the learning expectations for young children. In light of the developmental and learning characteristics of young children, kindergartens use real-life themes to incorporate learning elements of Chinese culture in integrated learning activities, such as storytelling, reading, role-playing, drawing, singing and dancing, with a view to helping them learn and experience Chinese culture. Kindergartens design a wide range of materials and learning activities with reference to the curriculum which enable children to learn about Chinese traditional festive customs, food, arts, architecture, morals and ethics through theme-based learning, daily life experiences, reading and parent-child activities. For instance, under the guidance of teachers, children get hands-on experience in the making of traditional Chinese opera masks, paper cutting works and ink paintings, and playing of traditional games such as gyroscope and Chinese shuttlecock as well as musical instruments like gongs and drums, small cymbals and Chinese woodblocks. Teachers also arrange music activities of Chinese music appreciation and singing, activities such as reading Chinese folktales with children, and encourage them to learn and practise virtues such as filial piety to parents, helping and caring for each other, as well as modesty and politeness in their daily life. Some schools inform parents of their emphasis on the teaching objective of introducing knowledge of our country and Chinese culture to young children through parents' meetings, school magazines, etc. There are also school activities like Chinese cultural trips for parents and children, Chinese costume day and Chinese traditional food making activities. With the concerted effort of parents and schools, children will be guided to build up their knowledge of and affection for our country and the traditional

culture from an early age, so as to pass on the heritage of Chinese culture.

Regarding the support for kindergartens, the EDB disburses the Promotion of Reading Grant for Kindergartens to all kindergartens joining the kindergarten education scheme. Recommended booklists on the theme "Chinese History and Culture" are provided for kindergartens to organise school-based reading activities. Furthermore, we have produced Educational Multimedia short videos on Chinese culture, developed different learning and teaching resources on an on-going basis, provided teachers with training programmes, to further support kindergartens in designing diversified integrated learning activities to promote values education and national education, help children learn about our country and Chinese culture, as well as cultivate in them a sense of national identity.