

Salute to all teachers in Hong Kong

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (September 10) expressed wholehearted respect to all teachers (including principals) in Hong Kong on the annual Teachers' Day.

A spokesman for the EDB said, "Though the 'Teacher Tribute 2020 – Teacher Respect Day Celebration and Commendation Ceremony' has been postponed to November 4 due to the COVID-19 epidemic, the EDB appeals to all students, parents and all sectors of the community to pay tribute to teachers on the Teachers' Day, and thank them for their selfless dedication, especially their great efforts and hard work in facilitating students to achieve the goal of 'suspending classes without suspending learning' for more than half a year."

He said, "In light of the evolving situation of COVID-19 since the beginning of this year, face-to-face classes have been suspended except for the short period of class resumption between end May and early July. Teachers have adopted various means (including the use of electronic platforms) to help students learn at home. The new learning and teaching mode has brought unprecedented challenges to teachers, and may have increased their workload. Yet at the same time, teachers have kept making new attempts and managed to overcome a lot of difficulties for the sake of students, demonstrating boundless creativity while exploring beyond their limits, leading to fruitful learning and teaching experiences."

"Due to the volatile development of the epidemic, different extents of e-learning, mixed with other modes for home learning, may become the new normal in teaching. The EDB would like to thank teachers for making efforts to keep on trying, exploring and implementing various flexible and innovative methods with a view to helping students achieve the goal of 'suspending classes without suspending learning'. We encourage schools to continue to make use of the teaching resources provided by the EDB and to combine resources within and outside schools to develop comprehensive learning and teaching strategies to meet the learning needs of students. Despite the stringent financial situation of the government amid the economic downturn, the EDB will review all available resources, including the Quality Education Fund, with a view to giving further support to schools and teachers for the implementation of e-learning, especially providing assistance to students with financial needs, to cope with the future challenges together."

The spokesman reiterated, "Education is the key to nurturing talents, the effectiveness of which hinges on the professionalism of teachers and principals. In this regard, the current-term HKSAR Government set up the Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers at the beginning of its establishment to conduct a review on the enhancement of teachers' professional development. Last year, the Task Force submitted a report to the EDB with all the recommendations accepted by the Government and progressively taken forward starting from the 2019/20 school year. Regarding the recommendation on rationalisation of the salaries for school heads and deputy

heads and the improvement of manpower at the middle management level in public sector primary schools, the support of the Panel on Education and the Establishment Subcommittee of the Legislative Council has been secured. The Government will submit the related recommendations to the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council very soon. It is hoped that these measures will be implemented as soon as possible to enhance the quality of primary school management and retain and attract talents for the purpose of achieving quality education."

Meanwhile, in order to enhance the professional growth of teachers, the EDB has taken steps to establish the Professional Ladder for teachers in Hong Kong, with professional competencies, professional values and conduct, and aspiration for self-advancement through self-reflection as the foundation for continuous self-improvement. Starting from the 2020/21 school year, the EDB will provide core training for newly-joined teachers, training programmes and resources for in-service teachers, and enhance training for teacher promotion.

The EDB hopes that it could continue to join hands with the education sector to create greater room for teachers and students to thrive with a view to enhancing the quality of education.