

SED on COVID-19 testing for teachers and new core subject

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, at a media session before attending the Chief Executive's Question and Answer Session in the Legislative Council today (February 4):

Reporter: First, some educators said it is not only their teachers who need to be tested regularly. So why are students not required to do so? It seems like pushing responsibility towards the school. How do you respond to that? And secondly, why is the Liberal Studies subject having such massive changes in this certain period of time?

Secretary for Education: On the first question, I must say that in the school set-up, the school management and the teachers must have a bigger responsibility than the students because they are there to provide the service, to provide the education, for the students. As I said, I think as a government we would like to ask every citizen to do the test as much as possible because this is one of the measures to prevent the spread of the pandemic. But for this particular measure or initiative that we are now proposing, it is just an option. We are just allowing those schools whose teachers are very willing to do the testing another option and an opportunity for them to have the whole school back to resume face-to-face lessons at the earliest opportunity. Of course, teachers, as the educators as well as the carers of students, have to look at the interests of the students. If they are willing, we would appreciate it very much that they are willing to do the test just to offer more protection to the students.

On the second question about the new subject renamed from Liberal Studies, if you look at the curriculum framework carefully, you will notice that actually the curriculum framework and the previous one are very, sort of – I would not say similar, but most of the topics are extracted from the previous one. Because what we are doing now is not creating a new subject. We are trying to consolidate the current Liberal Studies subject with some reductions in content, because we want to give the teachers and also the students more space for development. For example, the students could make use of the time to study deeper in other subjects or to take another elective subject. So the whole idea, if you look at the consultation, the questionnaire that we sent out to the schools, we are talking about the four core subjects, we are talking about creating, through these reforms, more space for these students, to cater for their learning diversities. This is the objective of the whole exercise.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)