

Speech by CS at Student of the Year Awards 2023/24 Presentation Ceremony (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, at the Student of the Year Awards 2023/24 Presentation Ceremony today (July 6):

Catherine (Chief Executive Officer of the South China Morning Post, Ms Catherine So), Gabriel (Executive Director, Charities and Community of The Hong Kong Jockey Club, Dr Gabriel Leung), Tammy (Editor-in-Chief of the South China Morning Post, Ms Tammy Tam), Advisory Board members, judges, parents, principals, teachers, students, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It gives me great pleasure to join you all on this happy occasion – the presentation ceremony of the annual Student of the Year Awards.

Today, we celebrate the remarkable achievements of senior secondary school students throughout Hong Kong. In total, there are ten distinct award categories, covering academic performance, language, arts, sports, community service, and more.

I must first thank the Awards organiser and sponsor, the South China Morning Post and The Hong Kong Jockey Club respectively, for putting together this meaningful event year after year. Their far-reaching commitment to education – to the youth of Hong Kong – inspires us all.

New this year is the "Sustainability Advocate" category, showcasing strong commitment and leadership in advancing sustainability. Our future depends on sustainability, so I am glad to see it recognised in the Awards.

The Hong Kong SAR Government is committed to building a sustainable future for Hong Kong and co-operating with young people in doing so.

A good example is the Sustainable Development School Outreach Programme, as well as the Sustainable Development School Award Programme, launched by the Environment and Ecology Bureau this school year. The programmes offered seminars, workshops, field trips and ambassador training, where some 75 000 students from around 200 primary and secondary schools learnt the concept and importance of sustainable development.

Our Government is equally committed to nurturing a new generation of youth with an affection for the motherland and Hong Kong, with global perspectives, and with positive thinking. As you all know, the Government launched a holistic Youth Development Blueprint two years ago, with more than 160 initiatives to chart a clear pathway for different stakeholders in society to drive youth development.

And we continued to meet young people's needs, with nearly 60 new measures introduced last year. Those measures ranged from promoting patriotic education, strengthening vocational and professional training, to enhancing support for mental health and fostering youth engagement.

We will also organise the first-edition Youth Development Summit in August. Guest speakers, and youth groups, from Hong Kong, Mainland China, and overseas will gather in Hong Kong, exchanging views for mutual learning on issues of interest to young people.

I am therefore pleased to say that the theme of this year's Awards, "Empowering Collective Impact", couldn't be timelier. To provide a conducive environment for young people to grow and thrive, the collective efforts of the Government and all stakeholders are essential.

Ladies and gentlemen, your commitment to youth development is reassuring. I am talking about not just our soon-to-be announced student winners and runners-up, but also their parents who must be proud.

I am talking, too, about the principals, teachers, and many others who have – so well, so selflessly – guided our students towards success every step of the way.

My thanks, once again, to the South China Morning Post and The Hong Kong Jockey Club, as well as the expert judging panel, for their dedication to this year's Awards.

Together, collectively, we make a profound difference for our youth and for Hong Kong.

And my congratulations to all the award winners and finalists this year. I have every confidence that you will continue to build on your achievements in your education – and in your bright career ahead.

Ladies and gentlemen, I know you will all enjoy this very special day. You certainly deserve it.

On that note, I wish you all the best in the year to come. Thank you very much.

