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Subcommittee on Promoting Family Education

Meeting on 5 December 2023

**Background brief on the Government's policy initiatives in
promoting parent education**

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the Government's policy initiatives in promoting parent education, and summarizes the views and concerns expressed by Members on the subject since the Sixth Legislative Council ("LegCo").

Background

2. The 2017 Policy Address announced the establishment of a task force to review home-school co-operation and parent education, with the aim of avoiding the culture of excessive competition, so that children would grow up healthily and happily. At the invitation of the Education Bureau ("EDB"), the Education Commission set up the **Task Force on Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education** ("Task Force") in December 2017 to review the existing approach in promoting parent education and home-school co-operation, with a view to formulating the directions and strategies for fostering both.

3. The Task Force's report was submitted to EDB in April 2019,¹ which included **18 recommendations covering an array of short-, medium- and long-term measures** as set out in **Appendix 1**. In gist, the Task Force recommended that:

- (a) in the short term, the Administration should provide **more resources for** setting up Parent-Teacher Associations (“PTAs”) and **organizing school-based parent education activities, develop a curriculum framework** on parent education and **launch** a territory-wide “**Positive Parent Campaign**”;
- (b) in the medium term, tertiary institutions (“TEIs”) and/or non-governmental organizations (“NGOs”) should be commissioned to **provide parent education courses**, talks and/or workshops and to conduct relevant researches; and
- (c) in the long term, parent education courses should be **specifically designed** and provided for **parents with different family status** and family background, and more **workplace parent education courses** should be organized.

4. According to **EDB**, it has **fully accepted the Task Force's recommendations** and relevant measures have been taken forward and implemented progressively. Currently, EDB's strategies for promoting parent education are focused on kindergartens (“KGs”), primary and secondary schools (including special schools) as the platform for promotion of home-school co-operation and development of home-school partnership. At the school level, EDB encourages schools to implement parent education programmes via their PTAs and other channels. At the community level, EDB provides resources to Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations (“FPTAs”) in the 18 districts and NGOs for organizing various parent education programmes or activities.

Members' views and concerns

5. The main views and concerns expressed by Members on the Government's policy initiatives in promoting parent education since the Sixth LegCo are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

¹ The Task Force's report is accessible from the following hyperlink: https://www.e-c.edu.hk/doc/en/publications_and_related_documents/education_reports/Report_TF%20on%20HSC_en.pdf

Parent education activities

6. Members took the view that while EDB and PTAs had organized activities to promote parent education, **many working parents were too busy to take part in these activities**. Members also expressed **concern about the effectiveness of these activities**, as well as how these activities could realize the recommendations of the Task Force. Members suggested that interpretation service should be arranged for parents of non-Chinese speaking students during the activities.

7. The Administration advised that EDB had all along been organizing parent education talks and activities to cater for parents' needs. To ensure the quality of these activities, EDB would regularly review the effectiveness of the activities it organized, and the organizers of government-funded parent education activities were also required to submit evaluation reports to EDB after the approved activities had been carried out. The Administration also advised that a growing number of private companies were aware of the importance of parent education and organized parent education activities for their staff.

Positive parent education

8. Members expressed concern that more and more young parents had displayed negative emotions and anxiety in parent-child and parent-teacher relationships. In this connection, Members suggested that EDB should **strengthen teachers' training to enhance teachers' capabilities** to help weaken parents' negative thinking and further **promote positive parent education** in areas covering empathy, appreciation, gratefulness, emotional management and positive parenting.

9. The Administration advised that EDB had commissioned a post-secondary institution to provide 12-hour short training courses annually for teachers at KGs, primary and secondary schools. Positive feedback had been received from the participating teachers. In addition, EDB had **launched the Curriculum Framework on Parent Education (Kindergarten) in September 2021** to facilitate structured delivery of parent education.²

² The Curriculum Framework on Parent Education (Kindergarten) is accessible from the following hyperlink: https://www.parent.edu.hk/docs/default-source/kg-curriculum-framework-on-parent-education/20230306-version/curriculum_framework_on_parent_education_kg_eng.pdf?sfvrsn=edd551e_2

Strategies for promoting parent education

10. Members expressed concern that the recommendations of the Task Force, which were made in April 2019, had not been able to take into account the changing social circumstances thereafter. To keep abreast of the recent developments, Members suggested that **elements of national and national security education should be incorporated into the strategies for promoting parent education**, and Mainland visits should be conducted for parents and their children to enhance their understanding of the country.

11. The Administration advised that it would take into account the latest social development, such as the pandemic and the enactment of National Security Law, when devising measures on promoting parent education. To facilitate parents' understanding of national affairs, FPTAs had organized activities on memorable days of significant historical events such as Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Establishment Day.

12. Members also considered that heavy homework and numerous extra-curricular activities were barriers to parent-child communication, and were not conducive to promoting parent education. Members suggested that EDB should **create a joyful learning environment for students (in particular at KG level) and discourage the culture of excessive competition** with a view to allowing more time for parents to support their children's effective learning and healthy development. Members also considered it necessary to put in place measures to effectively promote parent education, such as **commencing parent education as early as the baby was born**, exploring measures to encourage and **facilitate busy working parents' participation in PTA activities**, and organizing home-school co-operation and parent education activities through **collaboration among bureaux and departments ("B/Ds")** to ensure coherence or continuity. Members also suggested that EDB could incorporate elements of the Youth Development Blueprint formulated by the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau into the strategies for promoting parent education.

13. The Administration advised that one of the aims of the Task Force was to explore measures to discourage the culture of excessive competition so that children could grow up healthily and happily, and EDB would continue its effort in this direction. To effectively promote parent education, EDB had set up a parent education **website "Smart Parent Net"** to provide parents with useful online information, such as video clips on parenting and parent education programmes/activities organized by different

B/Ds and tertiary institutions. The Administration also advised that EDB would continue to collaborate with TEIs and NGOs to develop more e-learning parent education courses to facilitate self-learning by parents. EDB would also continue to work closely with the relevant B/Ds, NGOs and tertiary institutions in promoting parent education.

Recent developments

14. The **Curriculum Framework on Parent Education (Primary School) was launched in December 2022.**³ In February 2023, EDB announced that the One-off Grant on Parent Education of \$200,000 would be provided in the 2022-2023 school year for each publicly-funded primary school and primary schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme to help schools embark on structured school-based parent education programmes or activities. The 2023 Policy Address announced that **within 2024, the Curriculum Framework on Parent Education (Secondary School) would be launched** and a one-off grant of \$200,000 would be provided to each publicly-funded secondary school to support schools to embark on structured school-based parent education programmes or activities.

15. The Administration will brief members on issues relating to the Government's work in promoting parent education at the meeting of the Subcommittee on Promoting Family Education on 5 December 2023.

Relevant papers

16. A list of relevant papers on the LegCo Website is in **Appendix 2**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
29 November 2023

³ The Curriculum Framework on Parent Education (Primary School) is accessible from the following hyperlink: [https://www.parent.edu.hk/docs/default-source/curriculum-framework-on-parent-education-\(primary-school\)/20230203version/curriculum-framework_pri_eng.pdf?sfvrsn=4fc087cf_2](https://www.parent.edu.hk/docs/default-source/curriculum-framework-on-parent-education-(primary-school)/20230203version/curriculum-framework_pri_eng.pdf?sfvrsn=4fc087cf_2)

**The 18 recommendations made by the
Task Force on Home-school Co-operation and Parent Education**

Short-term measures

1. The Education Bureau (“EDB”) should **provide more resources to** increase the amount of Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities for schools and **Parent-Teacher Associations** (“PTAs”).
2. EDB should **increase the number of activities** which **Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations** (“FPTAs”) could apply for Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities, and set up a new type of subsidy for FPTAs to organize joint-district parent education activities.
3. The amount of Set-up Grant and Annual Grant for PTAs of kindergartens (“KGs”) should be increased to **encourage more KGs to set up a PTA**.
4. Publicity and education should be stepped up to **help KGs and their school sponsoring bodies** better understand the procedures and matters pertaining to the **setting up of PTAs**.
5. Tertiary institutions (“TEIs”) or non-governmental organizations (“NGOs”) should be commissioned by EDB to **develop a curriculum framework** or a set of curriculum guidelines **on parent education**.
6. **Short training courses for teachers** should be provided to enhance their skills in promoting home-school co-operation and parent education, as well as skills in relation to mediation and home-school communication.
7. EDB’s parent education **website “Smart Parent Net”** should be **developed to become a more popular** parent education learning **platform**.
8. A **territory-wide “Positive Parent Campaign”** should be launched and promoted through different platforms. EDB should also produce videos and articles on the theme of “Positive Parent Campaign”.
9. EDB should **provide funding for KGs and public sector schools** to implement school-based activities under “Positive Parent Campaign”.
10. NGOs should be commissioned to **conduct out-reaching promotion activities** such as photo-taking, games and arts activities in places including public housing estates, shopping malls and markets so as to

reach more parents of different backgrounds for promoting the “Positive Parent Campaign”.

Medium-term measures

11. TEIs or NGOs should be commissioned by EDB to **design and organize structured and evidence-based parent education courses** in accordance with the curriculum framework or guidelines on parent education developed by the Government, whose targets include parents in general, grandparents, single parents, and parents of students with special educational needs (“SEN”), non-Chinese speaking students (“NCS”), newly arrived and non-attendance students.
12. TEIs should be encouraged or commissioned to **conduct various researches on** home-school co-operation and **parent education**.
13. NGOs should be commissioned to **provide free parent talks or workshops** on various topics regularly in different regions, whose targets include parents in general, grandparents, single parents, and parents of SEN, NCS, newly arrived and non-attendance students.
14. TEIs or NGOs should be commissioned to **develop and provide e-learning parent education courses** to enable self-learning through computers or mobile phones.

Long-term measures

15. **Parent education courses specifically developed for fathers, mothers, grandparents and single parents** should be optimized with a view to covering members of different family status and meeting their needs in nurturing children.
16. TEIs or NGOs should be commissioned by EDB to optimize **tailor-made parent education for parents of SEN, NCS, newly arrived and non-attendance students**, etc.
17. TEIs or NGOs should be commissioned by EDB to **design and provide workplace parent education courses** specially for working parents.
18. **Companies should be encouraged to join workplace parent education courses** through media such as Announcements of Public Interest. Opportunities to co-operate with other organizations which promote programmes on corporate social responsibility could also be explored.

Appendix 2

Relevant papers on the Government's policy initiatives in promoting parent education

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Education	26 June 2017	Agenda Item V: Measures to promote parent education Minutes
	2 July 2021	Agenda Item V: Promote home-school co-operation and parent education Minutes
	7 October 2022	Agenda Item IV: Home-school co-operation and parent education Minutes

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
29 November 2023