



12 January 2005

Response to the “Reforming the Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education”

1. Introduction

- A. The Hong Kong Subsidized Secondary Schools Council (the Council) has a membership of 354 schools, representing about 70% of all secondary schools in Hong Kong. All member schools are represented by their principals.
- B. The views presented in this paper are based on what the Executive Committee of the Council has gathered from member schools by a survey.
- C. The survey was carried out in December 2004, with 253 returns (71.4%) from 354 member schools.

2. Majority Views

A. Liberal Studies (LS)

- i. More than 50% agreed that LS should consist of two parts: compulsory and elective, with the former to be included as a subject in the public examination and the latter to be assessed by school-based assessment (SBA) but not to be included in the public examination.
- ii. More than 50% agreed that the compulsory part should be graded as “outstanding”, “satisfactory” and “unsatisfactory” while the elective part by SBA as “satisfactory” and “unsatisfactory” only.
- iii. Slightly less than 50% agreed that schools should submit students’ SBA marks to HKEAA once a year for compilation of the overall rank order of the pupils in each school. The passing percentage of SBA part would be equivalent to that of the external/publicly examined part.
- iv. About 70% agreed the teaching time allocated to LS should be the same as an elective subject (X) i.e. 8-12%, whilst English and Chinese Languages should be 12-15% each, and Mathematics 10-15%.
- v. More than 40% opposed the model of 9+6 units. Only about 33 % supported it.
- vi. Nearly 80% agreed that the class size of LS should be half of a normal class. Cash grants should be given to schools for employment of teachers to support split class teaching and for subject development.
- vii. Over 90% agreed that sufficient teacher training together with cash grants for employment of supply teachers should be provided to schools starting from the year 2005-06.
- viii. Over 70% agreed that provision of teacher training hours for LS should be 90 or more,

depending on the needs of individual teachers.

- ix. If the conditions (Para. i-viii) could be completely met, more than 50% agreed that LS could be accepted as one of the core subjects and its compulsory part be included as a subject in the public examination.
- x. From members' individual views expressed in the survey, 21 schools suggested that the additional teachers entitled to split class teaching of LS should be included in the normal staff establishment calculation.

B. Elective Subjects (X)

- i. About 70% intended to offer 2 or 3 elective subjects depending on pupils' abilities.
- ii. Nearly 60% would consider offering Career Oriented Curriculum (COC) as an elective.

C. Assessment

- i. Nearly 60% agreed with the introduction of a "standards-referenced" system with five clearly identifiable levels of performance in the public examination.
- ii. About 80% stated that SBA need not be applied to ALL subjects and SBA might be spread over SS2 and SS3.
- iii. Over 65% preferred the weighting of SBA to be 20-30%.

3. Supporting Measures

- A. Under the condition that no alternatives other than Mode A and Mode B were offered by the EMB, 87% opted for mode A (1.7 /1.9 ratio), assuming that there is no change in the number of junior and senior classes.
- B. About 66% stated that there would be surplus teachers in their schools as a result of the proposed class-teacher ratio (Mode A), of which 49 schools indicated that there would be 4 or more surplus teachers in their schools.
- C. Over 90% would prefer a toleration period of five or more years for surplus teachers starting from the year of implementation.
- D. More than 90% agreed that an Early Retirement Scheme would be a good suggestion to solve the problem of teacher redundancy

4. Overall

- A. Slightly more than 60% agreed that the university admission criteria should be 4 core subjects and ONE elective only.
- B. Almost 50% preferred the date of implementation of the new Senior Secondary Education Structure be 2008 provided all the resources and suggestions proposed are granted. About 40% opted for 2009 under the same conditions.
- C. About 60% indicated that the reform of structure and curriculum should be implemented simultaneously to avoid creating a long and unstable transition period.

5. Concluding Remarks

- A. We support the “Reform of 3+3+4”.
- B. This Reform is an investment for the future. It has profound effects on the generations to come. Financial restraints should not come first in our consideration. All necessary resources should be provided to ensure the success of the Reform together with adequate supporting measures in place.
- C. Teacher redundancy arising from the reform of the academic structure “3+3+4” is unacceptable. To make the reform a success, support and efforts of schools are essential. Therefore, the Government should take all possible measures to help schools solve the problem.