

Education and Manpower Bureau

I. Education

In the past year, we have been working on 86 pledges, of which :

- we have completed 35;
- we are on schedule on 43;
- two are under review;
- we are taking active measures to speed up the progress on one which is behind schedule; and
- we are pressing ahead with five on-going commitments.

The following sets out the detailed report for each main programme area.

Kindergarten Education

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
Action Completed		
1997	1. To advance the comprehensive review of the Kindergarten Subsidy Scheme (KSS) to the 1997-1998 school year, i.e., one year ahead of the original schedule, to take stock of how well the Scheme has been operating since its introduction in September 1995. In the 1998-1999 school year, to introduce improvements to the KSS to provide incentives to encourage kindergartens to employ more trained teachers. To deploy about \$35 million to enhance the KSS.	Improvements to the KSS have been introduced starting from the 1998-1999 school year. The basis for calculating the rate of subsidy has been changed from the number of pupils to the number of classes. To encourage kindergartens to employ more Qualified Kindergarten Teachers (QKTs), an enhanced rate of subsidy is provided to those employing a higher percentage of QKTs than the stipulated government requirement. The full-year cost for the enhanced scheme will rise from \$106 million in the 1998-1999 school year to \$155 million in the 2001-2002 school year.

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| 1996 | 2. | To harmonise training for kindergarten teachers and child care workers in 1996. | The basic training programme for kindergarten teachers and child care workers has been harmonised. |
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Action in Progress : On Schedule

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| 1997 | 3. | To require : | |
| | – | at least 50% of teachers in each kindergarten to be QKTs by September 1999; | Kindergartens were informed of the requirements in January 1998. A total of 1 950 QKT training places will be provided by the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) in the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years to ensure an adequate supply of QKTs. |
| | – | at least 60% QKTs in each kindergarten by September 2000; and | |
| | – | by September 2004, all newly recruited kindergarten principals to have completed the Certificate in Kindergarten Education (CKE) Course. | Kindergartens were informed of the requirements in April 1998. 173 teachers have completed the CKE Course. Some 80 teachers will complete the course by September 1999. HKIEd will provide another 390 training places between the 1998-1999 and 2000-2001 school years. |
| 1997 | 4. | To provide additional training for 660 existing kindergarten principals and teachers from 1998 to 2002 to enable kindergartens to meet our requirements on teacher qualifications. | HKIEd will start providing the additional training places from the 1998-1999 school year. |

- 1997 5. To ask the Education Commission (EC) to begin before the end of 1997 a thorough review of the structure of pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education, addressing the age at which students should begin each stage of education, the length of the various stages of education, the curriculum of each stage and the interface between them.

The EC has formed working groups and sub-groups to examine issues related respectively to pre-primary and basic education, and post-Secondary 3 education.

Given the complexity of the issues involved, the review will be conducted in phases. To start with, the EC and its working groups and sub-groups will focus on the overall aims of education, taking into account the needs of the community and future changes.

A series of focus group discussions and consultative sessions with relevant education-related executive and advisory bodies will be held in the coming months. The education community and the public will also be consulted in the course of the review.

Action in Progress : Under Review

- 1996 6. To require at least 40% of teachers in each kindergarten to complete the QKT Courses by September 1997.

Enough QKTs have been trained to meet the 40% requirement but they are unevenly distributed in kindergartens. HKIED has agreed to give priority in the allocation of training places to teachers from kindergartens that have not met the requirement. We shall look into ways to ensure that kindergartens meet the target.

Primary & Secondary Education

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
Action Completed		
1997	1. To establish a \$5 billion Quality Education Fund (QEF) to promote quality and innovation in school education in Hong Kong.	The QEF was established in January 1998. Of the 2 367 applications received in the first call, 510 applications have been successful in obtaining grants totalling \$333 million. The second call for applications will be invited in late September 1998.
1997	2. To set up an IT Education Resource Centre (ITERC) to provide professional and technical support for teachers and schools.	The ITERC has commenced operation in September 1998.
1997	3. To declare “10 September” each year as “Teachers’ Day”.	The Chief Executive (CE) announced in his 1997 Policy Address that 10 September each year would be designated as “Teachers’ Day”. A series of activities, including a reception for teachers officiated by the CE, were organised to celebrate the first Teachers’ Day on 10 September 1998.
1996	4. To improve support services for language teaching and learning in schools by setting up a Language Resource Centre in the 1997-1998 school year and by using the electronic media and school computers to develop links between teachers and various institutions to enhance the exchange of teaching ideas and materials.	The Centre opened in August 1998 to provide support for teachers.

Action in Progress : On Schedule

- 1997 5. To ask the EC to begin before the end of 1997 a thorough review of the structure of pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education, addressing the age at which students should begin each stage of education, the length of the various stages of education, the curriculum of each stage and the interface between them.

The EC has formed working groups and sub-groups to examine issues related respectively to pre-primary and basic education, and post-Secondary 3 education.

Given the complexity of the issues involved, the review will be conducted in phases. To start with, the EC and its working groups and sub-groups will focus on the overall aims of education, taking into account the needs of the community and future changes.

A series of focus group discussions and consultative sessions with relevant education-related executive and advisory bodies will be held in the coming months. The education community and the public will also be consulted in the course of the review.

- 1997 6. To improve the quality of education by implementing in 1998 the recommendations of Education Commission Report No. 7 (ECR 7).

The spirit of ECR7 is to promote school-based management and quality assurance. To this end :

- steps are being taken to encourage all schools to implement school-based management by year 2000. Seminars, training courses, experience-sharing sessions and reference materials on school-based management have been organised and developed for all schools. Consultative sessions have been held for school managers, principals and teachers to solicit their views on implementation. Schools will be required to submit their implementation plans to the Education Department (ED) by February 1999, with a view to implementing the key elements of school-based management by year 2000;
- whole-school inspections have been conducted in 26 schools, including primary, secondary and special schools. More schools will be inspected in the coming school year.

- 1997 7. To set up an award scheme for outstanding performance by schools and teachers under the QEF.

A consultation document containing proposals on the award schemes was issued in July 1998 to seek comments from the education sector and teaching profession. The consultation will be completed in September 1998 and the schemes will be formally introduced in 1998-1999.

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| 1997 | 8. | To formulate in 1998 a five-year strategy on IT education. | A proposed five-year strategy was put out for a two-month consultation, which ended in August 1998. We will finalise the strategy and formulate an implementation plan, in the light of comments received, before the end of 1998. |
| 1997 | 9. | To enhance the provision of IT facilities in public sector schools. On average, each primary school is to have 40 and each secondary school to have 82 multi-media computers. | <p>Primary schools are being provided with 15 computers each in accordance with their readiness. Delivery is expected to be completed by early 1999. 12 500 computers had been delivered to secondary schools by August 1998 to upgrade the facilities in their computer rooms.</p> <p>The procurement arrangements for the remaining 43 800 computers are being finalised with a view to giving schools more flexibility. In parallel, site preparation works are being carried out at schools. We plan to deliver the remaining computers to schools by mid-2000.</p> |
| 1997 | 10. | To enhance training to over 30 000 teachers in IT use. | A tender for basic IT training for primary school teachers has been awarded. Training courses will be conducted in the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years for 30 000 teachers. We are exploring ways to allow schools to have more flexibility in acquiring IT training for their teachers. |
| 1997 | 11. | To procure and develop new software to support teaching. | Schools have been provided with a recurrent grant to purchase educational software from the 1998-1999 school year onwards. The ITERC will develop plans to acquire, develop and promote the use of educational software. It will set up a software library in November 1998. |

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| 1997 | 12. | To select ten primary and ten secondary schools to take part in an IT Pilot Scheme. | Ten primary and ten secondary schools have been given the resources and flexibility to implement their own IT plans in the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years. |
| 1997 | 13. | To connect all schools to the Internet. | Secondary schools have all been provided with access to the Internet. Primary schools will be provided with Internet access when computers are delivered to them. |
| 1997 | 14. | To plan for an education-specific Intranet to facilitate exchange of ideas and sharing of information within the school sector. | Preparations are underway for commissioning a consultancy on the development of an education-specific Intranet. |
| 1997 | 15. | To have teaching in at least 25% of the curriculum supported through IT within five years. | The Curriculum Development Council (CDC) will set out a workplan for the review of syllabuses. In parallel, the ED has set up working groups to develop IT learning targets for students and to facilitate the development of IT-based teaching and learning resources. |
| 1997 | 16. | To promote the professionalism of teachers by setting language benchmarks for all teachers in 1998-1999; require all new teachers to meet the benchmarks before they join the profession in 2000, and provide training for in-service language teachers so that by 2005, all teachers will be able to reach the benchmarks. | Tentative benchmarks have been developed for English teachers in lower secondary forms, Putonghua teachers and teachers using Chinese as the medium of instruction in primary schools. A pilot exercise to finalise these benchmarks is making good progress. Benchmarks will be developed for teachers at other levels. |
| 1997 | 17. | To set up a General Teaching Council by 1999. Preparatory work has started and the necessary legislation will be introduced in 1998. | Public consultation will be conducted around the fourth quarter of 1998. After public consultation, the relevant legislation will be introduced into the Legislative Council with a view to setting up the Council by 1999. |

- 1997 18. To ask the University Grants Committee (UGC) to study the means needed to achieve the target that all new teachers be degree-holders and professionally trained.

The UGC and the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications have submitted their respective reports on the Review of Teacher Education. The Government has decided to start upgrading the sub-degree teacher training places at the HKIED to degree or above level in 1999-2000.

- 1997 19. To call on international expertise and best practices to review and streamline the existing structure of executive and advisory bodies on the education front.

The Government issued on 6 May 1998 the Consultation Document on the Review of Education-related Executive and Advisory Bodies for a three-week consultation period which ended on 27 May 1998. In the light of public feedback received during consultation, the Government announced on 15 July 1998 the final views on how the operation of the present system of education-related executive and advisory bodies can be improved.

The Government appointed a consulting firm to conduct a review of the ED in December 1997. This has been completed. The consultants' recommendations, and the Administration's initial response were issued on 20 July 1998 for a three-month public consultation period. On the basis of the views received, the Government will take a final view and set up a dedicated team within the ED to formulate the implementation details. The Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) will also set up an appropriate institutional framework within the Bureau to monitor progress.

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| 1997 | 20. | To review the policy on private schools in 1998 to encourage the development of a strong private school sector and to rationalise government assistance to private schools. | We have conducted a review and consulted the major education advisory bodies on our proposals. We aim to take a final view on the way forward before the end of 1998. |
| 1997 | 21. | To review the curricula for various subjects to enhance learning about China, and to ensure schools give proper attention to science and mathematical knowledge. | <p>The ED and the CDC have been working on the following :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – reviewing the elements in the curricula of various subjects of learning about China with a view to strengthening these elements. The review will be completed in the 1998-1999 school year; – reviewing the current practices of arts and science streaming at Secondary 4 to 5 with a view to achieving a more balanced mix of subjects at these levels. The review will be completed in the 1998-1999 school year; and – conducting a holistic review of the mathematics curriculum with a view to enhancing continuity and coherence of the curriculum at various levels. The review will be completed by the 1999-2000 school year. |
| 1997 | 22. | To review the examination system with a view to taking account of students' performance at schools. | A consultancy study has been commissioned to review the examination system. The Hong Kong Examinations Authority has set up a Project Advisory Group, chaired by the Chairman of the Authority, to monitor progress. The consultants will submit a report on school-based assessment to the Authority by the end of 1998. |

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| 1997 | 23. | To provide Induction Programmes, English language programme, short-term preparatory courses and school-based support services to help newly arrived children integrate into the local school system. | In the 1997-1998 school year, a total of 786 classes of Induction Programme and 539 classes of English Extension Programme were organised for 10 770 and 6 985 newly arrived children respectively. 520 schools provided school-based support services to 12 301 newly arrived children. Two secondary and five primary schools also conducted short-term preparatory courses for some 300 newly arrived children. |
| 1996 | 24. | To extend the School Improvement Programme to cover all public sector schools in which improvement works are feasible by 2004. | Construction work for phase 3 schools is in progress. Feasibility studies for phase 4 schools will commence in October 1998. The programme has been extended to cover 40% of all public sector schools as at the end of the 1997-1998 school year. |
| 1996 | 25. | To consider the Board of Education's recommendations following a review of the nine-year compulsory education system and decide what changes, if any, should be made. | The Administration has considered the 77 sets of recommendations arising from the review report, and has decided to implement the 12 sets of recommendations which could be pursued independent of other policy reviews currently in progress. Another 59 sets of recommendations will be pursued in accordance with existing policies and programmes. The remaining six sets of recommendations will be further studied in the context of other policy reviews or developments. |
| 1996 | 26. | To improve teacher education by constructing a new campus in Tai Po for the HKIED to be commissioned in September 1997 at a cost of \$2.3 billion. | The HKIED became operational at its new Tai Po campus in the 1997-1998 academic year. The Institute is pressing ahead with the outstanding construction works. |

1995	27. To enhance in-service teacher training for primary and secondary teachers to ensure an adequate supply of trained teachers for the new Putonghua curriculum to be implemented from the 1998-1999 school year.	About 900 Putonghua teachers have received in-service training in the 1997-1998 school year. A further 1 900 teachers will be trained in the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years. There will be adequate supply of trained Putonghua teachers in the 1998-1999 school year.
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Good progress has been made with the following commitments in the past year. We will continue to work on them on an on-going basis.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>
1997	28. To provide resources for and promote educational exchange programmes to involve the community in the process of getting to know more about Chinese history and culture.
1996	29. To improve the quality of aided schools by inviting them to join the Performance Pledge Programme.
1996	30. To step up training for school principals to enhance their leadership and administrative skills.
1996	31. To adopt a comprehensive approach in curriculum development to ensure continuity across different levels of school education and to encourage an integrated approach to overcome rigid subject boundaries and segmentation of learning.

Primary Education

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
Action Completed		
1997	1. To provide in 1998 a travel subsidy for needy primary students who have to travel far to go to school.	The new Travel Subsidy Scheme began to accept applications in September 1998. Eligible pupils will begin to receive subsidy payments starting from December 1998. About 19 000 pupils are expected to benefit.

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| 1997 | 2. | To provide 421 additional clerical staff for 411 primary schools in 1998. | 421 additional clerical posts were provided to 411 primary schools from the 1998-1999 school year. |
| 1995 | 3. | To develop a new Putonghua curriculum for Primary 1 to 6 and introduce the new Putonghua curriculum for Primary 1 in the 1998-1999 school year. | A new Putonghua curriculum for Primary 1 to 6 has been developed. The new Putonghua curriculum for Primary 1 was implemented from the 1998-1999 school year. |
| 1995 | 4. | To provide a recurrent grant for primary schools which offer Putonghua from the 1998-1999 school year. | A recurrent grant of \$1,250 per school per annum is being provided from the 1998-1999 school year for primary schools offering Putonghua. |

Action in Progress : On Schedule

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| 1997 | 5. | To raise the percentage of government and aided primary school students in whole-day schools from the present 21% to 60% in the 2002-2003 school year. | Five out of the 73 new primary schools required have commenced/ will commence operation in the 1998-1999 school year. Through administrative measures, 23 uni/bi-sessional schools have commenced operation as 15 whole-day schools in September 1998. The percentage of government and aided primary school places in whole-day schools will rise to 25% in the 1998-1999 school year. |
| 1997 | 6. | To advance the timetable for having 35% of primary teaching posts as graduate posts from the target year of 2007 to 2001 by providing about 1 380 graduate teacher posts a year from the 1998-1999 to 2001-2002 school year. | A total of 1 380 graduate posts will be provided in the 1998-1999 school year and the annual provision will be increased to 1 640 in the 1999-2000 to 2001-2002 school years. Together with the existing 1 015 graduate posts, around 12% of the teaching posts in primary schools will be graduate posts by the end of the 1998-1999 school year. |

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| 1997 | 7. | To study in 1998 the feasibility of replacing the Academic Aptitude Test for allocation of Secondary 1 places with a proposed Academic Ability Assessment (AAA), which aims at testing pupils' higher order thinking skills with test items based on the syllabuses of all subjects in the primary curriculum. | Prototypes on the proposed AAA designed by a research team from a local tertiary institution have been tested in sample schools in April and June 1998. The results of the tests are being analysed. |
| 1997 | 8. | To extend the service of the Central Curriculum Development Support Team to help primary schools with a large number of academically low achievers in 1998. | A pilot scheme on curriculum tailoring is being carried out in ten primary schools in the 1998-1999 school year. |
| 1997 | 9. | To start to provide in 1998 one additional Certificated Master/Mistress post for each whole-day primary school and each bi-sessional primary school with 12 classes or more by phases in the next four years to co-ordinate library service and to support the Chinese and English Extensive Reading Schemes. | In the 1998-1999 school year, 180 Certificated Master/Mistress posts were provided for government and aided primary schools to co-ordinate library service and to support the Chinese and English Extensive Reading Schemes. |
| 1997 | 10. | To build an additional 13 primary schools before the 2001-2002 school year. | Five primary schools were completed for operation from the 1997-1998 school year, and another two from the 1998-1999 school year. The remaining six schools are being planned; construction work for three of them will commence soon. |
| 1996 | 11. | To promote the Target Oriented Curriculum (TOC) so that all primary classes will implement TOC for the core subjects of Chinese, English and Mathematics by the 2000-2001 school year. | 753 primary schools (or 88.5% of all primary schools) are implementing TOC in Primary 1 to 4, Primary 1 to 3, Primary 1 to 2 or Primary 1 in the 1998-1999 school year. |

Action in Progress : Under Review

1992	12. To reduce the size of school classes to 35 pupils each, starting in September 1993 with Primary 1, and extending it to a higher level a year at a time.	To meet the target of providing 60% of primary school places in whole-day schools by September 2002, the policy of reducing the class size has been adjusted slightly on a temporary basis. At primary level, the class size is 32 for an activity-approach class and 37 for a conventional class starting from the 1998 Primary 1 intake. Reduction of class size at secondary level will be withheld.
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Secondary Education

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
Action Completed		
1997	1. To provide one to two additional English teachers and a recurrent English Language Class Grant for every public sector secondary school adopting Chinese as the medium of instruction in the 1998-1999 school year.	Additional English teachers for all public sector secondary schools adopting Chinese as the medium of instruction and a recurrent English Language Class Grant of \$600 for each Secondary 1 to 3 class and \$900 for each Secondary 4 and 5 class is being provided from the 1998-1999 school year.
1997	2. To start to raise the graduate/non-graduate teacher ratio in prevocational schools to that of public sector grammar secondary schools by phases from the 1998-1999 school year.	The graduate to non-graduate teachers ratio for prevocational schools has been raised from 1:1 to 6:4 in September 1998.
1997	3. To extend the Textbook Assistance Scheme to needy students in Secondary 4 to 7 in 1998.	The extended scheme began to accept applications in September 1998. Eligible students will begin to receive payments from December 1998. About 94 000 students are expected to benefit.

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| 1997 | 4. | To provide one additional clerical staff each for 410 secondary schools in 1998. | One additional clerical post has been provided to each of the 410 secondary schools from the 1998-1999 school year. |
| 1996 | 5. | To develop in the 1996-1997 school year a civic education syllabus for Secondary 1 to 3. | A new civic education syllabus for Secondary 1 to 3 has been implemented from the 1998-1999 school year. |
| 1995 | 6. | To provide a recurrent grant for secondary schools which offer Putonghua from the 1998-1999 school year. | A recurrent grant of \$1,625 per school per annum is provided from the 1998-1999 school year to secondary schools offering Putonghua during school hours. |
| 1995 | 7. | To develop a new Putonghua curriculum for Secondary 1 to 5 and introduce the new Putonghua curriculum for Secondary 1 and Secondary 4 in the 1998-1999 school year. | A new Putonghua curriculum has been developed for Secondary 1 to 5 and introduced for Secondary 1 and 4 from the 1998-1999 school year. |
| 1995 | 8. | To include Putonghua in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) as an independent subject in the year 2000. | Putonghua will be introduced as a subject in the HKCEE in 2000. |
| 1993 | 9. | To provide an additional graduate teacher for every secondary school with a high proportion of Band Five students. | Since 1994, every secondary school participating in the School-based Curriculum Tailoring Scheme has been provided with an additional graduate teacher post. In the 1998-1999 school year, each of the 92 schools participating in the Scheme is provided with an additional graduate teacher post. |

Action in Progress : On Schedule

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| 1997 | 10. | To start updating the technical curricula and upgrading the teaching facilities in prevocational and secondary technical schools in 1998. | The CDC is developing a new technical curriculum in 16 new business and technological subjects for prevocational and secondary technical schools, the work on which will be completed by April 2000. Conversion work for special rooms and workshops in these schools is being planned or carried out for completion by December 2000. |
| 1997 | 11. | To build an additional 19 secondary schools before the 2001-2002 school year. | Construction work for nine of the new secondary schools scheduled for completion in 1999 has started, and that for another nine will commence soon. Planning for the remaining one has begun. |
| 1996 | 12. | To phase out floating classes in Secondary 1 to 5 by the year 2000. | We have provided 128 additional classrooms in 34 secondary schools and completed three new secondary schools for this purpose. The class structure in 29 secondary schools will also be reorganised in phases from the 1998-1999 school year. |
| 1994 | 13. | To build three more Practical Schools and seven more Skills Opportunity Schools over the next five years (1995 to 1999) to meet the needs of unmotivated students and those with severe learning problems. | One Practical School and three Skills Opportunity Schools were completed in 1998. This has brought the total number of new Practical Schools and Skills Opportunity Schools built after 1995 to three and six respectively. |

Action in Progress : Behind Schedule

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| 1997 | 14. | To provide one native-English speaking teacher (NET) for each public sector secondary school, and up to two NETs for schools using Chinese as the medium of instruction from 1998-1999 school year. A total of about 700 NETs will be required. | As at early September 1998, 323 NET posts had been filled. 303 public sector secondary schools (or 74 % of all these schools) will have the support of NETs from 1998-1999 school year. Further recruitment is underway. |
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Good progress has been made with the following commitment in the past year. We will continue to work on it on an on-going basis.

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| <i>Year</i> | <i>Pledge</i> |
| 1994 | 15. To broaden the core curriculum at secondary and sixth form levels in order to allow students more choices of academic, practical and technical subjects. |

Special Education

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| <i>Year</i> | <i>Pledge</i> | <i>Present Position</i> |
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Action Completed

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| 1997 | 1. | To improve further the provision of boarding staff in practical schools by upgrading the posts of warden and assistant warden in 1998 to provide better pastoral care and counselling services to students. | Administrative arrangements for upgrading these posts to improve the pastoral care and counselling services to students were completed in September 1998. |
| 1997 | 2. | To enhance the provision ratio of school social workers from 1 to 150 students to 1 to 100 students in 1998 to strengthen counselling and guidance services to students of practical schools. | Four additional Social Work Officer posts have been created to implement the new manning ratio in September 1998. |

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| 1997 | 3. | To complete an evaluation of the pilot school-based programme for gifted students in primary schools in the 1997-1998 school year. | An evaluation report for the pilot programme was completed in September 1998. |
| 1997 | 4. | The Fung Hon Chu Gifted Education Centre to expand its services to include centre-based enrichment programmes for both primary and secondary school students in 1998. It will also expand training programmes for teachers to equip them to help gifted students fully develop their potential. | A total of 80 enrichment programmes for gifted students and 12 training programmes for heads of schools and teachers of gifted children have been provided in 1998. |
| 1994 | 5. | To develop new programmes to cater for students of varying ability. | 20 new programmes will be tried out in Fung Hon Chu Gifted Education Centre. |

Action in Progress : On Schedule

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| 1997 | 6. | To start in 1998 to upgrade Programme Worker and Houseparent posts in special schools by phases to enhance pastoral care and education to students with special educational needs. | 60 posts have been made available to schools to upgrade qualified staff in the 1998-1999 school year. A total of 154 posts can be upgraded by 2001-2002. |
| 1997 | 7. | To formulate a long-term strategy on helping students with special education needs integrate into ordinary schools, based on the results of a two-year pilot project on integration which commenced in the 1997-1998 school year. | <p>The pilot project is being conducted. The results of the project, when available, will form the basis for the long-term strategy.</p> <p>A series of publicity activities are being undertaken to promote public acceptance of integrated education.</p> |
| 1997 | 8. | To provide more janitor staff for schools for physically handicapped children and schools for severely mentally handicapped children. | 82 additional janitor posts have been created from 1 September 1998. 17 special schools will benefit from the improved manning ratio. |

Tertiary Education

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
Action Completed		
1997	1. In 1998, to double the number of non-local students at undergraduate and taught postgraduate levels from the present 2% to 4% and increase substantially the ratio of non-local research postgraduates from the present 20% to one-third. Tertiary institutions to recruit outstanding students from the Mainland to enrol in first-degree courses.	The new policy of increasing the ratio of non-local undergraduates and taught postgraduates has been implemented by the UGC-funded institutions for the 1998-1999 academic year. The UGC-funded institutions will start to admit, as a pilot scheme, some 150 outstanding Mainland students to first-degree courses in 1999-2000.
1997	2. To provide \$423 million for research funding in the 1997-1998 academic year.	An amount of \$423 million in research funding was distributed by the Research Grants Council to the UGC-funded institutions in 1997-1998.
1997	3. To enhance the Chinese and English language skills of students at UGC-funded institutions by setting aside \$87.5 million for Language Enhancement Grants in the 1997-1998 academic year to help institutions develop and mount language enhancement courses in Chinese, English and Putonghua to establish/expand self-access learning centres for students, etc.	The UGC allocated \$87.5 million to the UGC-funded institutions as Language Enhancement Grants in the 1997-1998 academic year.
1997	4. To consider setting up a Centre of Language Teaching within the HKIED as a centre of excellence in the training and retraining of our language teachers.	The HKIED established a School of Languages in Education in September 1998.

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| 1997 | 5. | To ask the tertiary institutions to seriously consider setting exit language examinations for the students. | All of the UGC-funded institutions have put in place some form of language assessment, such as exit language tests, to ensure that the language proficiency of students reaches a certain level before graduation. |
| 1997 | 6. | To introduce improvements to the existing Local Student Finance Scheme (LSFS) in 1998-1999 to enhance its fairness, efficiency and transparency. | A new, improved formula for assessing applications has been approved by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council. Starting from April 1998, applications are assessed on the basis of adjusted family income, rather than annual disposable income of the applicants' families. It is envisaged that an additional 19 000 students will benefit from the improved scheme. |
| 1997 | 7. | To introduce a non-means tested loan scheme (NLS) on a no-gain-no-loss and cost-recovery basis to enhance the financial assistance for tertiary students. | A NLS has been introduced for the 1998-1999 academic year to replace the Extended Loan Scheme. The ambit of the new NLS covers not only full-time students of the UGC-funded institutions but also students of the Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK), the Hong Kong Shue Yan College and part-time students pursuing publicly-funded programmes offered by the UGC-funded institutions, Vocational Training Council-funded Technical Colleges, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and the Prince Philip Dental Hospital. |
| 1997 | 8. | To shorten the processing time for the LSFS applications by one month through more extensive computerisation. | The computer system has been enhanced and the user acceptance test for the system was completed in July 1998. The processing time for applications has been shortened by one month. |

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| 1997 | 9. | To extend the student travel subsidy assistance to full-time undergraduate students aged over 25. | The subsidy assistance was extended to full-time undergraduate students aged over 25 in April 1998. |
| 1997 | 10. | To make a capital grant of \$50 million to the OUHK for its development into a centre of excellence in adult and distance learning. Course materials will be produced in both English and Chinese, to serve not just Hong Kong's long-term residents and new arrivals, but also students in the Mainland. | Finance Committee's approval of a capital grant to the OUHK was obtained in late 1997 and the grant was disbursed to OUHK in early 1998. The OUHK has prepared a set of deliverables for developing a centre of excellence in distance and adult learning. |
| 1994 | 11. | To provide an additional \$122 million in grants and an extra \$203 million in loans to Hong Kong students of tertiary institutions over the next four years (1995 to 1998). | These additional grants and loans were disbursed to students in 1996-1997 and 1997-1998 through the Extended Loan Scheme, which has been replaced by the NLS in 1998-1999. |

Action in Progress : On Schedule

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| 1997 | 12. | To ask the EC to begin before the end of 1997 a thorough review of the structure of pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education, addressing the age at which students should begin each stage of education, the length of the various stages of education, the curriculum of each stage and the interface between them. | <p>The EC has formed working groups and sub-groups to examine issues related respectively to pre-primary and basic education, and post-Secondary 3 education.</p> <p>Given the complexity of the issues involved, the review will be conducted in phases. To start with, EC and its working groups and sub-groups will focus on the overall aims of education, taking into account the needs of the community and future changes.</p> <p>A series of focus group discussions and consultative sessions with relevant education-related executive and advisory bodies will be held in the coming months. The education community and the public will also be consulted in the course of the review.</p> |
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| 1997 | 13. | To provide in the next five years 11 000 additional student hostel places. Preparation for 9 360 places (at a cost of \$1.6 billion) will start in 1998. | The UGC-funded institutions have drawn up plans to provide about 11 000 additional student hostel places in the coming five years. Of these, preparation for some 9 400 places started in 1998. |
| 1997 | 14. | To invest heavily in emerging centres of excellence which will enable our institutions to achieve and maintain recognition as world-class researchers in the international academic community, keep pace with rising international standards and serve the future economic and social needs of Hong Kong. | The UGC allocated \$50 million to the UGC-funded institutions in 1997-1998 as start-up money to help them identify potential centres of excellence. 99 initial proposals have been received and are being considered by the UGC. The institutions will be invited to submit formal proposals towards the end of 1998. |
| 1997 | 15. | To ask the Universities to review their admission criteria for undergraduates to give recognition to excellence in non-academic areas, such as community service, sports and the arts. | For the 1998-1999 academic year, the UGC-funded institutions have invited all secondary school principals to nominate students who excel in non-academic areas for admission to the institutions. Each school is to nominate up to three students as a pilot exercise. Some 180 students have been admitted so far. |
| 1996 | 16. | To undertake management reviews of UGC-funded institutions in 1997 to ensure that they have in place appropriate internal resource allocation, planning and financial processes. | Management reviews for four of the UGC-funded institutions were conducted in August 1998 and the reviews for the remaining four institutions will be conducted in April 1999. |