

MESSAGE

Education holds the key to the future of every society, including Hong Kong. As we enter a new millennium, we need to ensure Hong Kong's long term stability and prosperity in a rapidly changing knowledge-based global society. We see the role of education not only in imparting basic knowledge and skills, but also in nurturing our new generation to be independent thinkers and life-long learners. The Education Commission is currently conducting the second phase of the review on our education system, with a view to mapping out a blueprint for the twenty-first century. Life-long learning is the central principle guiding the review.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government is committed to providing quality education at all stages. Our aim is to develop the full potential of our students, and guide them to become responsible members of our society. At the community level, our education should cater for Hong Kong's social and economic needs and maintain our international competitiveness. To underline our commitment, education continues to be the single largest spending item in our public expenditure.

This booklet describes our various on-going and new initiatives in pursuit of our Policy Objective of providing quality education. We believe that to meet the demands of the twenty-first century, our education system should be increasingly responsive to the changing needs of society. We will continue our efforts to promote the application of information technology in schools, enable our students to acquire better language standards, enhance the quality of our teaching profession, encourage innovations in education through the Quality Education Fund and inject an element of diversity and competition into our education system through developing a vibrant private school sector. I wish to highlight some of the new initiatives briefly in the following paragraphs.

Schools are best placed to understand the needs of students. The first phase of the Education Commission's review has reaffirmed the need to empower front-line education practitioners to deliver quality education. To give schools the required flexibility to meet their own educational targets, and at the same time hold them accountable for their performance, we will require all schools to practise the basic elements of school-based management by the 2000-2001 school year. To prepare our principals for this initiative, we propose that aspiring principals should undergo a comprehensive training programme and serving principals should undergo continuing professional development, the details of which are being worked out with the education sector.

Our universities are continuing their efforts to develop their existing strengths into areas of international excellence with the support of Government funding. They are taking more non-local students, including those from the Mainland, which would also help to broaden the outlook of our students. Some changes have been made to the undergraduate admission system to ensure minimum language standards of the intakes and promote the

all-round development of our school students. We believe more can be done and will consider the matter further with our universities, in consultation with the Education Commission and the University Grants Committee.

To promote life-long learning, our aim is to ensure that education and training opportunities are available to all those who aspire to them. We will further expand the scope of the Non-means-tested Loan Scheme to cover more students; and will seek a one-off grant of \$50 million to support the Open University, a leader in distance and adult learning, in establishing a Regional Learning Centre. We are also conducting a stocktaking exercise of all existing continuing education courses and course providers and will work closely with the Education Commission in the context of its current review to make Hong Kong a learning society.

We will put in place an assessment mechanism to obtain feedback on whether our investment in education is producing the desired results. This will include annual employers' surveys on the quality of our first-degree graduates, and the development of indicators to measure the performance of our students in the individual domains of all-round quality education.

I wish to emphasise that the initiatives in this booklet cannot be successfully implemented by the Government alone without the support and participation of educationalists and the whole community. I was encouraged by the enthusiastic response during the public consultation on the Education Commission's review earlier in the year, not just from front-line education practitioners, but from parents and the business sector. I am convinced that as a community, we can all work together to improve the education system and raise the standard of education for our next generation.

Lastly, I would like to express my appreciation to the Chairmen and Members of the Education Commission, the University Grants Committee, the Vocational Training Council, the Hong Kong Examinations Authority and the Board of Education, as well as to my colleagues in the Education Department, Secretariat of the University Grants Committee, and the Student Financial Assistance Agency for their contributions towards the formulation of education policies and the delivery of education services. I will count on them to help meet the various targets set out in this booklet.

I welcome your comments and suggestions.



(Joseph W P Wong)
Secretary for Education and Manpower

QUALITY EDUCATION

Our Policy Objective is to ensure that young people in Hong Kong receive an all-round quality education to prepare them for life and work and to develop in them an aptitude towards life-long learning.

Our indicators this year in pursuing this Policy Objective are the results of periodic surveys, assessments and other feedback on the performance of our students and graduates in all the major domains of education.

Progress Made

We have been working to establish a framework of assessment mechanisms which would enable us to ascertain, over time, whether resources devoted to education have achieved measurable results. As a start, we have commissioned a study to devise the methodology and questionnaire for an employers' survey covering the main aspects of performance of our first degree graduates in the workplace. These aspects of performance cover language proficiency, numerical competence, computer literacy, communication skills and work attitude. We shall commission another study soon to develop indicators for measuring the performance of education in Hong Kong, based on best practices in other countries regarding how they define and measure the results of education.

KEY RESULT AREAS (KRAs)

To ensure that this Policy Objective can be achieved, we must deliver results in a number of key areas, that is, we must –

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¹ this is a new KRA this year

1

Support school-based management and innovative practices

In January 1998, we set up a \$5 billion Quality Education Fund (QEF) which finances worthwhile one-off projects for the promotion of quality education in schools. With 523 projects approved for funding in the first call for applications, a quality culture is building up whereby schools are taking more initiatives to enhance the quality of education. The positive impact of the completed projects on the quality of teaching and students' all-round development is also being felt. In the second call for applications in November 1998, we received 2 160 applications seeking grants totalling \$1,844 million. Of these, we approved 617 projects involving grants totalling \$214 million.

We will continue to promote school-based management. Since the 1998-1999 school year, all schools must conduct annual school development planning as well as self-evaluation. We provide additional resources where necessary to cover expenses on launching management changes, conducting staff development programmes, and producing school documents. With the assistance of the Advisory Committee on School-Based Management, we will in the coming year develop a framework of governance for school-based management, which will broaden the participation of key stakeholders, enhance the transparency and accountability of school management, and provide for a system of checks and balances as more funding and operational responsibilities are devolved to schools.

Progress Made

In the past year, we achieved satisfactory progress in these two areas. The implementation of various actions for achieving the set targets was on schedule. We have continued to monitor the progress of QEF projects approved in the first call and we completed the assessment of over 2 100 applications in the second call. To disseminate the good practices and experiences resulting from the funded projects across the school sector, we organised a large-scale exposition, roving exhibitions and experience-sharing sessions for teachers; established a resource centre; and issued newsletters. We are establishing a cyber resource centre to facilitate teachers, students and other educational users to search for useful teaching and learning materials developed by the QEF projects.

All public sector schools have to submit a school plan for the 1999-2000 school year by October 1999, and to prepare annual school reports before the end of the year. We have advised them that they should put in place a constitution for the school management committee, with a participatory decision-making mechanism, and a staff performance management system by the 2001-2002 school year.

To achieve results in this area, various initiatives have been undertaken in the past years. Details are set out below –

Initiative *	Target #	Present Position +
<p>To provide each public sector school with an annual supplementary grant (on average, \$120,000 per primary school and \$155,000 per secondary school) to cope with the additional administrative work arising from school-based management</p> <p><i>(Education Department (ED))</i></p>	<p>To have all schools practising the core elements of school-based management by 2000</p> <p><i>(1998)</i></p>	<p>The annual supplementary grant will be disbursed starting from the 1999-2000 school year to help schools cope with the additional workload arising from practising school-based management.</p> <p><i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i></p>
<p>To improve the quality of education by implementing the recommendations of Education Commission Report No. 7 (ECR 7)</p> <p><i>(ED)</i></p>	<p>To implement the recommendations in 1998</p> <p><i>(1997)</i></p>	<p>The main theme of ECR 7 is to promote school-based management. To this end, an Advisory Committee on School-based Management (ACSBM) was set up in December 1998 to make recommendations on the overall planning, implementation and evaluation of school-based management. We aim to consult schools on the school-based management framework in 2000.</p> <p><i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i></p>

* the bracketed information denotes the agency with lead responsibility for the initiative

the bracketed information denotes the year in which the target was set

+ the bracketed information denotes the status of the target

Looking Forward

In the next 12 months, we will assess our performance in respect of this KRA against the following indicators –

Indicator	1999 Target
Number and effectiveness of on-going QEF projects; the effectiveness will be measured by achievement of goals set by the applicants	At least 85% of the completed QEF projects will demonstrate that the stated goals are fulfilled
Number and percentage of schools with parent and teacher participation in the School Management Committee	All government schools will have parents and teachers participating in School Management Committees by the 1999-2000 school year

2

Provide a quality learning environment

We are committed to providing a quality learning and teaching environment in which our young people can develop their full potential.

The advantages of whole-day primary schooling are well recognised by the education sector. It gives more flexibility in the design of the time-table and curriculum. It also allows more time and opportunity for pupils to interact with teachers, socialise with peers, and participate in extra-curricular activities. In order to implement whole-day primary schooling, we have an on-going programme to build more schools. We are also converting, through administrative measures, existing bi-sessional/uni-sessional schools into whole-day operation.

Following extensive consultation, we have revised the designs for secondary and primary schools to provide improved facilities to suit latest developments in education, such as the use of information technology and the enhancement of language training. The new designs also make full use of land resources and provide greater flexibility for schools to develop new initiatives. Schools adopting the new design will come into operation commencing September 2000. We will upgrade the facilities of existing schools to bring them into line with the new designs as far as practicable.

We are also concerned about promoting a quality learning environment at pre-primary level. We have published a pamphlet on how parents should choose which kindergartens to send their children to. A list of 'do's' and 'don'ts' for kindergartens has been issued so that kindergartens can refer to them in planning their curriculum. Profiles on key features of kindergartens will be published before the end of 1999 for public reference.

Progress Made

We are pressing ahead with the implementation of whole-day primary schooling. Five new schools commenced operation in the 1998-1999 school year; another 14 will commence operation in the 1999-2000 school year. We will also convert, through administrative measures, 20 uni-sessional/bi-sessional schools into 13 whole-day schools in September 1999. To enable 60% of our primary school pupils to study in whole-day schools by September 2002, we will build an additional 54 schools and convert a further 51 uni-sessional/bi-sessional schools to whole-day operation by September 2002. We are planning to build more new primary schools beyond 2002 to enable virtually all pupils to study in whole-day schools by September 2007.

We will continue to improve our school designs to ensure that our pupils study in a quality environment and have access to quality learning facilities and equipment. In this regard, the Education Department has recently formed a School Building Design Committee,

which includes practising architects and representatives of the school sector as its members, to review the school designs.

We will continue to take measures to enhance the quality of pre-primary education, including the development of performance indicators. We believe that with increased transparency and publicity, kindergartens will be induced to raise their standards further.

To achieve results in this area, various initiatives have been undertaken in the past years. Details are set out below –

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To implement the policy of whole-day primary schooling <i>(Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB))</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To enable 60% of primary school pupils to study in whole-day schools by September 2002 <i>(1998 and 1997)</i> ● Subject to regular review of a number of constraints (e.g. availability of sites and population changes), to work towards a tentative target of full implementation by the commencement of the 2007-2008 school year <i>(1998)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As at September 1999, the percentage of whole-day primary school places in government and aided schools is 32%. 54 additional new schools will be completed by September 2002. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i> ● We are planning to build more schools between 2002 and September 2007. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i>
<p>To provide air-conditioning for schools for physically and severely mentally handicapped children <i>(EMB)</i></p>	<p>Subject to feasibility studies, to proceed with the installation once resources are available <i>(1998)</i></p>	<p>The Architectural Services Department will start the installation works towards the end of 1999 for completion in early 2000. Schools may also opt for a cash grant to carry out the installation works themselves. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i></p>

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To improve the janitor service for schools for physically and severely mentally handicapped children (EMB)</p>	<p>To provide more janitor staff for schools for physically handicapped children and schools for severely mentally handicapped children (1997)</p>	<p>72 additional janitor posts have been created in 17 special schools from 1 September 1998. (Action Completed)</p>
<p>To provide adequate school places and support services for newly arrived children from the Mainland (Education Department (ED))</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To build an additional 13 primary schools before the 2001-2002 school year ● To build an additional 19 secondary schools before the 2001-2002 school year ● 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 (1997) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Five new primary schools have started operation from the 1997-1998 school year, and another two from the 1998-1999 school year. Of the remaining six schools, three are being planned and construction works for the remaining three have commenced. ● Nine secondary schools were completed in 1999; works for another nine have commenced. Planning for the remaining one has begun. ● In the 1998-1999 school year, a total of 980 classes of induction programmes and 665 classes of English Extension Programme were organised for 13 400 and 8 660 newly arrived children respectively. 589 schools provided school-based support services to 17 702 newly arrived children. Three secondary and 28 primary schools also conducted short-term preparatory courses for some 1 500 newly arrived children. (Action in Progress: On Schedule)

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To enhance pastoral care and education elements in the boarding service for students with special educational needs (<i>EMB</i>)</p>	<p>From 1998, to start upgrading Programme Worker and Houseparent posts in special schools by phases to enhance the quality of the boarding service for students with special educational needs (1997)</p>	<p>83 posts have been made available to schools to upgrade qualified staff in the 1999-2000 school year. A total of 154 posts will be upgraded by 2001-2002. (<i>Action in Progress: On Schedule</i>)</p>
<p>To eliminate floating classes at Secondary 1 to 5 by the year 2000 (<i>ED</i>)</p>	<p>To phase out 359 floating classes in 129 secondary schools by 2000-2001 (1996)</p>	<p>159 additional classrooms have been provided in 51 secondary schools. 78 floating classes have been eliminated through re-organising the class structure of 40 secondary schools. More floating classes are planned to be phased out through class re-structuring in the 2000-2001 school year. Seven new secondary schools have been completed to cater for the consequential demand for school places arising from the elimination of floating classes. (<i>Action in Progress: On Schedule</i>)</p>
<p>To extend the School Improvement Programme (<i>EMB</i>)</p>	<p>To extend the Programme to cover all public sector schools for which improvement works are feasible by 2004 (1996)</p>	<p>Improvement works in 286 primary and secondary schools have been completed. Another 94 schools are undergoing improvement works. Subject to the conditions of individual schools and the results of feasibility studies, improvement works for the remaining schools will proceed. (<i>Action in Progress: On Schedule</i>)</p>

Initiative	Target	Present Position
To build more Practical Schools and Skills Opportunity Schools to meet the needs of unmotivated students and those with severe learning problems <i>(EMB)</i>	To build three more Practical Schools and seven more Skills Opportunity Schools between 1995 and 1999 <i>(1994)</i>	The total number of new Practical Schools and Skills Opportunity Schools built after 1995 stands at three and six respectively. Building of the seventh Skills Opportunity School has been withheld because there are sufficient places in the other six schools. <i>(Action Completed)</i>
To reduce the size of school classes to 35 pupils each, starting in September 1993 with Primary 1 <i>(EMB)</i>	To extend it to a higher level a year at a time <i>(1992)</i>	To meet the target of providing 60% of primary school places in whole-day schools by September 2002, progress on reduction of class size was suspended from the 1998-1999 school year. <i>(Action in Progress: Under Review)</i>

Looking Forward

In the next 12 months, we will assess our performance in respect of this KRA against the following indicators –

Indicator	1999 Target
Number of schools which have substantially improved their facilities in comparison with current standards	To continue to carry out improvement works so as to cover all public sector schools for which improvement works are feasible by 2004
Proportion of whole-day primary school places in public sector schools	To press on with building new schools and assisting bi-sessional schools to turn whole-day through administrative measures so as to reach the target of having 60% of whole-day primary school places by September 2002

We will undertake the following initiative to deliver results in this area –

Initiative	1999 Target
To develop performance indicators for kindergartens (ED)	To provide kindergartens with a tool for self-evaluation and to provide reference to the public in assessing the quality and standard of kindergartens

3

Develop and maintain a dedicated and professional teaching force

The quality of the teaching profession has a direct bearing on the quality of education. We must ensure that our principals and teachers have a strong sense of mission and suitable academic and professional qualifications. We should also encourage and support continuous professional development in the profession.

To improve the professional training and standards of teachers, we will continue to develop the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) into a degree-awarding teacher training institute. In the current triennium, we will upgrade 900 sub-degree places in HKIEd's Certificate of Education programme, to degree or above levels, starting from the 1999-2000 academic year. In addition, we will make use of available resources to increase the teacher training places at degree and above levels. In total, we will provide an additional 1 900 such places in the current triennium.

To promote sharing of experience and dissemination of good practices among teachers, we shall promote a collaborative spirit and quality culture among schools through workshops, classroom observation and school-based support at the district level.

To give proper recognition to outstanding performance, we plan to implement an award scheme for teachers and principals under the Quality Education Fund (QEF). At the same time, as part of the implementation of school-based management, we will ask schools to introduce proper performance appraisal systems for principals and teachers to ensure appropriate feedback and enhanced accountability.

To further improve the quality and professionalism of teachers, the Government has undertaken to establish a General Teaching Council (GTC), a professional body for teachers. A Preparatory Committee under the Education Commission (EC) has conducted a public consultation on the future role of the Council and arrangements regarding its establishment.

Progress Made

In the past year, we continued with the efforts to develop and maintain a dedicated and professional teaching force through providing appropriate pre-service and in-service training, upgrading and creating more teaching posts in schools, and recognising outstanding performance of schools and teachers.

We have achieved good progress overall in delivering the various initiatives under this KRA. For example, we will upgrade 1 900 sub-degree Certificate of Education places at the HKIEd in the current triennium at degree or above levels in HKIEd and other tertiary institutions. Also, starting from the 1999-2000 school year, we will provide in-service subject training courses to non-subject trained Music and Art & Craft teachers.

We are on course in meeting the target of upgrading 35% of teaching posts in primary schools to graduate posts by the 2001-2002 school year. We will upgrade a total of 1 640 teaching posts in the 1999-2000 school year.

The EC held a public consultation exercise from November 1998 to January 1999 on practical arrangements concerning the establishment of the GTC. Taking into account the feedback of the education sector and the community, the EC recommended, and the Administration agreed, that the EC should consider, in the context of its on-going comprehensive review on the education system, the GTC's role and functions in the overall system, and that the establishment of the GTC should proceed at a slower pace, so as to allow more time for the profession and other stakeholders to gain better understanding of the role and importance of the GTC. The EC will work with other relevant educational bodies to enhance teachers' understanding about the role and functions of the Council, and to encourage the education sector as well as the community in general to actively participate in the discussion.

To achieve results in this area, various initiatives have been undertaken in the past years. Details are set out below –

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To upgrade teacher training by developing the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) into a degree-awarding teacher training institute <i>(Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB))</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the current triennium (i.e., 1998-2001), 900 sub-degree places will be upgraded to degree or above level in the HKIEd and other institutions <i>(1998)</i> ● 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 <i>(1996)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We have upgraded some 900 sub-degree places as pledged. In addition, we have made use of available resources to provide another 1 000 teacher training places at degree or above levels. <i>(Action Completed)</i> ● 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, including the student hostels, staff quarters and a sports centre. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i>

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To accelerate the provision of graduate posts in primary schools <i>(Education Department (ED))</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provision of 1 640 posts each year from the 1999-2000 to 2001-2002 school years ● To achieve 35% graduate primary posts by the 2001-2002 school year <i>(1998 and 1997)</i> 	<p>A total of 1 380 graduate posts were 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 2 395 graduate posts, around 20% of the teaching posts in primary schools will be upgraded to graduate posts by the end of the 1999-2000 school year; 27% by the end of the 2000-2001 school year and 35% by the end of the 2001-2002 school year.</p> <p><i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i></p>
<p>To set up an award scheme for outstanding schools and teachers to be funded by the Quality Education Fund (QEF) <i>(EMB)</i></p>	<p>To implement in 1998-1999 <i>(1998)</i></p>	<p>The award scheme is being launched in phases. Nominations for the Outstanding Schools Award were invited in June 1999 and awards will be made by mid-2000. The Outstanding Teachers Award will be open for nominations in 2000, subject to the advice of the Education Commission (EC).</p> <p><i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i></p>
<p>To improve subject training in cultural subjects <i>(ED)</i></p>	<p>To provide subject training to 600 in-service teachers in the Music and Art & Craft subjects each year <i>(1998)</i></p>	<p>The training courses will start from the 1999-2000 school year. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i></p>
<p>To provide a one-off grant of \$20 million for the setting up of the General Teaching Council (GTC) <i>(EMB)</i></p>	<p>To have the grant ready in time to tie in with the establishment of the Council <i>(1998)</i></p>	<p>Sufficient funding has been reserved, and the grant will be provided to the GTC upon its establishment. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i></p>

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To set up a General Teaching Council (GTC) (<i>EMB</i>)</p>	<p>To set up the Council by 1999 (1997)</p>	<p>Public consultation on the setting up of the Council was completed in late January 1999. Taking into account the feedback and suggestions of the education sector and the community, the EC recommended, and the Administration agreed, that the EC should consider, in the context of its on-going comprehensive review on the education system, the GTC's role and functions in the overall system, and that the establishment of the GTC should proceed at a slower pace so as to allow time for the profession and other stakeholders to gain better understanding of the role and importance of a GTC. As a next step, the EC will work closely with relevant educational bodies to further consider various issues relating to the establishment of the proposed GTC and to encourage the education sector as well as the community to actively participate in the discussion. (<i>Action in Progress: Under Review</i>)</p>
<p>To promote quality kindergarten education through upgrading the training and qualifications of kindergarten teachers and principals (<i>EMB</i>)</p>	<p>To require –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● at least 50% of teachers in each kindergarten to be Qualified Kindergarten Teachers (QKTs) by September 1999 (1997) ● at least 60% QKTs in each kindergarten by September 2000 (1997) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● About 95% of kindergartens have achieved the 50% QKT target. Kindergartens which have not met the requirement have sent teachers to attend QKT training courses in the 1999-2000 school year. (<i>Action in Progress: On Schedule</i>) ● A total of 910 teachers have completed the QKT courses offered by the HKIEd in the 1998-1999 school year. To ensure an adequate supply of QKTs, the HKIEd will provide 950 QKT training places in the 1999-2000 school year. (<i>Action in Progress: On Schedule</i>)

Initiative	Target	Present Position
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● by September 2004, all newly recruited kindergarten principals to have completed the Certificate in Kindergarten Education (CKE) course (1997) ● To provide additional training for 660 existing kindergarten principals and teachers from 1998-2002 to enable kindergartens to meet our requirements on teacher qualification (1997) ● at least 40% of teachers in each kindergarten to complete the QKT courses by September 1997 (1996) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 223 principals and teachers have completed the CKE course. Some 105 principals and teachers will complete the course by September 2000. HKIEd will provide another 195 training places on CKE course in the 1999-2000 school year. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i> ● HKIEd is offering the additional training places as scheduled. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i> ● About 97% of kindergartens have met the 40% requirement. A few kindergartens in remote areas have difficulties in meeting the target. HKIEd has been requested to study the feasibility of providing special QKT evening courses to facilitate these kindergartens to meet the target. As for non-Chinese speaking kindergarten teachers, there is available a QKT course which is conducted in English. Some have enrolled in this course. The qualifications of the others are being assessed by ED to establish their equivalence with QKT. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i>

Initiative	Target	Present Position
To provide additional Certificated Master/Mistress posts to co-ordinate library services and to support the Chinese and English Extensive Reading Schemes (ED)	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 services and to support the Chinese and English Extensive Reading Schemes (1997)	In the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years, 347 Certificated Master/Mistress posts were provided for government and aided primary schools to co-ordinate library services and to support the Chinese and English Extensive Reading Schemes. An additional 305 posts will be provided in the coming two years. (Action in Progress: On Schedule)

Looking Forward

In the next 12 months, we will assess our performance in respect of this KRA against the following indicator –

Indicator	1999 Target
Percentage of teachers who are professionally trained and/or degree holders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Government's long-term target is to require all new teachers to be professionally trained and degree holders ● With the phased upgrading of the Certificate of Education programme, all graduates of pre-service training programmes for primary and secondary school teachers will, as from 2004, also be degree holders

We will undertake the following initiatives to deliver results in this area –

Initiative	1999 Target
To upgrade teacher training by developing the HKIEd into a degree-awarding teacher training institute (EMB)	To make arrangements for upgrading all remaining sub-degree places for the training of primary and secondary school teachers to degree or above levels within the next four years

Initiative	1999 Target
<p>To provide continuous support for the leadership and professional development of all public sector school principals (ED)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To draw up a continuous professional development framework for serving principals for implementation in the 2000-2001 school year ● From the 2000-2001 school year, all newly appointed principals of public sector schools will have to complete an initial part of the development programme prior to appointment
<p>To upgrade the quality of kindergarten education through the employment of trained principals in kindergartens (ED)</p>	<p>To advance the target (announced in the 1997 Policy Address) of requiring all newly recruited kindergarten principals to have completed the Certificate in Education (Kindergarten) course from September 2004 to September 2002</p>
<p>To increase the number of places in the Certificate Course for Discipline Teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools (ED)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In respect of courses for primary school teachers, to increase the provision of training places from 240 by 80 to a total of 320 each year in 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 ● In respect of courses for secondary school teachers, to increase the provision of training places from 120 by 40 to a total of 160 each year in 2000-2001 and 2001-2002

4

Maximise the benefits of IT in education to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning

Hong Kong is undergoing rapid transformations brought about by advancement in information technology (IT). We must ensure that we provide the necessary education to our students so they can grow up with the vision and the capability to rise to new challenges. We issued a five-year strategy on IT in education in November 1998 following public consultation. Our objective is to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning by harnessing the power of IT. The four key components of our strategy on IT in education are to enhance our students' access to IT and the Internet, to provide training and support for all teachers, to use IT to support teaching in the school curriculum, and to foster a community-wide culture which helps promote IT in education. The Government will assume a leadership and co-ordination role in promoting IT in education. Schools are given the flexibility to devise their own IT plans and to set the pace for incorporating IT in education within the five-year period.

Progress Made

We are making good progress on various initiatives. Site preparation works are being carried out in phases. We have provided schools with cash grants to purchase IT facilities and they may place orders with any selected contractors. Additionally, we provide grants to all schools to enable them to connect to the Internet. All secondary schools and some 300 primary schools have already been so connected. More than 15 000 teachers have completed 'basic' IT training. We will provide a further 70 000 training places at various levels of competencies.

The Education Department has been conducting regular school visits to offer on-site help and advice on issues related to IT in education. We organise seminars and workshops on a regular basis to disseminate good practices and to facilitate experience sharing.

To achieve results in this area, various initiatives have been undertaken in the past years. Details are set out below –

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To formulate and implement a five-year strategy on the application of IT in education</p> <p><i>(Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB))</i></p>	<p>Following public consultation on a proposed five-year strategy, we will finalise the strategy and formulate an implementation plan by December 1998</p> <p><i>(1998)</i></p>	<p>A document entitled 'Information Technology for Learning in a New Era: Five-Year Strategy 1998-1999 to 2002-2003' was issued in November 1998 following public consultation. Initiatives proposed in the document are at various stages of implementation.</p> <p><i>(Action Completed)</i></p>
<p>To enable the more IT ready and willing schools to progress at a faster pace</p> <p><i>(Education Department (ED))</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To provide an IT co-ordinator for up to 120 schools from the 1999-2000 school year and up to another 130 schools from the 2000-2001 school year <i>(1998)</i> ● To select ten primary and ten secondary schools to take part in an IT pilot scheme which will be implemented from the 1998-1999 school year for two years, with a view to identifying and disseminating best practices in implementing IT in education <i>(1997)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The allocation of 120 IT co-ordinator posts was announced in May 1999. ● Ten primary and ten secondary schools have been chosen and given the resources and flexibility to implement their own IT plans in the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years. ● ED has conducted 26 experience-sharing sessions to disseminate to other schools good practices of the 20 pilot schools in using IT in education. In addition, individual pilot schools have also been organising similar sessions. <p><i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i></p>

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To encourage teachers to take up the challenges of their new roles in the promotion of IT in education and to enhance technical and training support for schools and teachers</p> <p><i>(ED)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To provide about 85 000 training places at four different IT competency levels for teachers ● To provide a wide range of professional support through the Information Technology Education Resource Centre (ITERC) ● To provide technical assistance to all schools on a contract basis <p><i>(1998)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 15 200 primary school teachers have completed 'basic' level training by end-August 1999. Some 1 600 primary school teachers will complete 120 hours of advanced level training in October 1999. ● Further training programmes are being arranged. To give schools greater flexibility, they may apply for a cash grant and arrange for school-based training at the basic, intermediate and upper intermediate levels. Training at the advanced level will continue to be organised by ED. ● Since September 1998, 11 100 teachers have attended experience-sharing sessions, seminars and school-based training organised by ITERC. ● Over 800 school visits have been conducted to offer on-site help and advice on issues related to IT in education, including formulation of school-based IT plans. ● Contracts are expected to be awarded by December 1999. <p><i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i></p>

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To provide adequate IT facilities, including network facilities, for our students and teachers to enable them to access and share information (ED)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To provide an incentive grant for schools to make available their computers for use by students after the normal school opening hours (1998) ● To provide some 1 000 computers with access to the Internet in 125 community and children and youth centres (1997) ● To provide, on average, to each public sector primary school 40 multi-media computers and to each public sector secondary school 82 multi-media computers (1997) ● To connect all schools to the Internet (1997) ● To plan for an education-specific Intranet (1997) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The incentive grant has been disbursed to some 400 schools in September 1999. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i> ● All computers were in place in September 1999. <i>(Action Completed)</i> ● Primary schools have been provided with 15 computers each by early 1999 as the first phase. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i> ● Secondary schools have been provided with 21 computers each by August 1999 as the next phase. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i> ● To provide schools with greater flexibility, they are given cash grants to procure the remaining computers and ancillary equipment. Schools may choose to place orders with any of the vendors shortlisted by ED. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i> ● All public sector primary, secondary and special schools are provided with a recurrent grant for Internet access. So far, all secondary and some 300 primary schools have been connected to the Internet. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i> ● The consultancy study on the establishment of an Intranet was completed in August 1999. Recommendations of the study are being examined. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i>

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To integrate IT into school education meaningfully by providing the necessary curriculum and resource support (ED)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To have at least 25% of the curriculum taught with the support of IT within five years ● To identify, source and promote software suitable for schools, and where necessary, to procure and develop new software to support teaching (1997) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some 200 seminars and workshops have been held to explain to teachers how IT can be applied in the teaching and learning of individual subjects. ● Incorporation of IT elements into the school curriculum is included in the holistic review of the school curriculum being conducted by the Curriculum Development Council (CDC). ● Working groups have been set up to develop IT learning targets for students and to facilitate the development of IT-based teaching and learning resources. A consultation document on targets in IT learning will be released in late 1999. ● Schools are provided with a recurrent grant to purchase educational software from the 1998-1999 school year onwards. ● A software library was set up by ITERC in November 1998. Some 1 300 pieces of educational software have been purchased for teachers' reference and preview. ● ITERC has developed nine packages of educational software. <p><i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i></p>

Looking Forward

In the next 12 months, we will assess our performance in respect of this KRA against the following indicators –

Indicator	1999 Target
Percentage of school curriculum delivered with the assistance of IT	To carry on implementing our IT in education initiatives so that 25% of the school curriculum will be taught with the support of IT by the 2002-2003 school year
Percentage of teachers achieving competence at various levels	All teachers to reach at least the 'basic' level of competency by the 2000-2001 school year. 75%, 25% and 6% of teachers to reach the intermediate, upper intermediate and advanced levels respectively by the 2002-2003 school year
Number of computers in schools	Each primary and secondary school to be provided with, on average, 40 and 82 computers respectively. All schools should have at least 70% of the entitled facilities in place by summer 2001

We will undertake the following initiative to deliver results in this area –

Initiative	1999 Target
To review the effectiveness of various initiatives in the promotion of IT in education (ED)	To conduct an interim review of the 'Five-Year Strategy' in 2001, and a final review in 2003

5

Enable our students and workforce to be bi-literate and tri-lingual

The acquisition of good language skills is an integral part of education. Hong Kong's competitiveness in the future to a large extent depends on a workforce that has effective communication skills in both Chinese and English.

We will launch a publicity campaign by early 2000 to enhance the awareness of the importance of high standards in English in the workplace, and to promote the use of English in the community. We will provide incentive grants for in-service English language training programmes and encourage employers to set minimum English competence levels for their employees.

To enhance English language learning in primary schools, the Native English-speaking Teacher (NET) scheme is being piloted in 20 primary schools. We also intend to assess the effectiveness of native-speaking English Language Teaching Assistants (ELTAs) by providing ELTAs to 32 schools by September 2000.

We are setting language benchmarks for language teachers and will be providing the necessary training to enable these teachers to attain standards equivalent to or above these benchmarks. Our target, starting from September 2000, is for all trained new teachers to reach the established benchmarks before joining the profession, all untrained new teachers one year after joining the profession and all serving language teachers by 2005.

Progress Made

Feedback from principals, teachers and students on the NET scheme in its first year of operation is generally favourable. With enhanced support from the Education Department and better deployment of duties for NETs, an environment that is more conducive to the learning of English is developing in our secondary schools. We have also stepped up the recruitment of NETs in the past year; all public sector secondary schools which recruited their NETs through the Education Department have at least one NET starting from this school year, compared to 260 secondary schools at the same time last year.

After one year of operation of the medium of instruction policy, our initial observation is that the teaching and learning in the Secondary 1 classes of Chinese medium schools have become more effective, lively and interactive. In the coming year, we will finalise the arrangements to be put in place from the 2001-2002 school year for the further implementation of the medium of instruction policy.

We have finalised the benchmarks for English teachers in lower secondary forms and Putonghua teachers in primary schools. We are developing the remaining language benchmarks. Examinations and training on established benchmarks will start in 2000.

To achieve results in this area, various initiatives have been undertaken in the past years. Details are set out below –

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Native English-speaking Teachers (NET) scheme in public sector secondary schools</p> <p><i>(Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB))</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To provide an interim report on the effectiveness of the scheme by the 1999-2000 school year and a final report by the 2000-2001 school year <i>(1998)</i> ● To provide one NET for each public sector secondary school, and up to two NETs for schools using Chinese as the medium of instruction from the 1998-1999 school year <i>(1997)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 80 schools and their NETs have been recruited for an evaluation study. A questionnaire survey, listening tests and writing tests have been conducted. The test results are being analysed. ● As at the start of the 1999-2000 school year, 436 NETs have been employed in 405 public sector secondary schools. Further recruitment will be conducted where necessary. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i>
<p>To establish a Support Centre for teachers using Chinese as a Medium of Instruction (MOI)</p> <p><i>(EMB)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Centre to start operation by March 1999 ● To provide a set of Chinese language support services to teachers switching from English to Chinese as a medium of instruction <i>(1998)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Support Centre started operation in September 1998 and was officially opened in March 1999. ● As at August 1999, 209 CMI schools have enrolled as members; 3 300 teachers using Chinese as the MOI have participated in 62 workshops/seminars and over 18 500 visits have been recorded on the Support Centre's website. <i>(Action Completed)</i>

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To invite the Board of Education (BoE) and Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) to jointly consider how to further promote mother-tongue teaching and enable students to be proficient in both Chinese and English</p> <p>(EMB)</p>	<p>To receive initial proposals by September 1999</p> <p>(1998)</p>	<p>The BoE/SCOLAR Joint Working Group has paid visits to and held consultation sessions with both Chinese medium and English medium schools. A questionnaire survey involving 80 schools has been conducted and the results are being analysed. Progress will need to tie in with the Education Commission's review on the overall academic structure.</p> <p>(Action in Progress: Under Review)</p>
<p>To develop language benchmarks for all new and serving teachers</p> <p>(EMB)</p>	<p>To require all new teachers entering the profession from the 2000-2001 school year onwards to reach the established benchmarks; to require all serving language teachers to reach the established benchmarks by 2005; and to require all serving teachers to reach the established benchmarks by 2008</p> <p>(1997)</p>	<p>Benchmarks for English teachers in lower secondary forms and Putonghua teachers in primary schools have been finalised. Other language benchmarks are being developed. Examinations and training on established benchmarks will start in 2000. Starting from the 2000-2001 school year, all trained new teachers will be required to meet the established benchmarks. Untrained new teachers will be required to meet the benchmarks within one year after joining the profession.</p> <p>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</p>
<p>To enhance in-service teacher training in preparation for the new Putonghua curriculum</p> <p>(EMB)</p>	<p>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</p> <p>(1995)</p>	<p>About 900 Putonghua teachers have received in-service training in the 1997-1998 and 1998-1999 school years, which would provide an adequate supply of trained Putonghua teachers. About 1 000 teachers will be trained in the 1999-2000 school year.</p> <p>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</p>

Looking Forward

In the next 12 months, we will assess our performance in respect of this KRA against the following indicator –

Indicator	1999 Target
Date that all language teachers reach the established benchmarks	Starting from September 2000, all new trained teachers to reach established benchmarks before joining the profession, all untrained new teachers one year after joining the profession and, all serving language teachers by 2005

We will undertake the following initiatives to deliver results in this area –

Initiative	1999 Target
To enhance English language learning in primary schools <i>(EMB/Quality Education Fund)</i>	To ascertain the effectiveness of English Language Teaching Assistants (ELTAs) by providing ELTAs to over 30 primary schools by September 2000
To provide professional development grants for non subject-trained English teachers <i>(EMB/SCOLAR/Language Fund)</i>	To provide incentive grants to 100 non-English subject major teachers to receive subject training by October 2000
To provide an additional 1 000 places for Secondary 5 school leavers in a Foundation Diploma course with emphasis on English and IT skills <i>(EMB/Vocational Training Council)</i>	First output of graduates in July 2000
To launch a publicity campaign to promote the standard of English in the workplace in Hong Kong <i>(EMB/SCOLAR)</i>	To launch a campaign by early 2000 to promote the use of English in the workplace

Initiative	1999 Target
<p>To encourage employers in the business and professional sectors to set minimum English proficiency levels for employees <i>(EMB/SCOLAR)</i></p>	<p>Minimum proficiency levels for the major occupation groups to be set by December 2000</p>
<p>To introduce an incentive grants scheme for in-service English language training programmes, benefiting up to 50 000 employees <i>(EMB/SCOLAR)</i></p>	<p>To call for funding requests by early 2000</p>

6

Improve the system of assessing students

Student assessment is a core issue in the Education Commission's (EC) overall review of the academic structure. In this context, we are considering the replacement of the Academic Aptitude Test, as well as improvements to the current allocation system of secondary school places. We are also exploring the feasibility of introducing core subject competency tests for students at key stages of education as a means of monitoring overall student performance standards and facilitating the teaching and learning of individual students.

Progress Made

We have made steady progress in the past year in this KRA. The Hong Kong Examinations Authority (HKEA) has completed a consultancy study on how students' performance at school should be taken into account in public examinations, and the EC is now consulting the public on the proposal for core competency tests for students at various stages of education.

To achieve results in this area, various initiatives have been undertaken in the past years. Details are set out below –

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To further develop and test the feasibility of replacing the Academic Aptitude Test (AAT) with an Academic Ability Assessment (AAA), which puts more focus on the curriculum and higher order thinking <i>(Education Department)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a prototype for the proposed AAA by October 1999 To conduct parallel runs of AAA and AAT in 2000 and 2001 <i>(1998)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A prototype of items for the proposed AAA has been developed. <i>(Action Completed)</i> According to the present progress of work, the first parallel run can be conducted in the 2000-2001 school year, but further work on AAA will depend on the overall review of the academic structure being conducted by the EC. <i>(Action in Progress: Under Review)</i>

Initiative	Target	Present Position
To review the public examination system to take account of students' performance at schools <i>(Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB))</i>	HKEA to submit recommendations to EMB by early 1999 <i>(1998)</i>	The HKEA has announced some preliminary proposals and will conduct public consultation on these proposals by the end of 1999. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i>
To ask the EC to develop proposals for a system to assess the performance of students at various stages of education <i>(EMB)</i>	To receive preliminary proposals by 1999-2000 <i>(1998)</i>	The EC is developing preliminary proposals. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i>

Looking Forward

In the next 12 months, we will assess our performance in respect of this KRA against the following indicator –

Indicator	1999 Target
Improvement to the assessment system which gives proper recognition to the objective of all-round quality education	To increase awareness among principals, teachers and parents of the importance of assessment as a source of feedback for improvement, and to build consensus on the principles for the design of an improved assessment system which is more objective and all-round

7

Develop Hong Kong into a regional centre of excellence for higher education

It is important to Hong Kong, both economically and culturally, that the higher education system and the graduates from that system should be of high quality. Our aim is to assure the quality, diversity and flexibility of the higher education system and to ensure its relevance to the changing needs of the community. We also aim at providing the working population with further opportunities for life-long continuing and professional education.

18% of the 17-20 age group now have access to first-year first-degree places and a further 8% have access to full-time first-year sub-degree places. In the 1998-1999 academic year, the tertiary institutions have launched a pilot scheme to admit students based on their non-academic achievements as recommended by their school principals. Some 180 students were admitted under the scheme.

In particular, we are aiming to build upon current strengths in tertiary institutions to develop “Areas of Excellence” which would be recognised internationally and which would justify substantial investment in state-of-the-art facilities. Such developments will enable our institutions to achieve and maintain recognition in the international academic community and keep pace with rising international standards.

In the coming years, we will build 11 000 additional student hostel places so that undergraduate students can have the opportunity to stay in a student hostel for at least one year. This will enable the students to identify with their academic community and participate more in activities which will in turn sharpen their communication skills, nurture their leadership qualities and encourage independent thinking.

Progress Made

We have achieved good progress in developing “Areas of Excellence” in the higher education institutions. The University Grants Committee (UGC) has received 41 detailed proposals for developing “Areas of Excellence”. Following a rigorous evaluation exercise, the UGC has decided to support three proposals in the first round, at an amount of \$126 million spread over five years.

The quality and achievements of our higher education institutions in teaching and research are increasingly recognised by the regional and international academic and professional communities. For example –

- the Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK) was granted two major international awards in 1999 for its excellence and achievements in open and distance learning; and

- the business schools of two of our universities achieved accreditation by AACSB – International Association for Management Education in 1999. They are the first two Asian business schools to achieve such status.

The higher education institutions have enhanced their exchange and collaborations with non-local institutions during the past year. The pilot scheme to recruit outstanding Mainland students was widely supported by the tertiary education sector. They recruited a total of 139 outstanding Mainland students to attend local undergraduate courses starting from the 1999-2000 academic year.

To achieve results in this area, various initiatives have been undertaken in the past years. Details are set out below –

Initiative	Target	Present Position
To encourage the development of 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 <i>(University Grants Committee (UGC))</i>	UGC to consider detailed proposals from tertiary institutions in early 1999 <i>(1998)</i>	The UGC received 41 detailed proposals, and shortlisted eight proposals for further evaluation. Following a rigorous evaluation exercise, the UGC has decided to fund the three most obviously outstanding proposals in the first round, at an amount of \$126 million spread over five years. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i>
To recruit 150 outstanding Mainland students to join the undergraduate programmes of UGC-funded institutions <i>(UGC)</i>	To carry out recruitment in the 1998-1999 academic year for admission to the undergraduate programme in the 1999-2000 academic year <i>(1998)</i>	A three-year pilot scheme to recruit outstanding Mainland students was launched in 1998. 139 such students have been recruited in the 1999-2000 academic year. The recruitment for the 2000-2001 academic year is under way. <i>(Action Completed)</i>

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To give recognition to excellence in non-academic areas, such as community service, sports and the arts when admitting students to the UGC-funded institutions (UGC)</p>	<p>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 (1997)</p>	<p>Following the success of the pilot scheme in 1998-1999, the UGC-funded institutions have modified their admission systems to formally take into account students' performance in non-academic areas. 277 students have been admitted on such basis in 1999-2000. (Action in Progress: On Schedule)</p>
<p>To provide more student hostel places in the UGC-funded institutions (UGC)</p>	<p>To provide in the next five years 11 000 additional student hostel places. The preparations for 9 360 places (at a cost of \$1.6 billion) will start in 1998 (1997)</p>	<p>The UGC-funded institutions have drawn up plans to provide about 11 000 additional student hostel places. Of these, the preparations for some 9 400 places started in 1998. (Action in Progress: On Schedule)</p>
<p>To undertake management review of UGC-funded institutions to ensure that they have in place appropriate internal resource allocation, planning and financial processes (UGC)</p>	<p>To start the review in 1997-1998 (1996)</p>	<p>Management reviews for the UGC-funded institutions started in August 1998 and were completed in April 1999. A full report is being prepared and will be available by end-1999. (Action in Progress: On Schedule)</p>

Looking Forward

In the next 12 months, we will assess our performance in respect of this KRA against the following indicator –

Indicator	1999 Target
“Areas of Excellence” projects supported by the UGC	To evaluate the first round and in the light of the findings, introduce a second round for the funding of more “Areas of Excellence” proposals

We will undertake the following initiative to deliver results in this area–

Initiative	1999 Target
To seek a one-off grant of \$50 million to support the OUHK in establishing a Regional Learning Centre (EMB)	To disburse the grant to OUHK in the 1999-2000 financial year

8

Ensure students are not deprived of education for lack of financial means

We aim to ensure that no students will be deprived of education for lack of financial means. We provide direct subsidies to kindergartens, free and universal education at primary and junior secondary levels, and heavily-subsidised senior secondary and tertiary education. While a substantial part of the cost of education is borne by the Government, there remain expenses that individual families are expected to contribute towards educating their children. For families which have financial difficulties, we provide assistance in meeting their share of the costs.

The Student Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA) provides financial assistance to needy students at all levels. Assistance for primary and secondary school students is in the form of remission of school fees, grants for the purchase of textbooks and/or subsidies for travel expenses. Eligible tertiary students are provided with grants and loans for their tuition fees, academic expenses and/or living expenses during the academic year.

Progress Made

In the 1998-1999 academic year, the SFAA assisted 426 000 students in meeting their education related expenses, or 35% of the student population covered by its assistance schemes. The Agency provided a total of \$3,145 million in grants, loans, fee remissions and travel subsidies, comprising \$2,054 million for tertiary/post-secondary students, \$676 million for secondary school students, \$91 million for primary school students, and \$324 million for kindergarten pupils.

At the tertiary education level, we revamped the means-tested Local Student Finance Scheme to make the scheme fairer and more transparent. We also introduced a Non-means Tested Loan Scheme to assist full-time tertiary students in meeting their tuition fees. We extended this scheme in September 1998 to part-time tertiary students of Government-funded programmes, students of the Open University of Hong Kong, and full-time students of the Hong Kong Shue Yan College. We introduced grants for the purchase of textbooks for needy senior secondary school students. In addition, we provided travel subsidies to needy students aged 25 and above who had not completed their first degree course. We also provided travel subsidies for needy primary public sector school students aged below 12 who attended school outside their resident Primary One Admission Net.

To achieve results in this area, various initiatives have been undertaken in the past years. Details are set out below –

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To extend the Non-Means Tested Loan Scheme (NLS) to students of the Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK), part-time students pursuing publicly-funded programmes offered by University Grants Committee-funded institutions, Vocational Training Council-funded Institutes of Vocational Education, Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and the Prince Philip Dental Hospital and full-time students of the Hong Kong Shue Yan College</p> <p>(SFAA)</p>	<p>Commencement in the 1998-1999 academic year; an additional 60 000 students will be eligible under the scheme</p> <p>(1998)</p>	<p>The extension of the NLS was implemented in September 1998. In the 1998-1999 academic year, 2 130 students have obtained loans amounting to \$45.4 million.</p> <p>(Action Completed)</p>
<p>To relax the criteria of the means test of the student financial assistance schemes for pre-primary, primary and secondary school students to alleviate the financial hardship of very low income families in educating their children</p> <p>(SFAA)</p>	<p>Relaxation of the criteria to take effect from the 1999-2000 school year; an additional 22 000 students are expected to benefit</p> <p>(1998)</p>	<p>Arrangements are in place to implement the revised criteria with effect from September 1999.</p> <p>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</p>
<p>To make a one-off grant of \$50 million to the existing means-tested student loan scheme of the OUHK to meet increase in demand</p> <p>(Education and Manpower Bureau)</p>	<p>To disburse the grant to OUHK in the 1998-1999 academic year</p> <p>(1998)</p>	<p>The one-off grant was disbursed to OUHK in the 1998-1999 academic year.</p> <p>(Action Completed)</p>

Looking Forward

In the next 12 months, we will assess our performance in respect of this KRA against the following indicator –

Indicator	1999 Target
Number and proportion of students receiving financial assistance	All eligible students will be provided with the financial assistance to which they are entitled

We will undertake the following initiatives to deliver results in this area –

Initiative	1999 Target
To extend the Non-means Tested Loan Scheme to students pursuing self-financing programmes in publicly-funded institutions as well as publicly-funded post-secondary five programmes offered by the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (SFAA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● To implement the extension in the 2000-2001 academic year● To extend eligibility to an additional 79 000 students

9

Ensure continuous improvement to the education system

In order to respond more effectively to the changing demands of the community, and to ensure that our education system will meet the needs of Hong Kong in the 21st Century, we will complete in the coming year an overall review of the academic structure from pre-primary to tertiary, with particular focus on the duration of various stages of education and their interface, the school place allocation system, the curriculum and student assessment.

To facilitate the implementation of various initiatives to improve the quality of education in Hong Kong, we have completed a review of the Education Department (ED). We are implementing various reform measures to enable ED to perform effectively its new role as a facilitator and partner with the school sector in promoting quality education.

We have reviewed the private school policy with the aim of fostering a more vibrant and diverse private school sector in order to give parents wider choices in our education system. As a result of the review, we have taken steps to increase our resources and support to facilitate the development of quality private schools. To ensure that private schools receiving government subsidy are accountable for the quality of their education services, we will require schools to sign a service agreement with Government.

Over the years, we have initiated various measures to help students with special educational needs, including those who are not performing well academically. In the coming year, we will consider what further measures we may introduce.

Progress Made

We have made satisfactory progress in the implementation of reform measures for ED. We have worked out the framework and work programmes for the reform and implemented a series of initiatives to streamline procedures and enhance efficiency.

The Education Commission has conducted a large-scale consultation on the aims of education for Hong Kong. The result of the consultation indicated a general consensus on the proposed aims of education and public support of the need for educational reform. The Commission has commenced the second stage of the review as scheduled.

We are progressing well with the implementation of measures to strengthen the private school sector. We have allocated four Government-built school premises to school sponsors to operate non-profit making Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools from the 2000-2001 school year. We have also allocated two sites at nominal premium to school operators for the construction of non-profit making private independent schools. Given broad public support, we will continue these measures in future. Aided primary schools may, as from the 1999-2000 school year, apply to join DSS as well.

To achieve results in this area, various initiatives have been undertaken in the past years. Details are set out below –

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To implement detailed proposals following the organisational and management review of ED</p> <p><i>(Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB)/ED)</i></p>	<p>To start implementing proposals in early 1999</p> <p><i>(1998)</i></p>	<p>A Steering Committee on the Education Department Reform has been set up under the chairmanship of the Secretary for Education and Manpower in January 1999 to monitor the progress of implementation. The Committee has endorsed the framework and the programme of work in 1999 for the reform. An Implementation Team has been set up in ED to co-ordinate the various reform measures which are broadly divided into three main components, namely, Culture Change, Roles and Responsibilities, and Organisation and Staffing Structure. The plan is to lay down firm ground work for changes for the department within two years and to have the new management culture to firmly take root in five years.</p> <p><i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i></p>
<p>To review the structure of all stages of education</p> <p><i>(EMB)</i></p>	<p>To complete the study by 1999-2000</p> <p><i>(1998)</i></p>	<p>The Education Commission has completed the first stage of the review and consulted the public on the aims of education for Hong Kong. It has started the second stage of the review to examine the academic structure, curriculum and assessment mechanism. The education sector and the public will be consulted in the course of the review.</p> <p><i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i></p>

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To facilitate the development of a vibrant private school sector by enhancing assistance for private schools (<i>EMB</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To make available, on a pilot basis, land grants at nominal premium and interest-free capital assistance loans in 1999 for non-profit-making private schools which do not receive recurrent subsidy from Government ● To enhance capital and recurrent assistance for private schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) from the 1999-2000 school year ● To allocate to sponsoring bodies, on a pilot basis, government-built school premises for the operation of new DSS schools from the 2000-2001 school year (1998) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Two sites, one at Diamond Hill and another at Sha Tin, have been allocated to school sponsors. Capital grants for the construction of school buildings will be provided to the schools. ● Local DSS schools have been invited to apply for assistance for major and/or slope repairs exceeding \$2 million and upgrading works. A two-age banding system for calculating recurrent DSS subsidy has been adopted since September 1999. ● Four government-built secondary school premises have been allocated as non-profit making DSS schools for commencement of operation in the 2000-2001 school year. (<i>Action in Progress: On Schedule</i>)
<p>To consider recommendations of a pilot study on the long-term integration policy for students with special needs (<i>ED</i>)</p>	<p>To complete consideration of recommendations by July 1999 (1998)</p>	<p>The recommendations have been considered and they will provide the basis for formulating the long-term strategy for the integration of students with special needs. (<i>Action in Progress: On Schedule</i>)</p>

Initiative	Target	Present Position
To consider the Board of Education's (BoE) recommendations following a review of the nine-year compulsory education system and decide what changes, if any, should be made <i>(EMB)</i>	To consider and implement the recommendations by phases <i>(1996)</i>	The Administration has considered the 77 sets of recommendations in the review report, and has decided to implement 12 sets of recommendations which can 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 studied further in the context of various policy reviews. A BoE sub-committee was set up in April 1999 to monitor the progress of implementation of the recommendations, and to study the feasibility of those which require further consideration. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i>

Looking Forward

In the next 12 months, we will assess our performance in respect of this KRA against the following indicator –

Indicator	1999 Target
Timely completion of all reviews	EC to complete review of the education system by 2000

We will undertake the following initiatives to deliver results in this area –

Initiative	1999 Target
<p>To provide ordinary schools which are prepared to adopt a whole-school approach in the integration of students with mental handicap, autistic disorders, sensory handicap, or physical handicap with a grant to enable them to organise training programmes for school personnel to empower them to support pupils with diverse abilities</p> <p><i>(ED)</i></p>	<p>To expand the scheme to 40 schools from the 2000-2001 school year</p>
<p>To provide, on a pilot basis, training and funds for schools to organise activities for students with behavioural problems, with a view to reaffirming and developing their potential for positive values and behaviour</p> <p><i>(ED)</i></p>	<p>About 150 schools will benefit in the 2000-2001, 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 school years</p>

10

Provide a curriculum which develops students' potential to the full and meets the needs of the community

The overall objective of curriculum development in Hong Kong is to provide a coherent, broad and balanced curriculum that enables all our students to develop their potential to the full in all areas (covering ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics) in meeting the needs of the community.

Quite different from the past subject-specific approach, the new direction of curriculum development combines related subjects into key learning areas and is student-oriented so that students can develop the necessary skills, knowledge, attitudes and values in a cohesive and integrated manner.

Progress Made

All initiatives are either on schedule or completed. The reviews on the mathematics curriculum, arts and science streaming at secondary four and five, and enhancement of the understanding of China have provided useful inputs for the subsequent development of a coherent, broad and balanced school curriculum to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

In line with the aims of education for meeting the challenges and needs of the 21st Century, a holistic review of the curriculum across all levels of schooling is under way. We aim to provide schools with a flexible curriculum framework and key elements in different learning areas so that the schools can devise school-based curriculum to suit the interests and abilities of their own students. We are also working on alternative curriculum models to facilitate schools facing different circumstances to provide an all-round education for their students.

To achieve results in this area, various initiatives have been undertaken in the past years. Details are set out below –

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To update, as well as to improve our curriculum in terms of the cross-levels continuity and cross-subjects integration <i>(Education Department (ED))</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To introduce a new curriculum for prevocational and secondary technical schools and upgrade their teaching facilities ● To complete a comprehensive review of the mathematics curriculum by the 1999-2000 school year <i>(1997)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Curriculum Development Council (CDC) is developing a new technical curriculum in 16 new business and technological subjects for prevocational and secondary technical schools and the work will be completed by April 2000. ● Conversion works for special rooms and workshops in these schools are being planned or carried out for completion by December 2000. ● Review of the secondary mathematics curriculum was completed in July 1999. The revised curriculum will be implemented from the 2001-2002 school year onwards. A new framework for the primary mathematics curriculum will be completed by August 2000. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i>
<p>To ensure students have a balanced mix of knowledge <i>(ED)</i></p>	<p>To review the current practice of arts and science streaming at secondary 4 and 5 <i>(1997)</i></p>	<p>The review was completed in December 1998. Recommendations will be incorporated into the holistic review of the school curriculum. <i>(Action Completed)</i></p>

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To encourage development of school-based curriculum having regard to the student profile (ED)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 (1997) ● 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 (1996) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On-site school-based curriculum support will be extended to 159 primary schools in the 1999-2000 school year. (Action Completed) ● Workshops and teacher education courses are conducted regularly by ED to facilitate schools' implementation of TOC. (Action in Progress: On Schedule) ● The primary curriculum is being reviewed to incorporate TOC elements across all subjects. (Action in Progress: On Schedule)
<p>To enhance students' understanding of China (ED)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To review the curricula of various subjects for inclusion of elements which will enhance the understanding of China ● To provide resources of educational exchange programmes which involve the community in the process to get to know more about Chinese history and culture (1997) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The review has been completed in the 1998-1999 school year. A curriculum report was issued in late 1998 to introduce to schools different proposals on enhancing students' understanding of China. (Action Completed) ● \$1.9 million has been provided to 81 school projects in the 1998-1999 school year for enhancing students' understanding of China under the Chinese Cultural Projects Incentive Award Scheme. (Action in Progress: On Schedule)

Looking Forward

In the next 12 months, we will assess our performance in respect of this KRA against the following indicator –

Indicator	1999 Target
All stages of the holistic review completed and recommendations implemented in time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● To complete the review of the school curriculum framework by 1999● To develop an open and flexible curriculum framework with specification of elements of learning in key learning areas in 2000● To pilot alternative curriculum models in the 2000-2002 school years● To implement alternative curriculum models flexibly in 2002