

A Respectable Profession as a Teacher - The Engineer of the Human's Soul

Language Education

The long term language policy of the Government of Hong Kong is to enable its residents to be biliterate—to be able to read and write in Chinese and English, and trilingual—to converse in Putonghua, Cantonese, and English. As a step to attain this goal, the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) has recommended qualifications for language teachers and has secured the necessary funding to support language teacher development.

Professional language teaching force

One important initiative indispensable to language education is a capable language teaching force. A grant scheme has been created to train existing and future language teachers to perfect their skills in language teaching and in their own language development. The scheme has been known to have given grants to these programmes:

- Overseas immersion programs for local teachers who are teaching English as a second language.
- Putonghua training programs for Chinese Language teachers.
- Training for kindergarten language teachers.

Motivating language learning environment

The Task Force on Language Support has been created to train and provide support and language development activities to schools and teachers. To-date, support of the task force has shown to be effective in these areas:

- Improving teachers' knowledge in language KLAs and in language related curricular initiatives.
- Development of learning and teaching strategies, curriculum, the culture of reflection collaboration, and curriculum leadership.
- Empowerment of teachers as agents of change by experience sharing and teaching material sharing through networks.
- Strengthening curriculum leadership by supporting teachers in NSS language curriculum and incorporating reform measures in the holistic planning of school curriculum.

- School-specific continuation of NET schemes.
- Organizing co-curricular activities such as the English and Putonghua festivals and school debates.
- Mediating schools choosing Putonghua as medium of instruction.

Promotion of reading

As one of the key learning areas in education reform, the EMB has supported schools to align reading promotion with strategic planning in schools. In relation to this, the EMB has:

- Launched the reading promotion website Book Works.
- Organized talks to families regarding the benefits of reading.
- Launched the Primary Literacy Program to promote reading at the secondary level.
- Continued to support reading events Reading Ambassador and Reading Contract organized by HKEdCity.

Medium of instruction

The government has reviewed MOI (medium of instruction) arrangements for schools. In this regard, the government has made available the Language Fund to:

- Support Chinese MOI schools by the English Enhancement Scheme
- Assist English MOI schools by the Support Scheme
- Help Chinese MOI schools by extending English based learning activities to junior secondary school

Language standards of students

Language proficiencies of students are continuously monitored via TSA and via IELTS on a voluntary basis. Various degrees of improvement in proficiencies in Chinese and English have been found since the implementation of language programs based on the education reform directives in 2004.

Scholarships for prospective English teachers

To encourage quality and professional English teaching, the Scholarship for Prospective English Teachers (the Scholarship) is now available those students who are proficient in English to pursue language related local bachelor degree programmes and/ or teacher training programmes which will qualify them to become English language teachers on graduation. If you are a university student, and if you are good in English and are interested in becoming a teacher, check out this government document:

http://www.edb.gov.hk/FileManager/EN/Content_7783/info_pgde_%20en.pdf