

Task Force on School-based Management Policy

Invitation of Views

PURPOSE

The Task Force on School-based Management (SBM) Policy (the Task Force) has examined the current implementation of the SBM policy in aided schools¹ and based on which has consolidated preliminary recommendations on optimisation of the implementation of SBM. This document aims to consult the stakeholders about the main recommendations proposed by the Task Force.

BACKGROUND

2. In 1997, the Education Commission issued its Report No. 7 on Quality School Education and one of the key recommendations to the Government was to provide schools with greater autonomy and flexibility by devolving more responsibilities to them, such that schools could develop their own characteristics to meet the diverse learning needs of students and enhance the learning outcomes. In parallel, there should be enhanced transparency of school operation and accountability of school governance with increased stakeholders' involvement in decision-making and school management. Participation of stakeholders in school governance is, in fact, a world-wide trend.

3. With a view to ensuring direct involvement of the major stakeholders in school governance, aided schools shall establish incorporated management

¹ Given that the Education (Amendment) Ordinance 2004 which came into operation on 1 January 2005 requires all aided schools to set up an incorporated management committee and be managed by it, the current review essentially covers aided schools. However, subject to prevailing circumstances, the Government will consider implementing the recommendations of the Task Force in other public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools.

committee (IMC) comprising different stakeholders according to the provisions of the Education Ordinance. With devolved responsibility and accountability, schools can enjoy greater autonomy and flexibility in school management, resource deployment as well as school development.

4. With the aim of attaining quality education, the Chief Executive actively listens to the views of the education sector and various stakeholders. In addition to the implementation of a package of priority measures in the 2017/18 school year, other education areas have been identified for further review and action, and one of which is SBM, which aims at removing encumbrances for the education sector to provide more room for studies and exchanges on education policies.

5. The Education Commission (EC) accepted the invitation of the Education Bureau (EDB) and formed the Task Force in November 2017 to study the current implementation of the SBM policy in aided schools and based on the results of the study, to make recommendations on the optimisation of SBM. The Task Force is chaired by the EC Chairman, Mr Tim Lui Tim-leung, with its membership comprising representatives of school sponsoring bodies (SSBs), school councils, parents associations and teachers unions as well as experienced educators.

6. The Task Force convened a number of meetings in the past 6 months and met the representatives of district primary and secondary school heads associations respectively. It has examined the current implementation of the SBM policy and based on which has consolidated preliminary recommendations on the optimisation of the implementation of SBM.

7. To take forward the review, the Task Force now invites stakeholders' written submissions about their views on the preliminary recommendations as detailed in the ensuing paragraphs. Views gathered will be an important source

of reference for the review and for the formulation of the final recommendations of the Task Force.

STATE OF PLAY

8. Providing schools with more flexibility in their operation and management, resource deployment and development planning with devolution of enhanced responsibilities and accountability, SBM aims at empowering schools to formulate their policies that can better meet the needs of the students and schools, develop their own characteristics and improve the learning outcomes. However, schools should operate within a centrally determined governance framework. All aided schools are required to set up an IMC which comprises different stakeholders and should operate in compliance with the rules and regulations under the Education Ordinance, Education Regulations, Codes of Aid, other related Ordinances, instructions and circulars issued by the EDB from time to time and guidelines from the SSB and their IMC Constitution.

9. The SBM framework is a participatory governance framework with transparency and accountability, with schools managed by an IMC which comprises representatives from the SSB, the principal, teachers, parents, alumni and independent members. The participation of various stakeholders in formulating school policies helps enhance the transparency and accountability of school governance and create synergy, thus enabling the betterment of school policies, and at the same time, provide effective checks and balances to guard against any unfavorable development.

10. After examining the current implementation of the SBM policy, the Task

Force is of the view that over the years of implementation of SBM, the majority of schools are generally characterized by well-coordinated, systematic and effective operation, and appreciates the efforts of the aided school sector in this regard. There leaves, however, room for improvement. For example, there are individual schools whose quality of governance is not satisfactory due to the fact that their school managers lack the required knowledge and skills in school management; there are isolated cases in which supervisors cannot perform effectively the functions as stipulated in the Education Ordinance. When an IMC cannot play its managing functions effectively, school operation and student learning would be affected.

11. The Task Force suggests that optimisation of the implementation of SBM be explored along 3 broad levels – (i) to improve quality of governance; (ii) to strengthen administration capabilities of schools and unleash capacity for teachers and principals; and (iii) to enhance participation of major stakeholders in school governance. Moreover, the Task Force considers that in addition to the EDB, SSBs also play an important role to realise the benefits of SBM, hence, the Task Force’s preliminary recommended initiatives cover them as well.

TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF GOVERNANCE

12. Aided schools are managed by their respective IMCs whose performance hinges on the competency and readiness of the IMC managers. To improve the quality of governance, it is important to have a correct understanding of the respective functions and responsibilities of the different parties involved and to strengthen the capability of the major stakeholders.

13. The respective roles and responsibilities of SSBs, IMCs and EDB are summarised below:

- (a) The SSB sets the vision and mission for the school and gives general directions to the IMC in formulating education policies of the school. It has the responsibility in overseeing the performance of the IMC and ensuring that the mission of the school is realised through SSB managers.
- (b) The IMC is responsible for managing the school and is accountable for the performance of the school which is required to operate in compliance with the rules and requirements under the relevant Ordinances and Regulations, instructions and circulars from the EDB from time to time and guidelines from the SSB and its IMC Constitution.
- (c) The EDB plays the role of regulator to ensure that the IMC / schools comply with the provisions in the Education Ordinance, Codes of Aid and such requirements as promulgated in circulars and instructions issued by the EDB from time to time; and provides resources and professional support to schools.

Illustration of the interactive relationship among the EDB, SSB and IMC is at Appendix 1.

14. The Task Force considers that the legal provisions on the functions and responsibilities of a SSB and an IMC (Appendix 2) are clear and sufficient and in general, SSBs and IMCs can maintain adequate and proper interaction and collaboration between them to fulfill their respective functions. For example, when IMCs formulate education policies based on the vision and mission set, their appropriate interaction with SSBs helps ensure that the mission is carried out for the ultimate benefit of students. Besides, the EDB ensures the quality of school education through putting in place various monitoring and support

measures, including conducting external school reviews and inspections on individual schools. It also fosters partnership with SSBs for collaborating support to schools. In addition to the existing support measures provided by the EDB, the Task Force considers that the parties concerned have to step up their efforts to improve the capability of managers and quality of school governance through enhancement of training and support measures.

Preliminary Recommendations (i) – (x)

Enhancing stakeholders' understanding of the functions and responsibilities of the parties concerned

15.1. For the EDB –

- (i) The existing training for IMC managers² and SSBs³ should be improved⁴, including enhancing the training content and mode of delivery, to help IMC managers and SSBs gain a better understanding of the respective functions and responsibilities of the SSB, IMC and EDB and to foster their continuous professional development, as appropriate. This will enable them to discharge their responsibilities more effectively.
- (ii) The Task Force considers training organised by the EDB and SSBs necessary and complementary to each other. While the EDB's training programmes help keep participants abreast of the latest education policies and good practices gathered, IMCs / SSBs would tailor-make training to

² Including the Structured Manager Training Programmes, refresher courses, seminars and briefings, etc.

³ Including tailored-made SSB-based programmes with specific learning themes such as roles and responsibilities of school managers, crisis management etc., and case study.

⁴ Including improving the SBM website, for example, strengthening the training materials / videos and updating the SBM-related information.

ensure their managers are well acquainted with the SSBs' vision and mission, and will address the specific mission of individual SSBs, etc. In this regard, additional resources should be made available for IMCs for such purposes.

- (iii) As finding a suitable person to fill a manager vacancy is crucial to school governance, a list of the duties, the values and attributes, the skills and competency of a school manager, etc., should be compiled for SSBs' and IMCs' reference and for aspiring managers to understand adequately their functions and responsibilities. Besides, the existing information bank of potential managers⁵ should be enriched to include more professionals of relevant fields such as retired principals, and be promoted to SSBs / IMCs to help them identify suitable candidates for appointment to the IMCs as school managers.

Strengthening the capability of IMC managers

- (iv) The Task Force generally agrees that IMC managers would benefit from training which helps improve their capability in discharging their responsibilities. As many of the school managers have full-time jobs and may find it difficult to spare the time for training courses, the SBM website should be further enhanced to provide school managers with greater accessibility to training materials, for example, training video episodes, built-in links to the relevant circulars / guidelines of EDB, etc. Besides, e-based self-learning programmes should be provided so that IMC managers can study at their own pace. In this connection, it has already been indicated that an e-based self-learning package comprising essential

⁵ The bank was set up in mid-2017 by EDB and currently contains a few hundreds of professionals in various areas, including law, accountancy, engineering, architecture and surveying, who have expressed interest in serving as IMC managers.

knowledge of SBM, handy tips and web-based video episodes would be developed.

- (v) To facilitate IMC managers, especially the newly appointed / elected ones, in managing schools and assessing schools' performance, a web-based handy tool containing essential and important items in school administration and governance should be devised for school managers as a quick reference.
- (vi) School visits / inspections by EDB officers should be strengthened to support the IMC operation of aided schools which are weak in governance so as to provide more in-depth advice on important issues on school governance, financial matters and personnel management through direct communication among the EDB officers, school managers and school personnel involved. Potential mismanagement can hopefully be identified and arrested early.

15.2 For the SSBs –

- (vii) Similar to the formation of a 'learning circle', SSBs, in particular those sponsoring a number of schools, are encouraged to:
 - enhance internal sharing among supervisors and managers of their sponsored schools with a view to developing mutual support and making concerted efforts to promote effective governance while the EDB would take the lead to promote the sharing culture by organising district / regional theme-based discussion / sharing for standalone / other SSBs deemed necessary.
 - open up their training programmes to schools sponsored by other SSBs, where appropriate.

- (viii) Given their indispensable role in school governance, SSBs are in a good position to support the respective IMCs to tailor-make training, where possible, to enable managers to be well acquainted with the SSBs' vision and mission and to tie in with the specific needs of individual SSBs / IMCs.

15.3 For the IMCs / schools –

- (ix) For maintaining continuity and smooth manager transition, the IMCs should attach greater importance to succession planning through early identification of suitable manager candidates and grooming of potential managers in the school-based context, for example, through coopting them into the committees formed under the IMC / school. For novice managers, school-based orientation could be organised to help them understand the key elements in school administration and operation and grasp the skills and acquire the knowledge required for fulfilling their roles and responsibilities in school governance.
- (x) There is a suggestion of setting a minimum training requirement for the school managers as some consider that as an IMC is an independent legal entity with devolved authority to determine the major aspects of school administration and management, its managers should have the basic knowledge and skills as required in school governance for fulfilling the respective roles and responsibilities. On the other hand, some opine that such a training threshold would probably render recruitment of managers more difficult, including deterring some of the existing managers from continuing their service and the potential managers from joining the IMC. Besides, it would be difficult to set a minimum training requirement appropriate for and applicable to all managers of different IMCs as training

needs of school managers would vary in light of their own qualifications / experience and prevailing circumstances of the schools concerned and individual SSBs would have put in place their own policies / arrangements on manager training.

16. The Task Force welcomes stakeholders' views on recommendations (i) to (x) as mentioned above, in particular feedback to the following questions:

- (a) Are there any views or other suggestions on the initiatives initially proposed for improving the quality of governance?
- (b) Should a minimum training requirement be set for all IMC managers, including supervisors? If so, would it be mandatory or optional? What are the basic contents? Are there any practical difficulties if such training threshold is put into practice?

TO STRENGTHEN ADMINISTRATION CAPABILITIES OF SCHOOLS AND UNLEASH CAPACITY FOR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS

17. The EDB has been putting in place various measures in the past two decades to help teachers and principals cope with the administrative work, such as streamlining administrative procedures, delegating authority on personnel and administrative matters to schools, providing additional resources for schools to hire extra supporting staff / services required, and conducting review critically to minimise the data collection as well as reporting requirements for schools when participating in different schemes / initiatives and using various grants / funding disbursed by the EDB. However, the school sector is concerned that with more administrative work in relation to the implementation of SBM and the related work arisen (such as handling personnel and financial issues directly by IMCs and providing support to the IMC operation), principals and teachers have to

spend more time and energy, for instance, planning and arranging the respective school-based initiatives according to the needs of school development and student learning for provision of quality education. In addition to the ever-increasing demands of administrative work, school administration has become more complex with enhanced transparency and accountability. Schools have to handle labour-intensive and time consuming tasks such as liaising with different stakeholders, handling complaints and maintaining effective communication with parents for crisis management, etc.

18. In addition to the above, the Task Force is of the view that internal administrative arrangements and requirements form an integral and essential part of school administration / management, which are school-based and usually at the discretion of the SSB and / or IMC. It is observed that apart from observing the requirements laid down by the EDB, some SSBs have tighter control on schools, for example, in procurement and financial management matters.

19. The Task Force considers it necessary to help enhance school administration and management by cutting red tape, streamlining procedures and strengthening schools' administrative support, thereby unleashing capacity for teachers and principals for the core business of education, as set out below.

Preliminary Recommendations (xi) – (xv)

20.1 For the EDB –

(xi) To alleviate schools' administrative workload, the EDB should continue the review exercise of its requirements on schools on a regular / need basis to facilitate schools handling their administrative work more smoothly. Taking the rules governing procurement / trading operation as an example,

more flexibility can be considered where appropriate, such as relaxing the recommended requirement on the contract period, the financial limits of tendering and the number of written quotations required by making reference to other subvention schemes as appropriate.

- (xii) It is considered necessary and desirable to provide additional manpower / resources to specifically support schools / IMCs in managing their administrative work. It is also advisable that administrative support be rendered by the personnel of higher ability, such as degree holders, as school administration and management have become more complex.

20.2 For the SSBs –

- (xiii) SSBs are encouraged to examine its administrative procedures and arrangements to oversee / monitor, for example, the financial and human resource management of the sponsored schools with a view to streamlining the administrative work on the part of the schools. SSBs are also encouraged to assume a coordinating role in school administration, where possible and deemed appropriate, for example, supporting their sponsored schools to arrange centralised procurements of various stores / services commonly required to attain economy of scales and alleviate the workload of schools.

20.3 For the IMCs –

- (xiv) Similarly, IMCs should review / streamline the internal arrangements and procedures in administration and daily operation of the school as well as operation of the IMC on a regular / need basis as deemed appropriate and in consultation with the school personnel. By the same token, they would

revisit the level of details required for various school documents especially the School Development Plan, Annual School Plan and School Report, which are required to be compiled under the implementation of School Development and Accountability Framework and SBM and have attracted grave concern from teachers about the contents required. Whether the school follows the templates provided by EDB or not, these documents should be succinct and to the point. In addition, the IMC should encourage the school concerned to apply information technology more widely to support administration work, such as processing procurement, thereby helping reduce the workload of the school personnel.

- (xv) IMCs are advised to revisit their constitution and revise the terms and procedures, etc., where necessary, with reference to their experience and to tie in with the prevailing circumstances, such as revising the tenure of the elected managers to help reduce the election-generated work and arranging the necessary delegation of authority according to the legislative provisions. Besides, IMCs might explore appointing a person other than the principal, teacher or Teacher Manager to be the secretary of IMC / various committees as far as possible, thereby relieving the administrative workload of the teaching staff.

21. Concurrently, the Task Force will continue to explore further for unleashing capacity for teachers and principals for teaching, professional development and exchanges on education policies etc., including exploring the possibility of further streamlining the schools' reports and information as currently required by the EDB. Stakeholders' views on recommendations (xi) to (xv) and the following questions are particularly invited by the Task Force:

- (a) What can be done to further unleash capacity for teachers and principals?

- (b) Are there any views on the initiatives proposed to strengthen administration capabilities of schools which would help unleash capacity for teachers and principals, for example, streamlining the EDB's requirements, relaxing the procurement-related rules (such as the requirement on the contract period and the financial limits of tendering)?
- (c) Are there any views on the initiatives initially proposed for the SSB and / or IMC to review the internal administrative requirements and procedures on schools, for instance, financial and human resource management matters? Is there any further action that EDB or SSB or IMC should take?

TO ENHANCE PARTICIPATION OF MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

22. Under SBM, an aided school should put in place a participatory (P) governance framework with transparency (T) and accountability (A) with the establishment of an IMC comprising managers who are key stakeholders from different backgrounds. Under the P-T-A governance framework, one of the key elements is the due participation of key stakeholders, such as teachers, parents and alumni, in school management, development planning, evaluation and decision-making, which helps enhance the transparency of operation in schools and accountability of school governance and ensure the fairness of administrative management.

23. Having regard to the feedback received that some schools should step up their efforts to strengthen the communication and consultation mechanism and to help ensure adequate participation of stakeholders, the Task Force agrees that IMCs and schools should build up a participative culture among stakeholders.

To achieve this, IMC should review and strengthen the engagement mechanisms for different stakeholders, both formal and informal, from time to time to facilitate effective communication in the school context.

Preliminary Recommendations (xvi) and (xvii)

(xvi) IMCs are encouraged to strengthen the mechanisms to ensure that there is close and effective communication with teachers, for instance, organising school and teacher consultative meeting regularly, establishing small groups to discuss specific issues and arranging gatherings between teachers and school managers. In addition, communication with stakeholders such as parents and alumni should be enhanced and diverse channels, both formal and informal, should be developed with a view to enabling the participative culture among stakeholders to take root and ensuring due participation of stakeholders in school management and decision-making.

(xvii) IMCs are encouraged to review critically whether there is a need for setting up committees, comprising school managers with relevant expertise and respective school personnel, to take care of major areas of school operation like human resources, financial control and audit, complaint- / appeal-handling and school development planning. These committees would facilitate thorough discussion about the specific issues and in turn, help enhance transparency of the IMC and efficiency of the IMC meetings.

24. The Task Force welcomes stakeholders' views on recommendations (xvi) and (xvii) as mentioned above, in particular feedback to the following questions:

(a) Are there any other suggested means to strengthen communication between

the IMC and different stakeholders?

- (b) Are there any views on the recommendation of encouraging IMC to review critically their need for setting up committees, comprising school managers with relevant expertise and respective school personnel, to take care of the major areas of school operation?

INVITATION OF VIEWS

25. Any views / comments on the above recommendations from the education sector and stakeholders are welcomed. Written submissions should be sent to the Task Force Secretariat **on or before 10 September 2018 (Monday)** by post, e-mail or fax:

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26. The provision of personal data when offering views on this consultation document is voluntary. Any personal data thus collected will only be used for the purpose of this consultation exercise. The data will be destroyed after analysis.

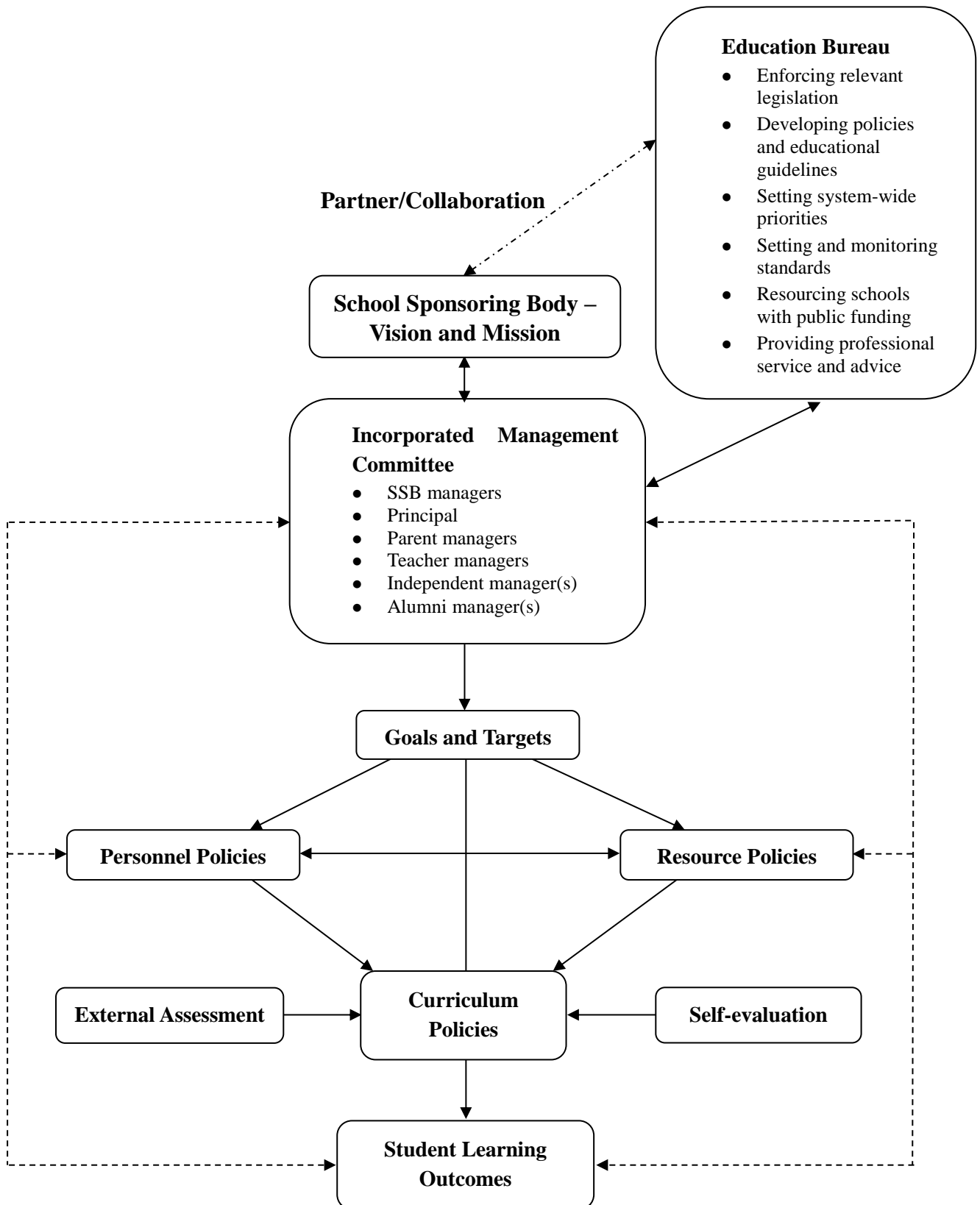
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Task Force on School-based Management Policy

23 July 2018

Relationship between EDB, SSB and IMC



40AE. Functions of sponsoring body and incorporated management committee

- (1) The sponsoring body of a school shall be responsible for—
 - (a) meeting the cost of furnishing and equipping the new school premises of the school to, where applicable, standards as recommended by the Permanent Secretary;
 - (b) setting the vision and mission for the school;
 - (c) maintaining full control of the use of funds and assets owned by it;
 - (d) deciding the mode of receiving government aid;
 - (e) ensuring, through the sponsoring body managers, that the mission is carried out;
 - (f) giving general directions to the incorporated management committee in the formulation of education policies of the school;
 - (g) overseeing the performance of the incorporated management committee; and
 - (h) drafting the constitution of the incorporated management committee.
- (2) The incorporated management committee of a school shall be responsible for—
 - (a) formulating education policies of the school in accordance with the vision and mission set by the sponsoring body;
 - (b) planning and managing financial and human resources available to the school;
 - (c) accounting to the Permanent Secretary and the sponsoring body for the performance of the school;
 - (d) ensuring that the mission of the school is carried out;
 - (e) ensuring that the education of the pupils of the school is promoted in a proper manner; and
 - (f) school planning and self-improvement of the school.

(PART IIIB added 27 of 2004 s. 16)