



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局
Education Bureau
Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

本局檔號 Our Ref. :

電話 Telephone :

來函檔號 Your Ref. :

傳真 Fax Line :

1 September 2009

Dear Primary School Principals and Teachers,

Working Together Towards a New Milestone in Education

I wish you all a happy and fruitful new school year.

From this school year onwards, public sector primary schools can implement, where circumstances permit, small class teaching (SCT) by phases, from Primary One progressively to Primary Six. This initiative marks a new chapter in the development of basic education. All of us in the Education Bureau will do our utmost to render assistance to principals and teachers to maximise the benefits of SCT with a view to further enhancing the quality of learning and teaching in primary schools. We have set aside a sum of \$218 million over a six-year period, commencing from the 2009-10 financial year, to provide schools with diversified support for SCT. We have already rolled-out in-service training programmes for teachers and in view of the enthusiastic response, we will organise more programmes for them from this October.

We also started providing some 700 additional teaching posts in the 2008/09 school year on a time-limited basis for schools to draw up school-based implementation plans for SCT. I am glad to learn that schools have made effective use of these additional posts to create more room for teachers to plan for SCT. For instance, some schools make flexible use of classrooms and other facilities to conduct “group teaching”. Based on the ability of students, subjects and learning themes, teachers adopt different modes and strategies to enhance questioning techniques for students to develop

problem-solving skills and give prompt feedback. In other schools, some teaching sessions are allotted to collaborative lesson planning to facilitate experience-sharing, reflection and group discussion. I sincerely believe that the school management and teachers will spare no efforts in implementing their SCT plans in full.

For schools maintaining the class size at 30, we have also provided them with additional teachers as an interim arrangement to improve learning and teaching before their transition to SCT.

As an international city with Mainland China as our hinterland, Hong Kong needs to nurture biliterate and trilingual talents with the requisite knowledge and generic skills in order to sustain our competitive edge worldwide. Following the implementation of the curriculum reform in 2001, I am glad to see that schools are able to help students to achieve the four key tasks and acquire the nine generic skills featured in the reform. Through the process, students have learnt how to learn and strived for all-round development at the basic education level, which is a particularly important learning stage. This has helped paved the way for lifelong learning for our students. We have also allocated additional resources to further improve the teaching and learning of English in primary schools, including establishing a scholarship to attract young talents to pursue a career in education, strengthening school-based support and providing professional training for teachers to create a better English environment. All these will, in turn, support the fine-tuned arrangement for the medium of instruction at junior secondary levels.

An improved learning and teaching environment inside classroom is not merely for enhancing students' academic performance. More importantly, it enables schools to strengthen moral education in order to instill into their students' minds positive values and life attitudes for good personal virtues. In this, our next generation will then learn how to embrace challenges and adversities when they grow up and enter the society.

Education is a mammoth task requiring sustained efforts. We are sure that with faith and determination, cordial collaboration and good deployment of resources, we will be able to create a caring and harmonious learning environment for students to pursue all-round development.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my sincerest thanks for your efforts to guard against the Human Swine Influenza in the past few months. I am sure that in the new school year, schools will continue to follow the measures recommended in the letter issued by the Bureau on the relevant arrangements and the latest guidelines provided by the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health to prevent the spread of the influenza and other communicable diseases in schools. With proper measures in place, teachers and students will have a clean and hygienic school environment to meet the challenges in the new school year.

On behalf of my Bureau colleagues, may I pay tribute and extend gratitude to each of you for your unfailing devotion to the education profession.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael M. Y. Suen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail.

(Michael M. Y. Suen)
Secretary for Education