

25 July 2025

## **Education Bureau Circular No. 17/2025**

### **Continuing Professional Development and Training Requirements for Principals**

[Note: This circular should be read by

- (a) Supervisors and Heads of government schools, aided schools (including special schools), caput schools and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools – for action; and
- (b) Supervisors and Heads of private independent schools and Heads of Sections – for information.]

#### **Summary**

This circular sets out the details of continuing professional development (CPD) and training requirements for principals, and calls upon school supervisors to monitor and support principals' participation in professional development activities. Education Bureau (EDB) Circular No. 31/2002 dated 17 July 2002 is hereby superseded.

#### **Background**

2. The core mission of education is cultivating values and nurturing people. Principals are not only disseminators, practitioners and leaders of education, but also linchpins of school education and are assumed primary responsibility for decision-making in schools. The professional competence and vision of the principals are thus of paramount importance. All along the EDB enhances the principals' professionalism through various initiatives, enabling them to lead effectively in the ongoing development of their schools. In addition to formulating CPD requirements and providing structured professional training tailored to the needs of aspiring principals, newly appointed principals and serving principals at different stages, the EDB has introduced the "Professional Standards for Principals of Hong Kong"<sup>1</sup> with a view to encouraging principals to reflect on their professional growth and fulfil their three professional roles, namely "Ethical Enablers", "Versatile Architects" and "Visionary

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<sup>1</sup> Please visit the webpage of the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals at <https://www.cotap.hk/index.php/en/t-standard/t-standard-ppsp>.

Edupreneurs”, thereby effectively steering their schools towards the vision of delivering quality education. Principals should serve as role models for teachers by proactively equipping themselves, staying abreast of current trends, and participating in CPD activities as required. School supervisors should assume a monitoring and supportive role to ensure that principals fulfil the training requirements at different stages as scheduled.

## **Details**

### **(A) Aspiring Principals (APs)**

3. Starting from the 2004/05 school year, APs must attain the Certification for Principalship (CFP), in addition to complying with the appointment conditions in force at the time, before they can be considered for principalship<sup>2</sup> in public sector or Direct Subsidy Scheme schools. CFP applicants must have at least five years of teaching experience and possess a recognised teacher training qualification. They must also satisfy the following criteria within a two-year CFP process:

- (a) Successful completion of the needs analysis (NA);
- (b) Successful completion of the preparation for principalship (PFP) course; and
- (c) Fulfilling requirements for the professional development portfolio.

4. The EDB will regularly release information on the NA and the PFP course through the EDB Training Calendar System. After successful completion of the NA and the PFP course, applicants can submit their professional development portfolio to the School Leadership and Professional Development Section of the EDB for assessment. The CFP is valid for five years from the date of issuance or the end of the initial two-year CFP process, whichever is the later. For details, please refer to the latest circular on the EDB website (EDB homepage > Teachers Related > Qualifications, Training and Development > Development > Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Principals > Circulars).

### **(B) Newly Appointed Principals (NAPs)**

5. Starting from the 2002/03 school year, NAPs<sup>3</sup> must undergo a Designated Professional Development Programme offered by the EDB. The programme consists of two parts:

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<sup>2</sup> Under exceptional circumstances, the Permanent Secretary for Education may approve a school sponsoring body/School Management Committee/Incorporated Management Committee to appoint a principal without CFP on an acting basis. The acting principal so appointed must fulfil the CFP requirement within two years from the date of appointment before his/her principalship can be confirmed, effective from the date of the CFP conferment.

<sup>3</sup> NAPs refer to principals who are appointed to publicly-funded schools **for the first time**.

(a) Professional Development Programme (PDP) for NAPs

- This two-year PDP is designed to equip NAPs with the necessary knowledge and skills for school management, broaden their inter-disciplinary perspectives, and enhance their foresight and insight into school leadership. It features diverse content including seminars, workshops, leadership forums, and visits to organisations. Online resources are also available for self-learning.
- The PDP includes a mentorship scheme, where experienced principals serve as mentors to provide support to NAPs. NAPs are also encouraged to establish learning communities through the mentorship scheme to facilitate mutual learning and sharing, and to foster a culture of professional exchange.

(b) Leadership Enhancement Programme (LEP) for Primary and Secondary School Principals

- The LEP is a five to six-day Mainland study tour, featuring thematic talks, visits to leading enterprises/organisations and cultural sites. The tour is designed to deepen NAPs' understanding of education, society, culture, economy, and innovation and technology in the Mainland. It also provides a broad perspective on national affairs, development and achievements, with the objective of further inspiring NAPs to develop strategies for leading their schools and enhancing their leadership skills.

6. All NAPs must complete the PDP and the LEP **within the first three years of their principalship**. Relevant training hours may be counted towards their personal CPD records. The EDB will inform NAPs and their school supervisors about the content and arrangements of these training programmes to facilitate their early formulation of professional development plans.

(C) **Serving Principals (SPs)**

7. Starting from the 2002/03 school year, SPs are required to participate in at least 150 hours of CPD activities in every three-year cycle, approximately 50 hours per year. They can engage in CPD activities organised by the EDB, school sponsoring bodies, tertiary institutions or non-governmental organisations in accordance with their personal development needs, the school's needs and the policy-driven needs.

## **Monitoring and Follow-up**

8. As stipulated in Code 8 of Chapter 3 of the Guidelines on Teachers' Professional Conduct<sup>4</sup>, teachers should actively participate in CPD activities to enhance their professional competence and meet the training requirements at different stages of the profession in accordance with the guidelines of the EDB and their respective schools. As school leaders, principals should serve as role models by upholding professional conduct and fulfil the training requirements in a timely manner. They should also proactively equip themselves and stay abreast of current trends to lead their schools in becoming learning organisations. The Management Committees/Incorporated Management Committees (IMCs)/School Management Committees (SMCs) should assume a monitoring and supportive role to ensure that principals fulfil the training requirements at different stages as scheduled.

9. If principals serving on an acting basis without the CFP fail to fulfil the CFP requirements by the end of the two-year of acting appointment, they have to cease acting and the approval for their serving as acting principals will generally be withdrawn. For NAPs who fail to complete the Designated Professional Development Programme, including the PDP and the LEP, by the end of the three-year training period, the EDB will follow-up seriously, which includes seeking explanations from the Management Committees/IMCs/SMCs of the schools concerned, and will definitely review the teacher registration of the relevant NAPs from the perspective of professional conduct and take appropriate follow-up actions. SPs should submit their CPD records to their Management Committees/IMCs/SMCs for endorsement at the end of each school year/three-year cycle.

## **Enquiries**

10. For enquiries about the CPD and training requirements for principals, please contact the School Leadership and Professional Development Section at 3509 7579. For issues related to principal appointments, please contact the respective Senior School Development Officers.

Ms W P LEE  
for Secretary for Education

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<sup>4</sup> The Guidelines on Teachers' Professional Conduct is available at:  
[https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/teacher/guidelines\\_tpc/guidelines\\_en.pdf](https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/teacher/guidelines_tpc/guidelines_en.pdf)