



Education Policy

(April 1965)

Author	Government of Hong Kong
Publisher	Government Printer, Hong Kong
Theme	Early childhood schooling - Education of English-speaking children - Educational Financing - Primary schooling - Secondary schooling - Teacher education
Level of Education	Pre-primary - Primary - Secondary
Background	This policy paper reflects the Government's intention to reformulating the aims of existing education policy and to flexibly implementing policy changes under resource constraints. The proposed policy changes are based on a comprehensive review of ideas presented in (a) the report of a Working Party, which was formed in January 1964 to examine the various policy recommendations presented in 1963 by an Education Commission (EC) and a Working Party on the Provision of Education for English-speaking Children (WPPEEC), and (b) the reports prepared by the EC and WPPEEC.
Aim	This White Paper aims to (1) review the prevailing educational policy of the Hong Kong Government and (2) outline government policy proposals for gradual reform in the following areas: education at early childhood, primary and secondary levels, education of English-speaking children, teacher education and educational financing.
Table of Contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preface • Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General (paras. 1-2; p. 1) Existing Policy (para. 3; p. 1) The Present Position (paras. 4-6; p. 2) • The New Proposals in Outline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General (paras. 7; p. 2) Kindergarten or pre-primary education (paras. 8; p. 2) Primary education (paras. 9-13; pp. 2-5) Secondary education (paras. 14-17; pp. 5-6) Other post-primary education (paras. 18-19; pp. 6-7) English education (paras. 20-21; pp. 7-8)

	<p>Training of teachers (paras. 22-23; p. 8)</p> <p>Government and the aided schools (paras. 24; p. 9)</p> <p>Salaries (paras. 25; pp. 9-10)</p> <p>Costs (paras. 26; pp. 10-11)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix 1. Modification and reservation (5 pages) Appendix 2. The 1964 report of the working party on the recommendations of the Education Commission, 1963 (102 pages)
--	--

Extraction from this Educational Document in the Handbook	
Content	Document Paragraph
Summary of Policy Review	
Existing Policy	para. 3
The Present Position	paras. 4-6
Summary of Policy Recommendations	
Kindergarten or Pre-primary Education	para. 8
Primary Education	paras. 9-13
Secondary Education	paras. 14-17
Other Post-primary Education	paras. 18-19
English Education	paras. 20-21
Training of Teachers	paras. 22-23
Government and the Aided Schools	para. 24
Salaries	paras. 25
Costs	paras. 26

*** Summary of Policy Review ***

The following extraction from the *Introduction* section of the Paper, *paras. 3 to 6*, summarises the prevailing educational policy and reviews the Government's position on primary and secondary education. *Editors.*

Existing Policy

3. The existing policy for primary and secondary education may be briefly summarised as follows:
 - (a) To ensure that places are available in government, aided or private primary schools for all children of primary school age.
 - (b) To provide in government and aided primary schools, and to encourage the provision in private primary schools, of an additional one year and, later on, an additional two years, of secondary education in Special Forms I and II for those pupils who are unable to gain admission to full secondary courses and who wish to remain at school until they reach the statutory minimum age for industrial employment-that is to say, at age 14.
 - (c) To provide in government, aided and selected private schools secondary education to School Certificate level for about 15% of all pupils who complete the primary school courses; and to encourage voluntary and private agencies to supplement this provision. Free sites, capital grants and interest-free loans for school building, as well as limited help towards meeting recurrent expenditure, are made available for non-profit-making organisations. Sites restricted to school use are made available for purchase by profit-making organisations.

The Present Position

4. In terms of primary school places in the Colony as a whole, the objective stated in paragraph 3(a) above has very nearly been achieved; but, with the large scale resettlement and redevelopment now proceeding, some areas are better provided with school places than others. Until recently also, more than half the available places were in private schools.
5. Special Form I has not proved popular. Last year only 2,653 pupils were admitted to Special Forms I, and this year only 1,902 were admitted.
6. This year, 18.3% of children leaving primary schools were admitted to government and aided secondary schools or were given assisted places in private secondary schools; thus exceeding the aim by 3.3%. A further 49.3% of primary school leavers were admitted to other secondary schools offering courses to School Certificate level.

* Summary of Policy Recommendations *

The following extraction from *The New Proposals in Outline* section of the Paper, *paras. 8 to 26*, outlines government policy proposals in a wide range of areas, including schooling at both early childhood, primary and secondary levels, education of English-speaking children, teacher education and educational financing. *Editors.*

Kindergarten or Pre-primary Education

8. For the time being, it will be necessary to rely on voluntary organisations and private enterprise to provide education at this level. The Education Department will however assist by providing advisory services and facilities for in-service training courses.

Primary Education

9. *School places.* It is intended to extend the number of places in government and aided primary schools as rapidly as possible, and to introduce a scheme of subsidised places in private schools, so as to provide for all children who seek any such places. The Working Party's estimate that 80% of all children of primary school age will, in fact, seek an aided education is accepted for planning purposes; as is the recommendation that endeavours be made to achieve this aim by 1970-71.
10. *Length of course.* It is also proposed that all children attending government and aided primary schools receive in future six years of general education before selection for entry into the secondary schools is made, thus absorbing the present Special Forms I into the primary system. This means that in 1968, when the first pupils will have completed Junior 5 under the present re-organised system, they will then receive a further year of general education before they sit for the Secondary School Entrance Examination. This extra year is intended to cover as much of the present secondary Form I syllabus as possible, and particular attention will be paid to the study of English. It is hoped that this proposed emphasis on English language work in the new sixth year will not only facilitate later study in Anglo-Chinese secondary schools but will also improve English standards in Chinese secondary schools. This will incidentally benefit the Chinese University of Hong Kong.
11. *Age of entry.* The age of entry to primary schools was raised from 6 to 7 in 1963, when the new pattern was introduced of a 5-year basic primary course starting at age 7, to be followed by two extra years in Special Forms I and II for those children not proceeding to a full secondary education. The purpose of this policy was to fill the existing gap of two years between the end of primary schooling and the statutory minimum age for employment in industry. The raising of the minimum age to 7 in 1963 has proved to be unpopular, not only with the parents but also with school management. When this rule results, as it may, in primary education starting for some children at an age as late as 7 years and 7 months, or in the alternative means that parents must pay higher fees for private primary education before the age of admission to aided education is reached, there must be much sympathy with the objectors. It is true that the effects of the rule have been somewhat modified in practice because it has been found possible for the last two years to admit children to government or aided primary education from the age of six years and eight months. Nevertheless, it is very clear that there is much dissatisfaction that primary education should have to start so comparatively late. Both the Education Commission and the Working Party had remarks to make about the implementation of the additional years of post-primary education in Special Forms I and II; but neither felt free to recommend so radical a reversal of policy as the abandonment of the current age of entry. This policy has therefore been re-considered in the light of the latest information now available on secondary school enrolment, quoted in paragraph 6 above. These figures show that those for whom the bridging of the gap between leaving school and employment at 14 is a practical necessity comprise only a minority of about 30%. For those who go

on to secondary education, at present comprising some 70%, a return to 6 years of age for entry into the primary schools would only have the effect of making their start on secondary education rather earlier than it otherwise might be. This should not add to the cost of educating those who proceed through the secondary schools. As to the minority who do not, a change in policy would result in a gap of duration varying between 1-2 years opening up between the end of the primary school course and the earliest age of industrial employment. This gap would be partly filled by the proposed seventh year of education with a vocational bias referred to in paragraph 18 below; it could be completely closed by offering a second year to children who, at the end of the first additional year, are still some six months short of their 14th birthday. Clearly this extra period of education for a proportion of the minority group who do not go into secondary education will increase total education costs, but it seems desirable that the additional cost be accepted. It is therefore intended to re-establish 6 as the minimum age of entry to Government and aided primary education. This cannot be done in one step however, as to do so would produce unacceptable congestion in the schools; it is therefore proposed to reduce the age of entry progressively by 2 months a year until an entry age of 6 is reached in four years' time.

12. *Fees.* The Working Party's recommendation that there be no increase in urban and rural Chinese Primary School fees is accepted, as is the recommendation that a suburban fee of \$30 per annum be instituted to apply in the many new areas which have in recent years been intensively developed and for which the preferential treatment accorded to rural areas is no longer appropriate.
13. *Fee remission.* The present practice is to remit up to 10% of the maximum theoretical fee income. The Working Party's recommendation that, if no increase in urban and rural Primary School fees is imposed then an increase in the present rate of fee remissions in primary schools is not necessary, has been carefully considered. It is clearly preferable to proceed towards a system of free primary education by increasing the allowable rate of fee remission rather than by an all-round reduction in fees, since the benefits of reducing the total fees chargeable ought first to be reaped by those whose need is greatest. Steady progress towards the eventual aim of free primary education is desirable if possible, and it is clear from the general sense of the Working Party's comments that they would agree. It is considered that in present circumstances an overall primary school fee remission rate of 20% can be afforded, and this new and more generous rate is therefore proposed. Steps will however be taken to see that as far as possible those who benefit from the extra 10% are those in the community as a whole who really need help most.

Secondary Education

14. *Aided school places.* The new aim proposed will be to increase the number of pupils admitted to government or aided secondary grammar or secondary technical schools, and to subsidised places in selected private schools, to between 15% and 20% of the total number of pupils completing the primary course. This proposal is a variant of the Working Party's recommendation, which expressed this figure as 'at least 15%'. The new proposal recognises that the present figure is already some 18.3% and the proportion is expressed as a maximum and minimum for the sake of practical flexibility. It is obviously impossible to keep the percentage at any particular figure at all times. In effect, this proposal means that if at any time an imbalance in the relative provision of primary and secondary places looks like reducing the proportionate figure to below 15%, the provision of new secondary places will be speeded up. Similarly, if the proportionate figure looks like rising above 20%, the secondary programme will be appropriately adjusted.
15. *Assisted places in private schools.* As secondary education to School Certificate level is clearly the most popular form of post-primary education, it is expected that an additional 50-60% of pupils leaving the primary schools will find places in private secondary schools, since it is also expected that private schools will tend to concentrate their efforts more on the secondary level as more and more places become available in aided primary schools. The Working Party has recommended that at least 1,500 places per year in the private secondary schools should be subsidised in such a manner as to enable them to be included in the 15-20% ratio of aided secondary school places

referred to in the preceding paragraph. It is proposed that this recommendation should be interpreted as meaning between 1,500-2,000 places, for the sake of flexibility.

16. Fees. The modifications made by the Working Party to the fee structure in secondary schools proposed by the Education Commission are accepted, as are the increases in the rate of fee remissions proposed by the Working Party. The result will be to raise the standard grammar school fee in government and aided urban grammar schools from \$320 to \$400, with corresponding suburban and rural fees of \$300 and \$200 and sixth form fees of \$450. Fees in secondary technical schools would be raised to \$200 (urban) and \$100 (rural) in September 1965 and would then progressively be brought into line with grammar school fees. At the same time those who genuinely cannot afford to pay the increases represented in these figures will be protected by the increased provision for fee remission; new maximum rates for which will now be 50% for matriculation classes, 45% for other grammar school classes, and 35% for secondary technical schools. The Working Party expressed considerable concern at the gap between fees payable in government and aided secondary schools and proposed measures for minimising this difference. This concern is shared, and the Working Party's proposals are accepted in principle.
17. It is proposed further to allow pupils who have completed the extra primary year referred to in para. 10 to enter the School Certificate examination after four years of secondary education if they show themselves capable of successfully completing the course in that period. Notwithstanding the introduction of the additional year into the primary school course, there is no intention of shortening the present five-year secondary course for all pupils until there is evidence to show that this can be done without serious detriment to academic standards. It is probable that for a time there may be four and five secondary classes running side by side according to ability; a final decision as between a four and five-year course in the long term can only be made in the light of experience. Nevertheless it would clearly be advantageous if pupils who were contemplating further post-secondary studies in universities or elsewhere were not obliged to spend an unnecessarily long period in reaching School Certificate level.

Other Post-primary Education

18. Assuming, as indicated above, that some 15-20% of primary school leavers receive a full secondary education in government and aided schools or by assisted places in private schools, and some 50-60% in private schools, there will remain some 20-30% of children who will have finished 6 years' primary schooling, but who will still be under the age at which they can be legally employed in industry. Recent experience indicates that such pupils are not attracted by the opportunity of further general education in ordinary schools, which does not lead to a definite qualification. It is therefore proposed to cater for the needs of this section by increasing the provision of various types of vocational training. The recently introduced one-year full-time pre-apprenticeship courses at the Technical College are an example of this. These facilities appear to be popular, and it is proposed to extend them and to grant financial assistance to other agencies which are prepared to establish a one-year course of training - or if necessary a two-year course (see paragraph 11) - directed towards specific industries or occupations. On obtaining employment, these young people will be able to continue their training either by joining one or more courses provided under the Adult Education programme or through the part-time and evening courses of the Technical College.
19. The total effect of all the above proposals is to ensure that all young persons who desire it can obtain a minimum of at least seven years' full-time aided education, while making increased provision for further education for those best able to benefit by it.

English Education

20. The preceding paragraphs refer to the main body of children in the Colony. The education of English-speaking children has also to be dealt with. Here, the conclusions of the recent Working Party are generally accepted. It is recognized that there is a demand for education of the kind

hitherto provided in the Government Junior English Schools and at King George V School, and that if Hong Kong's economy continues to depend in part upon the services of persons from other countries, for whom education in the English medium and for the most part in the pattern of English state education is a necessity, then the need must be filled; and it is also agreed that this need is best filled in future by aided rather than by government schools wherever this is possible. The general principle is also accepted that where such education is more costly than the type of education provided for the majority, the difference in cost should be passed on to those who enjoy these particular standards of provision, so that the general level of subsidy remains the same in all sections of the community. It is further accepted that the gap between the age of entry to English education provided by Government or subsidised by Government and Chinese primary education should be closed, and the intention will be to increase the age of entry to Junior English schools to 6 but to do this progressively by four stages in the same way as it is proposed progressively to lower the entry age for Chinese schools. As to the provision of places at primary level, the same object of providing aided education for all who desire it should apply to Junior English in the same way as with Chinese primary education. At secondary level the number of places to be provided is less easy to determine, but in terms of actual need it would appear that the provision of one additional school, to be sited on the Island, should suffice at the present time.

21. The Working Party has proposed an increase in fees from \$240 to \$480 a year for junior, and from \$320-\$360 to \$1,000 a year for secondary English education. These proposals are accepted, as are the accompanying proposals on their implementation by two stages in September 1965 and September 1966, and on the level of fee remissions. It is hoped that with this provision the new fees which are necessary to preserve the principle of equal subsidy for all, will not prove beyond parents' capacity to pay.

Training of Teachers

22. Both the Education Commissioners and the Working Party have made radical proposals regarding teacher training. The Commissioners refer in their report to the very favourable position enjoyed by students training to enter the teaching profession through training colleges as compared with students training for other professions. Their proposals would substantially erode that advantage by requiring the payment of a tuition fee and the repayment over a period of maintenance allowances. The Working Party expressed a proper concern lest the impact of these changes, equitable though they might be, should adversely affect the quality of those offering themselves for teacher training. It is therefore proposed to accept the Working Party's final conclusions, which include payment of a tuition fee of \$400 a year, with provision for all students on application to receive an interest-free loan up to \$1,200 a year, repayable over three or four years and additionally, for needy students, an outright grant over and above the loan, up to \$1,600 a year.
23. That it is now proposed to charge for tuition and to provide financial assistance only in response to application does not and should not be taken to imply any lack of appreciation of the importance of the teacher's role in society or of the responsibilities of the profession. It reflects rather a consciousness that no profession has a right to an especially privileged treatment, a principle with which the teaching profession itself would doubtless agree. The Working Party's proposals for a grant over and above a loan are considered to be so designed as to provide adequately and fairly for the needy aspirant to the profession.

Government and the Aided Schools

24. Stress has been laid in various sections of the Working Party Report on the part to be played in educational development by the aided school. In general it is proposed in the Report that Government should provide schools only where an aided school cannot be provided. This view is accepted. In general, education can be provided more economically in aided than in government schools and, in a period when educational facilities must be expanded, the capacity to do so is inevitably affected by cost: the more economical the cost the greater the capacity for expansion. However, in subscribing to this general policy, it must be made clear that there is no intention of providing cut-price education. If aided schools are to form the main body of our advance they must be adequately, though not extravagantly, supplied with the means of imparting a sound education. The Working Party devoted much attention to methods of subsidy; a detailed reference would be out of place here, but care will be taken first of all to simplify as far as possible the method of calculation of subsidy and the administrative processes connected therewith, and secondly to ensure as far as may be that the grants produced by whatever new simplified code is negotiated are adequate, when taken with the permitted fees, to enable schools to operate efficiently and to pay their staffs the salaries that are prescribed. The intention is to establish a formula whereby all normal expenditure is provided for by a grant expressed as a proportion of the school's total salary bill, together with provision for non-recurrent grants for items of an exceptional and unforeseeable character. Of the various possible ways of calculating the financial aid to be granted which were discussed by the Working Party, this method is considered likely to be the simplest and most appropriate.

Salaries

25. Finally a word has to be said about salaries. The Education Commission made radical proposals for a completely new salary structure, based upon the Burnham system, which would relate remuneration to responsibility. The Commission's proposed basic teaching scales are lower than current scales, but it proposed a wide range of allowances for posts involving responsibility. The Working Party, while preserving the character of the structure recommended by the Commissioners, made extensive changes and its detailed proposals are more generous than those proposed by the Commissioners. The impact of salaries is of critical importance to the development of education, and it is realised that there will be much disappointment that an authoritative statement on salaries at the present time is impossible. However, time for further consideration is unavoidable because the changes which have been suggested for adoption are very radical, they have wide implications, and the effects of their application must not only be examined in detail, but will need to be discussed in consultation with the many individuals and organisations affected by them. Every effort will be made to pursue these questions as rapidly as possible but in the meantime there is nothing that can be said either as to the principle, the quantum or the application of the Working Party's proposals on salaries; save only that the principle that salary scales for teachers in government and in aided schools should be the same is accepted.

Costs

26. In considering the financial effects of a revised policy of education it is well not only to differentiate between recurrent and non-recurrent expenditure but also to note that increased recurrent expenditure may arise as a result of two different causes. The first of these relates to the basic per caput cost of education at its various stages. Changes in the level of fees, the rate of fee remission, salaries of teachers, etc. will obviously affect these costs irrespective of the quantity of education provided. Table 25 of the Working Party's Report attempts to illustrate this by applying their new proposals to 1963-64 financial year. This results in an estimated increase in expenditure of the order of \$2.3 million, to which a further \$1.3 million would need to be added to take account of the later proposal to increase the rate of fee remission in primary schools. The second kind of financial effect relates mainly to changes in the quantity of education. In this category must be included the aim to increase the amount of government aided primary education to approximately

80% by 1970-71 and to provide post-primary vocational training facilities for 20% to 30% of school leavers. The Working Party has suggested that the first of these proposals would increase Government's expenditure on primary education from \$95 million to about \$182 million by 1970-71 if all its other recommendations are implemented; and this figure does not allow for the more generous rate of fee remission (plus \$2.7 million). The second proposal will take some years to introduce on any scale but assuming that 20,000 children have one such year and 10,000 a second post-primary year the recurrent cost will be in the region of \$23 million. Finally, there is the question of capital costs. It is virtually impossible to say how much of the necessary new buildings would have been provided anyhow, for example as a result of the Resettlement Programme, and how much is directly attributable to new educational policies. Over the next five-year period however it seems likely that capital expenditure on new school buildings will need to be of the following order:

Primary Education	\$61,500,000
Secondary Education	\$52,000,000
Post-primary Vocational Training	<u>\$10,000,000</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$123,500,000</u>

Appendices 1 - 2 (*See original document*)

