



Secondary Education in Hong Kong Over the Next Decade

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Theme	Educational assessment/ examinations – Language in education – Secondary schooling – Student selection and allocation – Technical education
Level of Education	Secondary
Background	The achievement of universal primary education in 1972 and the projected availability of resources became the basis for the Government to formulate a policy of progressive extension of universal education. The Governor appointed in January 1973 a Board of Education to submit policy proposals, on which the Legislative Council had commented in October 1973 and members of the public afterward. This policy paper was prepared in the light of all these deliberations and tabled in the Legislative Council on 16 th October 1974.
Aim	This White Paper aims to provide a blue print for the development of secondary education in Hong Kong up to 1984. It spells out the specific policy goal of extending subsidised education from six to nine years and those pertinent action plans and temporary measures for achieving the objective. The major proposed change is the abolition of the Secondary School Entrance Examination, to be replaced by the Hong Kong Junior Certificate of Education. Relevant to teacher education is the measure to placing a premium on trained non-graduate teachers to meet the planned drastic expansion of the junior secondary forms.
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✧ Summary of Policy Recommendations ✧

The following extraction from the White Paper, *paras. 2.1 to 2.24* outlines a new system of school education in which all children of Hong Kong are guaranteed a free nine-year education. It also recommends different measures to meet the expanded demand for school places while maintaining the quality of education. *Editors.*

Nine Years of General Education for All

- 2.1 In 1965, when the previous White Paper on Education Policy was published, universal primary education was the immediate aim. Now that this has been achieved, the time has come for the next major step forward, in the field of education, the development of secondary education.
- 2.2 The Government's main objective is to make available, by 1979, subsidised education for every child for nine years, i.e. six years in a primary school followed by three years in a secondary school. All children should follow a common course of general education throughout these nine years. With this ambitious target, there will be combined a significant expansion of places for those wishing to continue their education thereafter.

Junior Secondary Forms

- 2.3 The education at present provided in secondary schools tends to be dominated by preparation for the Hong Kong Certificate of Education and for the entrance examinations of the two Universities. Because many pupils will be unable to obtain a place in a tertiary educational institution, it is desirable that the three years of secondary education, which will be provided for every child, should lead to a new public examination. This will both provide evidence that a pupil has satisfactorily completed his education to Form III standard and will act as a form of selection for further subsidised education.
- 2.4 A possible system would be to provide special junior secondary schools for Forms I to III only, with separate senior secondary schools offering a further two years secondary education in Forms IV and V. Children selected from the junior secondary schools would have to move to senior secondary schools to complete their secondary education, while those not selected would leave school to enter employment. However, there are serious disadvantages to such a divided secondary school system; the practical difficulties of converting existing school premises; the disruptive effect of changing schools on the education of those children who will continue beyond Form III; and the problems of discipline in schools with a narrow age structure. It is therefore intended that, so far as possible, each secondary school should provide five years of secondary education, in a junior secondary course covering Forms I to III, and a senior secondary course for Forms IV and V. All new secondary schools should be constructed with these requirements in mind.
- 2.5 In junior secondary forms, all pupils should follow the same general curriculum, of which between 25% and 30% would be allocated to practical and technical subjects. The junior secondary curriculum will be designed to foster a liking for practical subjects, and it will be left to the discretion of individual schools to increase the proportion of time devoted to them. Schools will also be encouraged to ensure that junior secondary pupils participate in cultural activities (such as art and music) and in physical education.
- 2.6 The means by which sufficient junior secondary form places for every child can be provided as rapidly as possible are outlined in Chapter 3. When there are sufficient subsidised junior secondary places available to provide for every child completing six years of primary education,

the existing Secondary School Entrance Examination, which is the method now used to select pupils for subsidised secondary education, will no longer be necessary and can be abolished.

- 2.7 With the abolition of the Secondary School Entrance Examination, an alternative system will have to be devised to regulate the flow of students from primary to junior secondary schools. As far as possible, a secondary school will take its pupils from primary schools in the same area. It will be the responsibility of each school to select its pupils under the general supervision of the Education Department, which will co-ordinate the placing of children for whom school places are not available near their homes. A secondary school will be encouraged to avoid elitist admission policies and to accept pupils of all levels of ability. It should seek advice on a pupil's abilities from the head of his primary school and will be discouraged from setting its own private entrance examination. However, a secondary school which also runs a linked primary school will be allowed to give preference to pupils from the latter.

Senior Secondary Forms

- 2.8 After completing the three years junior secondary course, children selected by means of a new public examination in Form III will enter senior secondary grammar or senior secondary technical forms. It is intended that 60% of the places should be in senior secondary grammar forms and 40% in senior secondary technical forms, although this ratio may take some time to achieve in view of the existing preponderance of secondary grammar schools. It is the Government's aim that there should be sufficient places in senior secondary forms in the public sector for 40% of the 15-16 age group by 1979. In due course, the Government will consider whether a higher target percentage should be set for the public sector, though it should be remembered that the private sector will continue to offer an alternative for children ineligible for subsidised education in Forms IV and V and for those who opt for education in the private sector, so that the overall percentage of children for whom post-Form III secondary education will be available by 1979 will exceed 40% and will be at least 55%; this latter figure may well be not far short of the total of those who want to continue their education after Form III.
- 2.9 Senior secondary courses will follow curricula leading to the Hong Kong Certificate of Education, which is taken at the end of Form V; and one third of pupils entering Form IV should obtain places in lower Form VI where they can prepare for higher education.
- 2.10 There will be no automatic promotion from junior secondary to senior secondary forms. Selection and allocation procedures for the senior secondary course will be conducted by the Education Department and will be based on the results of a new public examination (to be called the Hong Kong Junior Certificate of Education) which will be taken at the end of the junior secondary course. As far as possible, children selected to continue beyond Form III should be permitted to do so in the senior section of the same school, and the allocation procedure will be so designed.

Prevocational Schools and Technical Education

- 2.11 It is recognised that the proposed plan of expansion must place the correct emphasis on technical education. The increasingly sophisticated industrial requirements of the next decade will best be met by providing workers with a basic minimum nine year course of general education but with a practical and technical content of 25-30%. This will provide the foundation on which further industrial training can be given. The pre-vocational concept by which a three year technical course is given after a basic six year primary course is not necessarily the most appropriate answer to the needs of a community as developed as Hong Kong is rapidly becoming, or with the extensive facilities for post-secondary technical education and vocational training that are being built in Hong Kong.

- 2.12 Existing prevocational schools, and those already planned or under construction, will continue as such for as long as they attract pupils. They will be allowed to accept children living anywhere in Hong Kong, and will not be restricted to drawing pupils from any particular geographical area. Although some parents wish their children to receive the type of education offered by prevocational schools, it appears that public support is more limited than was previously thought.
- 2.13 The Government has already embarked upon a substantial programme of technical institutes starting with Morrison Hill, and a further four are already under construction or in the planning stage. A major function of these institutes is to provide the related technical education which is required to complement the on-the-job training provided by industry. This aspect of technical education is of course of a vocational nature. The question of a further expansion in this field will depend upon the long term acceptability of technical institute trainees to industry. Technical institutes will provide a substantial number of places which will permit pupils leaving prevocational and other schools after Form III, to obtain full time technical training. Technical institutes will also provide for the training of apprentices under part-time day release training schemes.
- 2.14 As already mentioned in paragraph 2.5, practical and technical subjects will be included in the common curriculum of the junior secondary course, as speedily as facilities in schools permit. The curriculum for the two year technical course in senior secondary technical schools will be revised in order to give more emphasis to technical subjects, to ensure that pupils reach adequate standards in these subjects both in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination taken in Form V, and for employment in industry.
- 2.15 The practical and technical content of the common curriculum for the junior secondary course, the substantial expansion of technical institutes and the intended overall ratio of three grammar to two secondary technical schools indicate that the Government attaches considerable importance to a build-up of technical education at the secondary level in line with Hong Kong's future needs.

Language of Instruction

- 2.16 In the past secondary education has been conducted mainly through the medium of English. Now that it is intended to make secondary education in Forms I—III available to all, it is appropriate to review this practice. On educational grounds there are strong arguments for maintaining that the medium of instruction for children aged 12-14 should be Chinese. However, there are other considerations. Hong Kong is a commercial and industrial centre which has reached a high level of technical and professional sophistication and has established close contacts all over the world. It is undeniable that Hong Kong, if it is to maintain its progress, will continue to need people at all levels in commerce, industry and the professions who are at home in English as well as in Chinese. For these practical reasons, the standards of Chinese and English must be maintained, and indeed, if possible, improved, and parents are likely to demand that they should be. These considerations suggest the need for a balanced approach.
- 2.17 It is the Government's intention that individual school authorities should themselves decide whether the medium of instruction should be English or Chinese for any particular subject in junior secondary forms. This will facilitate the adoption of appropriate measures to ensure that there is no drop in the standard of English of those continuing their education beyond Form III, while, at the same time, enabling other students to derive maximum benefit from their education through the medium of Chinese. It is not intended to be more specific on this topic until full consultation with schools has taken place. Encouraging the greater use of Chinese will necessitate the development of textbooks in Chinese, the training of teachers who can use Chinese effectively as the medium of instruction, and the introduction of improved teaching techniques. These factors will to a large extent govern the rate at which teaching in Chinese can be introduced. Schools will probably wish to consider each subject separately, taking into

account factors such as the nature of the subject, availability of suitable textbooks and teachers, and the needs of their pupils. A pupil would then be able to take each subject of the new Hong Kong Junior Certificate Examination in the language appropriate to him.

- 2.18 The Government intends to review the arrangements for the language of instruction as these develop.

Examinations

- 2.19 The Government acknowledges that the existing Secondary School Entrance Examination should be phased out as soon as it is no longer required for its present purpose of determining whether a child should receive subsidised secondary education. This will be possible as soon as the target of 100% provision of junior secondary places (paragraph 2.2) is achieved. Thus, if the programme for these places, as outlined in this Paper, is carried out without delay, the Secondary School Entrance Examination (SSEE) would be set for the last time in May 1978.
- 2.20 A new public examination, the Hong Kong Junior Certificate of Education, will be introduced at the end of the junior secondary school course, to serve two functions. Firstly, it will provide evidence that a pupil has satisfactorily completed his education to Form III standard, which should assist him in securing employment if he leaves school at this stage. Secondly, it will serve as the means of selection for those who wish to continue their studies beyond Form III. The examination will be based on the common teaching syllabus for the junior secondary school course and will not have a special syllabus of its own.
- 2.21 It would make unreasonable demands on a pupil to require him to take both the Secondary School Entrance Examination and the Hong Kong Junior Certificate of Education. For this reason, the Hong Kong Junior Certificate of Education will only be introduced after the Secondary School Entrance Examination has been abolished. The Education Department, in consultation with school authorities, will devise measures to bridge the gap between the phasing out of the Secondary School Entrance Examination and the introduction of the Hong Kong Junior Certificate of Education. Consultation will also be required with school authorities on the phasing out of those selection procedures which are associated with the Secondary School Entrance Examination; on the introduction of new selection arrangements for junior secondary courses on an area basis, as the number of places available approaches the 100% provision target; and on the introduction of the new examination itself.
- 2.22 The present Hong Kong Certificate of Education will continue to be taken by pupils completing Form V of senior secondary schools. It will also be used as the basis for selection for entry to Form VI. Selection of students for Form VI will continue to be made by school authorities, taking into account broad guidelines, governing standards of entry, laid down by the Education Department.

Quality of Education

- 2.23 The emphasis in this Paper is on the need to provide a sufficient number of places and on the ways by which these can be made available. But the Government is very much aware of the desirability of improving the quality of the education provided in our secondary schools. With this in mind, steps will be taken to ensure an adequate supply of qualified teachers to meet the rapid expansion planned for the public sector and the additional teachers required for 'bought' places in the private sector. The early extension of educational television to secondary schools is under consideration. The recently established curriculum development committees will continue to examine syllabuses, with a view to making them more relevant to the needs of pupils in a changing and more demanding society.

Teacher Training Requirement

- 2.24 The future pattern of secondary education outlined in this Chapter will naturally require a matching increase in teacher training, and this is considered in detail in Appendix 1 (*See original document*).

* Implementation of the New System *

In the following extraction from the White Paper, *paras. 3.1 to 3.18*, the Government recommends a wide range of strategies to generate adequate school places to cope with the increased demand resulting from the proposed introduction of the nine-year universal education. *Editors.*

Provision of Places

- 3.1 As stated in paras. 2.2 and 2.8, the aim is to provide sufficient subsidised places in junior secondary forms for all children in the 12-14 age group, and in Forms IV and V for 40% of the 15-16 age group. It is obvious this objective will be achieved only if there is the fullest co-operation by sponsors and school management; past experience is such that the Government is sure that this will be forthcoming.
- 3.2 Before considering how these targets may be achieved, it is necessary to take stock of the total number of places currently available, and those expected to be available in the future if the proposals in this Paper are fulfilled. The following table projects the position, assuming that there is no disruption of the current school building programme and that the number of private school places remains substantially as it is:

Table 1:
The Total Number of School Places Likely to be Available
(including Subsidised and Private Places)

	September 1974	September 1976	September 1979
(a) Forms I – III (Junior Secondary Forms)			
(i) Government	10,000	15,600	19,560
(ii) Aided	44,040	*91,630	126,725
(iii) Assisted Private	33,367	4,251	4,251
(iv) Asymmetrical	960	11,840	34,720
(v) Prevocational and Secondary Modern (Public Sector)	7,220 (95,587)	13,640 (136,961)	19,690 (204,946)
(vi) Private Non-profit Making	27,340	29,605	30,565
(vii) Private Independent Schools	<u>87,132</u>	<u>87,132</u>	<u>87,132</u>
	<u>210,059</u>	<u>253,698</u>	<u>322,643</u>
(b) Forms IV and V (Senior Secondary Forms)			
(i) Government	6,360	7,549	8,600
(ii) Aided	28,880	47,250	56,930
(iii) Assisted Private (Public Sector)	11,718	1,383	1,383
(iv) Private Non-profit Making	(46,958)	(56,182)	(66,913)
(v) Private Independent Schools	6,077	7,587	8,227
	<u>29,807</u>	<u>29,807</u>	<u>29,807</u>
	<u>82,842</u>	<u>93,576</u>	<u>104,947</u>

[Note: It assumes that 36 Assisted Private Schools – see * above – will become fully aided with effect from September 1976; and does not include any 'bought' places within the Public Sectors.]

- 3.3 The targets of the campaign to provide 100% subsidised junior secondary places and 40% subsidised senior secondary places by 1979 will be as follows:

	September 1974		September 1976		September 1979	
	Forms I – III	Forms IV – V	Forms I – III	Forms IV – V	Forms I – III	Forms IV – V
Public Sector	95,587	46,958	136,961	56,182	204,946	66,913
Bought Places	64,320	3,000	64,320	-	77,454	19,007
Total	<u>159,907</u>	<u>49,958</u>	<u>201,281</u>	<u>56,182</u>	<u>282,400</u>	<u>85,920</u>
Percentage of School Population of Age Group	48%	24%	62%	25%	100%	40%

[Note: These figures include the extra places in Forms I – III from the adoption of the flotation/extended day pattern. Form VI places are excluded though these may be seen in Table III (see original document) dealing with recurrent costs.]

- 3.4 It is clear from these figures that the targets given in paragraph 3.1 for junior secondary places cannot be achieved unless there is a rapid expansion in the number of subsidised places available. Ideally, this expansion should take place through a substantial new school building programme but, even if financial and other resources so permitted, it would not be possible to plan and construct sufficient schools in the time available. Thus, temporary measures will have to be adopted to maximise enrolments in existing schools, until the building programme overtakes the school population.

Bisessional Operation

- 3.5 Bisessional operation would have been the most effective means of increasing secondary school enrolments quickly, but this system has not found public support and it is not the Government's intention to introduce it compulsorily in junior secondary forms, even as an interim measure. But, if individual school authorities choose to adopt bisessionalism in preference to any of the other methods proposed to achieve the same objective, there would be no government objection.

Rotation

- 3.6 Rotation, which is a six-day working week for the school buildings but a five-day working week for the pupils and teachers, is already practised in some schools. Although there are disadvantages such as the additional burden imposed on school administration and the inconvenience caused to the home lives of pupils and their families, school authorities will be permitted to continue rotation if they wish. Nevertheless it is not intended to recommend the adoption of rotation as standard practice.

Flotation/Extended Day

- 3.7 Flotation is an arrangement whereby utilisation of the teaching areas of a school is maximised. It is already practised in many secondary schools and is thought to be the best available method of providing the additional places required in the shortest possible time. Flotation, combined with an extended day system which permits a staggering of classes throughout the day, could increase school enrolments by up to 50%, without any significant educational disadvantage. It is therefore proposed to introduce this flotation/extended day system into all junior secondary forms in Government schools, but not to senior secondary forms, thereby increasing junior secondary enrolments by up to 50%. The aided schools will also be encouraged to adopt this system.
- 3.8 Although there was a fair measure of public support for the flotation/extended day system, it is not an ideal solution; but the Government believes that it is far more acceptable than the alternative, which is that a really effective expansion of secondary education should await the completion of the school building programme and the major movement of population to the New Towns. Although the system does not ordinarily increase the number of hours spent in school by an individual child, the Government is aware that it will create staff problems. Every effort must

be made to streamline school timetables so as to avoid any substantial increase in teaching hours, and the position of school supervisory staff, whose responsibilities are significantly increased by larger enrolments, will require review.

- 3.9 In order to achieve the 1979 target of 100/40% [*sic*] places as a start the flotation/extended day system should be adopted in September 1975 in Forms I-III of Government and aided secondary schools. If it proves possible to increase their enrolments by 50%, the number of places available in Forms I-III of these schools will be 137,000 in September 1976 and 205,000 in September 1979. The balance of places necessary to make up the target of 100% provision for the age group by September 1979 would be 'bought' in private schools. In 1979 it is likely that about 77,000 places would have to be 'bought', but the actual number of 'bought' places will also depend upon the rate of completion of new school buildings and the extent to which aided schools are able and willing to increase their enrolments by flotation/extended day operation.
- 3.10 It is not proposed to increase enrolments in Forms IV and V by use of the flotation/extended day method. 66,913 places will be available in September 1979 in Forms IV and V of Government, aided and assisted private schools against a target figure of 85,920 places [see para. 3.3 above]. The balance of about 19,000 places will have to be 'bought' in private schools and there is no reason to doubt that this will be available.

Bought Places

- 3.11 It should be noted that while the number of 'bought' places proposed to achieve targets in the public sector in Forms IV to V will increase from 3,000 in September 1974 to 19,000 in September 1979, there will be a relatively smaller increase in 'bought' places in Forms I to III. The latter will increase from 64,000 in September 1974 to the target of 77,000 by September 1979. The reason for this comparatively modest increase is that in order to achieve the 1976 target of secondary places in Forms I to III of the public sector for 50% of the 12-14 age group, it has already become necessary to place maximum reliance on the buying of such places in the private sector. Recourse to buying of places was necessary to offset the time required to carry through the secondary school building programme. As a result the majority of places of an acceptable standard in Forms I to III of the private sector have already been taken up and present indications are that there is only a limited reserve of 'unbought' private secondary places available between now and 1979.

Spare Accommodation in Primary Schools

- 3.12 As a result of the current downward trend in the primary age group, the preference of some parents for places in the private sector, and the movement of population from one district to another, some primary school premises in the public sector are under-utilised. Such schools are mostly on Hong Kong Island and in the New Territories, while in Kowloon the majority of primary schools are fully utilised.
- 3.13 A feasibility study has indicated that the conversion of a primary school to secondary school operation is usually uneconomic if a reasonable range of secondary level facilities is to be provided. Consideration is therefore being given to possible linking of existing primary school premises to adjacent secondary schools, and to the possible amalgamation of adjacent primary schools to provide increased secondary level accommodation. The scope for such *ad hoc* conversion of primary school premises is nevertheless limited, as individual primary schools are intended to serve a restricted area and falling primary enrolments do not necessarily indicate that a primary school is wholly redundant.
- 3.14 Conversion to secondary level usage is not the only choice when considering how best to make use of under-utilised Government primary schools. The special education diagnostic and remedial centres, the temporary College of Education at Hung Hom, and the Technical Teachers

College are all operating in converted primary school premises. There are a number of other possible specialist usages within the sphere of the Education Department, and competing claims for surplus primary accommodation will require careful weighing. It is nevertheless expected that a measure of re-organisation will permit some primary school premises to be utilised for additional secondary places.

- 3.15 The 1979 targets set for secondary education can be achieved on time if:
- (a) All existing and planned Government and aided schools accept and practise the flotation/extended day system to the fullest extent by September 1976.
 - (b) The schools building programme set out in Table II (*See original document*) is fully implemented on schedule.
 - (c) The required number of 'bought' places in private schools can be acquired.

School Building Programme

- 3.16 It is estimated that, by 1983, there will be about 82,000 in the 12-14 age group and about 23,000 in the 15-16 age group living in the New Towns. Sufficient places for these children will, if possible, be provided in Government and aided secondary schools in the New Towns. The full achievement of this goal will require a further 57 new schools in addition to the 53 schools in the present New Towns building programme and the 12 existing schools in the New Towns, i.e. there will be a total requirement of 122 secondary schools (12 existing; 110 to be built).
- 3.17 Outside the New Towns, there are areas (notably in Kwun Tong and parts of the New Territories) in which there is an existing shortage of secondary school places. This will be accentuated by the adoption of the new targets. It is estimated that by 1983 a total of 51 extra new secondary schools will be required in areas other than the New Towns. Thus, altogether, 161 new secondary schools will be required for the whole Colony.

Fees

- 3.18 Since the 1965 White Paper on Education Policy, free primary education has been introduced in Hong Kong. This step was only possible when there were sufficient places available in Government and aided primary schools for all children of primary school age. The Government believes that no child should be denied secondary education solely because of the inability of parents to pay school fees. It is, therefore, intended that the present system of fee remission will continue for so long as the Government is unable to accept the high cost which would be involved in making secondary education wholly free.

Appendices 1 - 2 (*See original document*)