

## A Perspective on Education in Hong Kong

( November 1982 )

<b>Author</b>	Visiting Panel commissioned by the Hong Kong Government
<b>Publisher</b>	Government Printer, Hong Kong
<b>Theme</b>	Curriculum and instruction – Educational administration – Educational assessment/examinations – Language in education – Research and development – School staffing – Special education – Student selection and allocation – Teacher education – Teacher professionalism
<b>Level of Education</b>	Pre-primary – Primary – Secondary – Higher – Continuing
<b>Background</b>	The Government invited in 1981 a panel of overseas scholars to, with reference to the approved and proposed policies for the development of education in Hong Kong at all levels, undertake an overall review of the education system for further improvement. Specifically, the panel was “to identify the future aims of the education system, to consider the coherence and effectiveness of the service, to identify areas which may require strengthening ... to make recommendations on priorities in its further development ...” and to give advice on “the relationship between the various sectors and levels of education and the place of teachers in the educational system” (p. 115). The panel began the pursuit in April 1981, applied the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's policy review framework in the process, and submitted its report to the Governor in November 1982.
<b>Aim</b>	This report presents findings concerning the various critical issues of educational governance, policy making and implementation, all levels of education and their interface, the examination system, special education, and the teaching profession. The report then concludes with demand for policy action in five critical areas: the establishment of a comprehensive language policy for the education system; language competency of teachers; attenuation of selection by examination and control by administrative procedures; the access to and reorganisation of post-school education; and the enhancement of a policy planning, analysis, and formulation capacity. The report calls for the formalisation of the education commission system, a proposition well received by the Government.
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section I The Review in Context (paras. I.1-I.16; pp. 9-13) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General background (paras. I.1-I.4; pp. 9-10)</li> <li>The educational situation (paras. I.5-I.13; pp. 10-12)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p style="text-align: center;">Future directions (paras. I.14-I.16; pp. 12-13)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section II Policy and Planning (paras. II.1-II.34; pp. 15-24) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Processes (paras. II.3-II.14; pp. 15-18)</li> <li>Machinery (paras. II.15-II.32; pp. 19-24)</li> <li>Research and development (paras. II.33-II.35; p. 24)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Section III Languages in the Classroom (paras. III.1.1-III.1.21; pp. 25-30) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sorting and sifting (paras. III.2.1-III.2.31; pp. 31-39)</li> <li>The kindergartens (paras. III.3.1-III.3.18; pp. 41-46)</li> <li>The schools (paras. III.4.1-III.4.42; pp. 47-61)</li> <li>Beyond the schools (paras. III.5.1-III.5.25; pp. 63-71)</li> <li>Continuing education (paras. III.6.1-III.6.9; pp. 73-77)</li> <li>Special groups (paras. III.7.1-III.7.21; pp. 79-86)</li> <li>The teaching service (paras. III.8.1-III.8.46; pp. 87-101)</li> <li>Labour market implications (paras. III.9.1-III.9.20; pp. 103-109)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Section IV Prospects and Priorities (paras. IV.1-IV.13; pp. 111-114)</li> <li>• Appendices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix I. Terms of reference given to the panel (2 pages)</li> <li>Appendix II. Main stages of overall review (1 page)</li> <li>Appendix III. Individuals and Organisations met Formally by the Panel (3 pages)</li> <li>Appendix IV. Institutions visited by the panel (1 page)</li> <li>Appendix V. Organisations and individuals making open written representations to the panel (3 pages)</li> <li>Appendix VI. Student flow statistics (drawn from Education Department sources) (2 pages)</li> <li>Appendix VII. Structure of the Hong Kong education system (1981) (1 page)</li> <li>Appendix VIII. Government expenditure on education (1 page)</li> <li>Appendix IX. School performance at public examinations (1 page)</li> <li>Appendix X. A chronological sketch of educational provision in Hong Kong (3 pages)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
--	--

<b>Extraction from this Educational Document in the Handbook</b>	
<b>Content</b>	<b>Document Paragraph</b>
<p><b>Summary of Policy Review and Recommendations</b></p> <p>Section II Policy and Planning</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Processes</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Machinery</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Research and development</p>	<p>paras. 11.3-11.3, 11.8</p> <p>paras. II.27-II.29, II.30-II.32</p> <p>paras. II.33</p>

<b>Content</b>	<b>Document Paragraph</b>
Section III Chapter 1 Languages in the Classroom	paras. III.1.1-III.1.21
Chapter 2 Sorting and Sifting	paras. III.2.1-III.2.31
Chapter 3 The Kindergartens	paras. III.3.1-III.3.18
Chapter 4 The Schools	paras. III.4.1-4.42
Chapter 5 Beyond the Schools	paras. III.5.1-5.23
Chapter 6 Continuing Education	paras. III.6.1-III.6.9
Chapter 7 Special Groups	paras. III.7.1-III.7.21
Chapter 8 The Teaching Service	paras. III.8.1-III.8.46
Section IV Prospects and Priorities	paras. IV.1-IV.13

## ✧ Summary of Policy Review and Recommendations ✧

### Policy and Planning

[In the following extraction from *paras. II.3 to II.35*, the Report makes suggestions on how government bodies could be reorganised and streamlined to ensure more effective policy-making, planning and implementation in education. *Editors.*]

### Processes

- II.3 ... Education has not fared badly, at least in relative terms, over the recent years but expansion and increased policy commitment do not seem to have created what might be called a 'joint enterprise' spirit in the education community.
- II.4 Rather, there is a 'we-they' attitude prevalent in the educational enterprise: between schools and the Education Department (referred to loosely as 'the government'); between and within various arms of the administration; between administrative and departmental officers; but, interestingly, not as much as we might have imagined between locals and expatriates. There is a pervasive feeling that responsibility for and knowledge about what is happening lies elsewhere; but no one is sure where this is, or who holds the master plan. There is in short a noticeable lack of mutual trust and understanding... Counting all the government and private instrumentalities, there is little doubt that the education system is over-administered. The plethora of jurisdictions and lack of forward planning capacity militate against efficient management.
- II.5 We believe that the problem lies not in the dedication of those involved but rather in an absence of clearly set out and easily understood purposes and procedures. A fundamental confusion has crept in, perhaps only over recent years, between the task of managing the education system as it exists and the notion of policy formation with the necessary forward planning to achieve long term objectives. The education system seems over-administered in terms of minute bureaucratic surveillance of regulations yet under-planned in terms of strategic goals and the know-how to attain them. The existing administrative machinery is clearly inadequate for the leadership and monitoring responsibilities which the government has properly taken upon itself in respect of the education service. The complexity of the service is being heightened as it inherits the erstwhile custodial and socialising functions of the family. This does not seem to be sufficiently realised. While it was taken for granted that the education system was contributing faithfully to a better society, basic questions about the effectiveness of management and governance were rarely raised. However Hong Kong's educational institutions are now expected by some to maximise opportunity and redress inequity, and by others to reproduce the economic and social order.
- II.8 ... We feel that strenuous efforts should be devoted to raising the level of parent and community involvement in policy-formation (especially at the school level) and to engage as much expertise as can be marshalled (not only from within the bureaucracy) in planning.

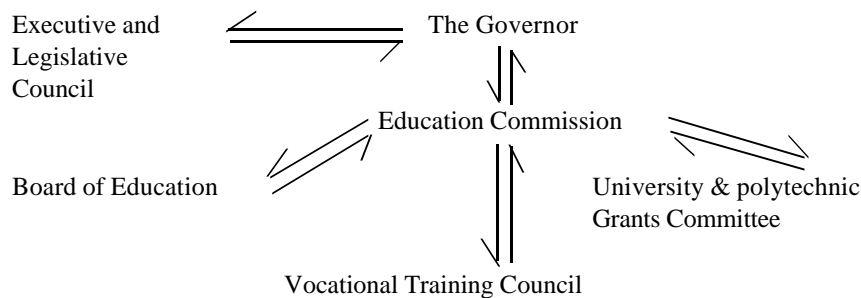
### Machinery

- II.16 ... We suggest arrangements whereby the best advice may be made available to the government to ensure the orderly and balanced development of education in a way which will best serve the people of Hong Kong and facilitate the most effective use of their potential:

- the Board of Education, the Vocational Training Council and the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee should be retained but with certain changes in membership, modus operandi and responsibilities as set out below; and
- a co-ordinating body - an Education Commission - should be established through which these three agencies would provide advice to the government.

II.17 A diagrammatic representation of our proposal for the organisation of educational planning and policy - the governance of education - in Hong Kong is as follows:

Governance of Hong Kong education system



The double-ended arrows indicate that any matters concerning the development of education may be referred in either direction. However, recommendations will only be in the 'upward' direction; the views of the Board/Council/Committee would be collated and commented upon (but where appropriate conveyed in full) by the Commission when their recommendations are presented to the government. We now examine the composition and functions of the four educational advisory bodies.

The Board of Education

II.20 The Board could be a useful forum for those of its members and for Departmental officers who have the responsibility of policy and of administration. We see good reason for it to establish ad hoc working parties and standing committees not only to consider remits from the Commission but also to inquire into matters which fall within its brief. The thinking of the Board, shaped by its own deliberative and investigative machinery, would be conveyed to the Education Commission by the Board Chairman who would, of course, be a member of the Commission. The Board would have general oversight of all phases and aspects of school level education - K through FVII - and would continue to be serviced as at present by the Department of Education.

The University and Polytechnic Grants Committee

II.23 We agree with the UPGC that it is not practicable to plan in detail the development of higher education more than six to eight years ahead. We are confident, as indicated later in Section III Chapter 5, that in the longer run Hong Kong will need at least two and possibly three more institutions of higher education and that the first of these should be a polytechnic with the authority and capacity to offer degree-level programmes. Much attention should be given now to the establishment of an efficient organisation to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the higher education needs of Hong Kong and to propose the most suitable courses of action at the appropriate times.

- II.24 ... we suggest that the UPGC establish an executive group consisting mainly of local members which can meet more frequently than the UPGC. This group should be enabled to identify and give preliminary views on various planning options which will ultimately assist the work of the committee of the whole. It should also follow through on the monitoring of implementation strategies for approved policies such as the nature and development schedule of the next higher education institution; the harmonisation of entry requirements for the two universities; the case for an overseas scholarship programme to speed the production of graduates in the short to medium term; the creation of a research fund to aid faculty training and recruitment; and the numbers and types of qualifications required in the longer term....
- II.25 The UPGC should concern itself wholly with the Universities, the Polytechnic(s) and post-secondary colleges and should retain its privilege of reporting its advice on the development and maintenance of these institutions to the Governor. However, in recognition that it is concerned with only one part of the educational system and that whilst it must strive to maintain excellence in higher education it must only do so in the context of the balanced development of all the sectors, we recommend that this advice be channelled through the Education Commission of which the UPGC chairman will be a member.

#### The Education Commission

- II.27 We consider the establishment of a co-ordinating Commission to be of prime importance. Having received and digested the views and recommendations of the Board of Education, the Vocational Training Council and the Higher Education planning and Grants Committee (or UPGC if the traditional title is retained), it will be able to bring to the Governor-in-Council consolidated advice on the needs of and priorities for the educational system as a whole and the most equitable and practicable responses to them. The Commission might also receive input from other quarters (e.g. manpower studies), on which it might ask for comment from one or more of these three constituent advisory groups.
- II.29 We would hope that the Chairman of the Commission would be, or would have been, a member of the Executive Council and that the two other members defined as 'persons of standing' would be men or women of such calibre as to make it likely that if they are not, nor have previously been appointed as Executive Council Members, are likely to be considered for such appointment in the future. The most stringent criteria should continue to apply to the selection of Chairmen of the Board, Council and Committee. All chairmen should have strong and continuing links with the world beyond the educational sphere.
- II.30 The Commission should be serviced by the Secretary for Education and members of his staff. Indeed the role and function of Education Branch might well be thought of as becoming the Commission's Secretariat....
- II.31 ... We would expect that the Commission would have the formal authority and responsibility for advising the Governor on all matters relating to development and planning of education in Hong Kong and that it would have the power to enquire into such matters, and through its 'official members' to require such information as would be needed to fulfil its functions.
- II.32 We re-emphasise the point made in paragraph II.16 above that the comprehensive role of the Education Commission and its associate bodies will enhance the quality of decisions made by the Governor-in-Council. While it may appear at first sight that interpolation of another link in the chain of advice might slow down the decision-making process, we believe that this will not be the case because we are confident that the form of advice coming through the system via the Commission will relieve the highest echelons of government of much detail and will indeed expedite the taking of decisions and their implementation.

## Research and development

- II.33 We saw little evidence of research and development in education. Those who work in schools are simply too extended to turn their minds to such matters, even if they were trained to do so. The colleges of education are not attempting any major research pursuits. In conversation with those engaged in research in the universities we were left with the impression that there has been little of what we would call policy relevant research, especially that of an interdisciplinary nature. There is need for in-depth research into curriculum development, teaching practices and the evaluation of pupil achievement. There, however, an indication of some movement in the direction of policy analysis as reported in Chapter 4 of the Background Report and by the Education Research Establishment.

[In the following extraction from *paras. III.1.1 to III.8.46*, the Report discusses the issue of professionalisation of teaching and in great length the policy recommendations on the following areas: language in education, the examination system, schooling at early childhood, primary and secondary levels, higher education, and special education. *Editors.*]

## Section III Major Policy Areas

### Chapter 1 Languages in the Classroom

#### Specifying the problem

- III.1.1 The education system in Hong Kong must aspire to higher goals than those of many other nations. The necessity for most students to learn two languages - English and Chinese - is an unusual privilege and burden, especially when one considers the particular problems which arise from the differences between the spoken language, Cantonese, and written standard Chinese. But the issue of languages in the classroom goes deeper than this. Language reflects the soul and culture of a people. Each language has its own images, proverbs, sense of humour and different thought structures expressing various facets of civilisation. Thus it has cultural and economic ramifications (fostering the 'essence' of Hong Kong; helping the people of Hong Kong perform well on the world stage) as well as pedagogical and technical ones (in which language children learn most readily; how best to teach language skills).
- III.1.2 This creates a demand for teachers with language competence that are rarely to be found in mass education systems. The time required for language instruction tends to 'crowd out' other curriculum areas such as physical education and the performing and visual arts. A school day in Hong Kong must have more time devoted to language than is the case in countries which are officially monolingual. Consequently, the Hong Kong education enterprise must either become very efficient in teaching and learning methods in order to meet the necessary variety of educational objectives - or (the enterprise) work harder and longer. There is simply not enough time in the school day or year to cope with the language requirement as well as to cover the other core subjects in the same depth that can be achieved in many other nations.

#### The medium of instruction

- III.1.4 ... No matter what strategies are used to improve language teaching in Hong Kong, the present lamentable situation concerning the use of English as a medium of instruction will remain because these measures do not confront the basic issue of whether it is possible to use a second language successfully as the vehicle for providing universal (compulsory)

education in what is de facto, although not de jure, still a monolingual society as far as the vast majority of the population is concerned.

### The quality of language teaching

- III.1.10 Many of the problems associated with schooling in Hong Kong - excessive hours of homework, quiescent pupils - are magnified, even if not caused, by the attempt to use English as a teaching medium for students who, even if they proceed to university, prefer not to use it by choice.
- III.1.12 Hong Kong cannot afford to reduce the emphasis on English in its schools, especially since its great neighbour, China, has afforded the teaching of English a high education priority. This is especially the case as Hong Kong's future is clearly intimately linked with China's. However, care should be taken that the pursuit of this policy simultaneously with that of introducing universal secondary education does not foster an elite caste of English users with the less linguistically competent being labelled as such by dint of their having Cantonese as the only instrument of communication....
- III.1.14 We...accept as a fact that the mother tongue is, all other things being equal, the best medium of teaching and learning. There are sound political, cultural and psychological reasons to support this proposition. Education resource inputs, however, are rarely equal from school to school because of the nature of the peer group, quality of teachers, instructional methods, curriculum design, availability of learning materials, and so on. Much more would need to change in schools than just the medium of instruction before the full educational potential of using the mother tongue could be realised.

### Options

- III.1.16 ... Given the concerted efforts required in all areas of public policy to bring about changes in language patterns, the Government ought to consider linking its efforts in the educational sphere with concrete moves in other areas in support of its 'two language' policy - for example by insisting on modifications to current codes for advertising and media broadcasts.
- III.1.17 An obvious way out of this problem area is for the Government to impose Cantonese as the medium of instruction in FI-III of all secondary schools so that the first nine years of schooling (PI-FIII) would be in the 'language of the heart'. A pragmatic variant on this would be to leave alone the small number of schools which have been genuinely successful in using English as the medium of instruction. However, not only the principled and pedagogically sound option but also its pragmatic and less attractive mutation are in reality unavailable to the policy makers for practical and political reasons. One possibility is to embark on a long-term project of changing parents' and employers' attitudes towards Chinese as a teaching medium. This would presumably entail a scheme of positive discrimination in favour of such schools, both in terms of resources (in particular to upgrade their standard of English teaching) and post-school opportunities (perhaps with a quota to assure a proportion of admissions from them to further study and the Civil Service).
- III.1.18 A second way forward is to acknowledge the reality that much of the teaching and learning going on in Anglo-Chinese schools is in fact undertaken in both languages; and that the language policy of the Chinese middle schools can hardly be expected to continue when students and parents see that the pinnacle of the educational pyramid in the popular eye - medical studies - is taught principally in English at CUHK. This would open the way to serious attempts to improve the effectiveness of this reality by developing genuinely bilingual curriculum strategies. The Government should mandate that English be taught formally in K-P6 as a second language or first foreign language (depending on which

instructional methodology is the more suitable for the pupils in particular schools). This would involve extra resources being made available to improve the English language competency of teachers of these grades. We suggest that Putonghua be offered as a publicly financed but extra-curricula (Saturday or after normal school hours), and therefore optional supplement for those who wish to enrol from p3/4 onwards.

- III.1.20 The dilemma lends itself to a typically Hong Kong solution, that of compromise. This would involve, in the long term, a shift towards complete mother tongue education in the early compulsory years through abandoning the fiction that the Anglo-Chinese and Chinese middle schools use only one language as the medium of instruction. Such a solution would support a wholehearted push towards genuine bilingualism after P6, including the tertiary level. From F1 there should be a progressive shift to genuinely bilingual programmes so that by the end of FIII students are receiving approximately half of their instruction in each language, with Putonghua continuing to be an option which can be built into the secondary school timetable as well as being offered on an extra- curricula basis at public expense.
- III.1.21 We conclude that the saving of appearances has led to an unfortunate lack of correlation between policy and practice. Now that the inherent problems have been recognised officially and that earmarked resources are available, we suggest that it is timely, given that improvement is being sought, to do what has to be done on grounds of principle rather than as a perpetual temporary expedient. To formalise the informal, to make de jure what is often de facto, can lead to desirable ends.

## Chapter 2 Sorting and Sifting

### Role and power of examinations

- III.2.1 What we are concerned with in this chapter is the character and role of examinations in the Hong Kong education system. Next to the 'language of learning' issue (and often connected with it) the frequency, nature and crucial importance of examinations for the educational and career chances were the prominent concern of students and teachers, parents and policy makers alike.

### Incidence of examinations

III.2.7 – III.2.14 (*See original document*)

### The significance of language competence

III.2.15 – III.2.20 (*See original document*)

### Desirable directions

(Extracted from *paras. III.2.21-2.31*)

- III.2.23 ... Our specific suggestions are based on the conviction that the effects of sorting and sifting through examinations are the more educationally harmful and socially unjust the deeper they reach down into the earlier stages of a child's development and educational career. They are further based on the consideration that the effects of examination and allocation procedures are especially harsh as long as there is no alternative or 'second chance'.
- III.2.24 We suggest that every effort be made to ensure equality of resource standards among schools. Places in primary schools should ideally be allocated on the principle that for the residential address of each pupil there should be several primary schools accessible. The

preference of families would then depend increasingly upon such factors as location, family tradition, special features of curriculum but not on a general difference in standard.

- III.2.25 The Junior Secondary Education Assessment system (JSEA) should be abolished as quickly as possible. If creation of the corresponding number of places in government schools or in the aided sector is not feasible (we understand that the residual bought places in FIV and FV account for about five per cent of the total provision), then the alternative should be to improve the quality of the places where they are now. A way to do so would be to pay more for every bought place, to allow the school to charge private students more, and to define standards to make sure that the additional income is used for the intended purpose. The outcome of such a policy would be that private schools would become either good enough to be accepted into the aid scheme (given appropriate upgrading of physical facilities) or not good enough from which to buy places. This would be a step closer towards equality of educational opportunity within compulsory education as well as a means of taking the edge off the sifting process at the end of primary school.
- III.2.26 In order to move towards greater equity in primary and junior secondary education, we suggest that consideration be given to the idea of 'positive discrimination', i.e. of giving special support to schools which, for instance, have produced or have had to accept a particularly high share of 'low band' pupils in transition from primary to secondary.
- III.2.27 With the phasing out of the JSEA, admission to senior secondary schools should then be based on internal assessment moderated to accommodate differences in student ability and teacher expectations from school to school.
- III.2.28 There is no case for extending compulsory schooling. However, subsidised post-compulsory education should be available to anyone who wants it. Given the high regard for learning and school achievement among the people of Hong Kong, this may well amount to a virtual universal extension. As impressed as we were with the efforts being made in the prevocational schools we visited, we nevertheless favour a comprehensive type of secondary schooling up to FV. We do not mean that every student should do the same subjects and learn the same things: diversification and specialisation should be offered within the one school as well as among schools. The full range of options for a higher educational qualification or for entry into an apprenticeship, some other form of specialised training or directly into the labour market should, in principle, be open to every student up to the end of FV regardless of what type of school or programme he or she has previously undertaken - but not regardless of how well he or she performed generally and in particular subjects.
- III.2.29 Achievement in (pre) vocational and in technical education should be suitably acknowledged as stepping stones to more advanced study. For example, a specified level of achievement in the technical institutes or in apprenticeship training should be considered as equivalent to other more general educational qualifications for entry to specific types of further education and training.
- III.2.30 There should be increased effort to draw the teaching force into curriculum development and to improve the co-ordination between the organisations responsible for Curriculum and for Examinations. The aim should be to have a curriculum which is educationally sound and then to construct appropriate assessment instruments - not to let the curriculum be dominated by examination requirements.
- III.2.31 The importance of reducing the number of examinations is immense. Specific proposals are made in Chapter III.5. At a minimum, however, if CUHK and HKU are to continue with different length courses, admission to CUHK should be based on performance in the HKCE

examination at the end of FV. Matriculation would then be conditional on continuing success in FVI, attested to by the school...

## **Chapter 3 The Kindergartens**

### **The first hurdle**

III.3.5 ... Where more than five children are looked after regularly, these child-care centres must legally be registered with the Social Welfare Department. Kindergartens come under Education Department surveillance because they provide schooling .... Kindergartens do not now have to conform to a defined staffing policy. Even child-care workers must attend a minimum fortnight's preparation course and supervisors must have had at least five years' experience. Our view is that very high priority be given to the training of the teachers of early childhood teachers. In particular, there should be within an amalgamated college of education (rather than the independent institution proposed in the White Paper) a teacher education faculty specialising in the pre-service preparation and continuing development of early childhood professional and ancillary staff....

### **Increasing governmental concern**

(Extracted from *paras. III.3.6 – 3.13*)

III.3.8 Child-care and kindergarten both should develop a strong concern for the child's social and personal development, creative and motor skills, concept formation, and linguistic competence. More attention should be given to the construction of Chinese (rather than western) curriculum materials. 'Activity' pedagogies seem most appropriate, with classes of not more than 35 pupils to allow this approach to operate effectively....

### **System support**

(Extracted from *paras. III.3.14 – III.3.16*)

III.3.14 Given its recent entry into the kindergarten policy arena and the great distance to go in developing a significant government role in this field, we believe that the administration lacks the necessary quality of infrastructure to improve the situation in toto at an appropriate pace. The Education Department should therefore pursue a more vigorous and innovative approach to curriculum and methods for early childhood education and accept that additional resources will have to be directed to this end. We spell out this increased government role below.

III.3.15 ... There should be a policy initiative concerning leadership training in the form of an intensive in-service programme for head teachers in kindergartens who can then assume greater responsibility for both the performance and development needs of their own staff.

### **Options**

III.3.17 We see the options available to government presenting themselves as differences in degree of financial and administrative involvement: there is no alternative but to become more interventionist in policy determination....

III.3.18 In the longer term, kindergartens should become part of the aided sector with the Government having a role similar to that which it undertakes in respect of primary and secondary education.

## Chapter 4 The Schools

### Primary

III.4.2 – III.4.9 (*See original document*)

### Secondary

III.4.10 – III.4.22 (*See original document*)

### Curriculum and teaching method

- III.4.29 Our line of argument is that the emphasis in student assessment on formal selection and allocation should be lessened. This is elaborated in Chapter III.2. Therefore, consideration should be given to transforming the role and function of the Hong Kong Examinations Authority from that of controlling a public examination system to that of operating a course and student accreditation service on behalf of the schools and the post-school institutions. This would still provide for the quality of the education system to be independently and externally monitored, at least in terms of the relative performance of school leavers and the standard of courses offered. In addition, however, it would encourage the trying out of alternative assessment techniques to traditional, externally set and marked unseen written examinations. We think a title such as Accrediting Agency (AA) would be appropriate. We deliberately suggest the word 'agency' to connote that this body, while structured in order to allow it to make independent judgements, would be so governed as to be in the service of and to report to the Education Commission and its Boards/Committee Councils (see Section I). It is therefore suggested that the AA have a board or council including nominees of the Commission and an independent part-time unofficial chairman.
- III.4.31 To encourage curriculum development efforts, especially in the post-Form III area, we believe there is merit in drawing the teaching service, as a professional force, into curriculum development and assessment practices. Strategies should be implemented to improve the co-ordination and communication between the agencies responsible for curriculum development and examinations. A genuine drive towards school-based curriculum selection and adaptation, together with school-based programme and pupil evaluation, would open up new horizons for teacher participation. This involvement would be from periphery-to-centre rather than the centre-to-periphery tradition which now permeates educational planning, policy making and innovation, limiting the number of teachers who can become involved in these activities. Every effort must be made to encourage innovation at the school level which, after all, is where the real work is being done.

### Points of concern

- III.4.32 The principal features which strike us about the school level of the education system are:
- Student motivation and application verges on the fanatical, by western standards. Maths and science attainment is excellent by any standard: while preserving this, it should be possible to devote relatively more resources (including time) to meet shortfalls in other areas.
  - The curriculum is 'examination driven' through syllabuses designed for university preparation. The Education Department should be reorganised and resourced to provide a 'professional epicentre' for school curricula.
  - Proficient English-speaking teachers are in very short supply and their turnover is high. As more Form IV-V places become available, this shortage will become increasingly critical. We urge the setting of definite targets for the acquisition (by a deliberate

training and/or importation plan) of an adequate supply of competent speakers of English to work in the schools.

- Technical and prevocational education is not sufficiently articulated nor is there an adequate link with the academic streams to allow students to switch streams without excessive backtracking.
- Students spend too little time in critical or analytical thinking. The library is a symbol of a 'learning-to-learn' system, but use and provisioning of libraries seem to reflect a lack of understanding of their potential and importance.
- The private independent schools are generally of low quality and there is no effective policy to remedy this either by upgrading or by closure. The standards of private schools with bought places should be raised to an explicitly defined level. As a corollary, subsidy rates for private schools with bought places should be increased to equate with those of the aided sector. The very low-rated schools should be eliminated from the pool and more places bought from the better schools.
- Although classes are large, there is no advantage in reducing them in size unless concomitant steps are taken to improve teaching methods. Pedagogical reform is a prerequisite for reduced class size to have any real effect.
- With increasing retention and participation rates, the formal status of FIV and V studies needs further clarification. They presently 'float' between the end of 'basic' (free, compulsory) schooling and the beginning of 'upper secondary' education (generally thought to begin in FVI).
- Because of the current course patterns, there is too much wastage of effort and misdirection of talent as the vast majority of FVI and FVII students do not gain entry to the universities or the Polytechnic.

### 'Levelling-Up' school quality

(Extracted from *paras. III.4.33-III.4.37*)

- III.4.33 As we have pointed out, the basic education system is now in place and enrolments have expanded rapidly and impressively. The school system should focus now on some of the challenges caused by this rapid enrolment build-up - the new issues relate to quality rather than quantity....
- III.4.34 ... Hong Kong has some of the best schools in the world in terms of student attainment. Products of these schools are accepted into the world's most prestigious universities.... Most of the schools, however, leave something to be desired. Facilities, teacher qualifications, examination results and other indicators of quality rank low. Students are allocated to these schools for various reasons including their test performances and lack of opportunity owing to the educational and economic status of their parents.
- III.4.35 No education system has schools of uniform quality. The objective should be to gradually but persistently raise the lower quality schools to the standards of the best. We do not advocate diminishing the existing resources or quality of the top-ranked schools in order to 'homogenise' educational opportunity.
- III.4.37 The target of government policy should be the lower quality schools in terms of their resource base and capacity for improvement. The government could provide compensatory resources on top of its regular subsidy....

## Suggested action

- III.4.38 Smooth progress of pupils through the system can best be facilitated by removing many of the barriers between sectors and strands.... FIV and V should be accessible to all, regardless of scholastic potential, thus reflecting the evident social demand. The Government should make every effort to ensure equitable provision. This might lead to a concentration of FVI and FVII teaching in a small number of schools (including, possibly, Chinese middle schools) or by the complete removal of teaching at this level from the secondary schools and the establishment of new institutions concerned wholly and solely with senior secondary programmes.
- III.4.39 FVI and FVII could be planned as a coherent two-year programme for all who performed sufficiently well in the HKCE or who obtain admission by other criteria. Such a programme should be uninterrupted by any public examination and lead at the end of the period to formal certification. Within it there could be a comprehensive choice from vocational preparation to the purely academic....
- III.4.40 Students should be able to enter one or other of the higher educational institutions or take up employment in industry and commerce more smoothly than the present examination-ridden arrangements permit. If entry to the CUHK four-year course is still to be allowed at the end of Form VI, this could be achieved by a 'provisional' acceptance of students based on their performance at the end of Form V in the HKCE, elaborated as necessary by a statement from the school concerning performance in FVI. Indeed a similar accrediting process could operate for any student who wishes to terminate his or her school education during the FVI-FVII biennium. We advocate in the long term that a system of accreditation be instituted on the basis of continuous assessment of student performance for those who wish to terminate their secondary school education after Form V but prior to the end of FVII....
- III.4.41 In the light of recent studies, the Education Commission should set up a task force to make specific recommendations on the organisation and provision of FVI-FVII education as a matter of urgency bearing in mind that the fundamental objective is the establishment of a multi-option two year series of curricula uninterrupted by any formal examination....
- III.4.42 The disparity in degree of government control over different types of schools should be lessened. Maximum authority and responsibility should be afforded all schools (government, aided and private) so that, within prescribed educational and administrative guidelines, a variety of modus operandi may develop. Schools should be left to manage their own affairs as far as is practicable, with the education portfolio being more concerned than is presently the case about general policy matters.

## Chapter 5 Beyond the Schools

### The present pattern

- III.5.3 From the point of view of manpower alone, expansion of the technical institutes and sweeping improvements in teacher education would seem to us to be clear priorities....
- III.5.4 Part-time degrees may well provide a viable alternative to full-time university education though clearly they will put not only the students but also existing university staff, space and resources under considerable stress. The introduction of a 'university without walls' using the mass media is an attractive idea to us but does not seem likely in the foreseeable future mainly because of a questioning of what its viability and credibility would be....

## A decade of expansion

- III.5.10 ... a considerable and rapid expansion of degree level and higher technician education is both necessary and desirable. The maximum feasible rate of expansion of existing tertiary level institutions needs to be determined in order to provide a larger proportion of higher education places of acceptable standard for the relevant age group by 1990.
- III.5.14 ... We believe that urgent action should be taken to identify and acquire at least two sites for new institutions, the first of these being designated for a second polytechnic....
- III.5.16 We have no reason to doubt the calibre or the dedication of the academic staff of the universities and the Polytechnic - indeed most of those with whom we conversed would do credit to a good university anywhere in the world - but it would be less than honest to suggest that the higher education establishment of Hong Kong stands in the front rank of world academe.... Hence we urge caution in the rate of increase of new staff and also suggest that the encouragement of post-graduate studies (both by the award of post-graduate scholarships and the establishment of a research fund and more research facilities) might well be helpful in the recruitment process and would go some distance in raising and maintaining the esteem of these Hong Kong institutions in the international academic community....
- III.5.17 We consider that the UPGC (or its successor - see Section II) should bring forward advice to the government through the proposed Education Commission on:
- (a) The establishment of a research fund to encourage post-graduate research in the universities and the polytechnic in order in the short run to attract high calibre expatriate staff and in the longer term to create a corps of locally born academic staff.
  - (b) The expansion of an overseas undergraduate scholarship scheme to run for a decade in the first instance in order to relieve the pressures on the existing institutions and to produce graduates in disciplines not adequately covered by the universities and the Polytechnic.
  - (c) The long term planning of the expanded provision of Higher Education: determine priorities and estimate of costs; ensure that building sites are acquired in good time and that the range of facilities required match the needs of industry, commerce and the people of Hong Kong.

## Matriculation problems

- III.5.21 ... We have suggested that entry qualification to the two universities and the polytechnic should be harmonised.

## Suggested action

- III.5.23 ... The first is the maintenance of the existing organisational arrangements except that students who have passed their A Levels would be granted exemption from the first general year at CUHK. The second is that matriculation to either university, the Polytechnic and any other degree granting institution ought to be defined in terms of performance at the A Levels (without necessarily ruling out schemes of provisional acceptance of certain students). This might obviate the need for the first year general course at CUHK and have implications for the course structure of other institutions. The way forward is to harmonise the matriculation requirements for the various post- secondary institutions, including the abolition of the Higher Level Examination; this requires the first year programmes at these institutions to be adapted accordingly. For those students who wish to terminate their secondary school

education after Form V but prior to the end of FVII, in the long term we advocate that a system of accreditation be instituted on the basis of continuous assessment of student performance (see Chapter III.4.38-40).

## Chapter 6 Continuing Education

### Untapped potential

III.6.1 – III.6.5 (See original document)

### Principles

III.6.6 (See original document)

### Options

(Extracted from paras. III.6.7-III.6.9)

III.6.8 We wish to be specific on one point: with its small geographic size and its high technological standard, Hong Kong would be eminently suitable for a system of education by radio and TV, combined, for example, with week-end study camps and evening tutorials ...

III.6.9 ... we make three rather general statements which may form a foundation upon which to build concrete proposals:

- (a) There is a reservoir of idealism and experience in voluntary organisations for adult education, and it would be wise for public policy to acknowledge and support these.
- (b) There is a great need for second 'chance' offers through adult education: for example, in learning English or in obtaining formal education qualifications. In the current circumstances we accept that meeting such obvious needs should have priority over catering for leisure education.
- (c) Nevertheless, we endorse the idea of public subsidy for what may be termed 'cultural enrichment' courses: Hong Kong has an extremely rich cultural heritage upon which to draw - Chinese, European and (most interesting) the blending of the two.

## Chapter 7 Special Groups

### Equity and potential

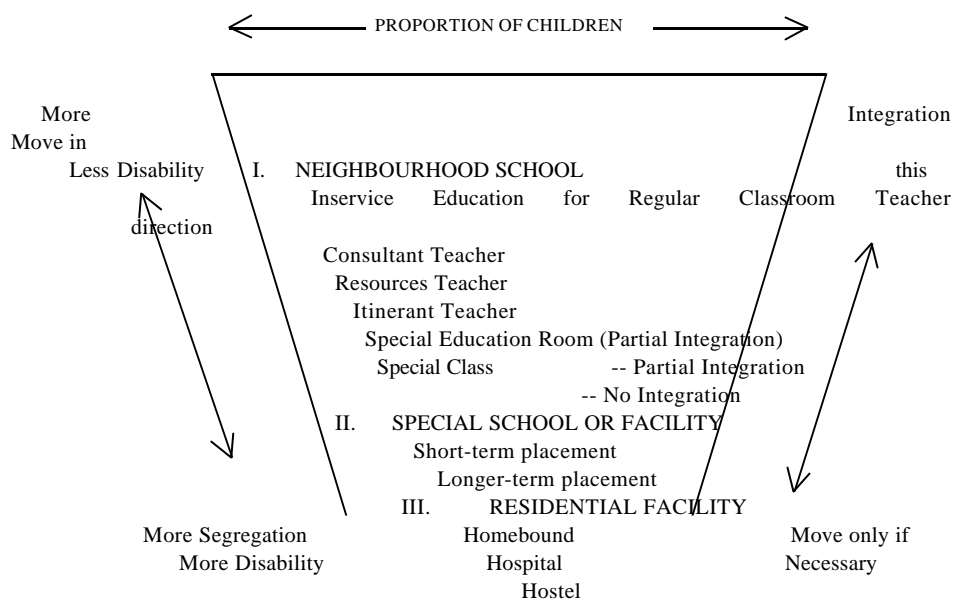
III.7.4 The United Nations in its declaration of the International Year of Disabled persons (IYDP), to which Hong Kong gave such positive recognition, made an important distinction between the terms disability and handicap, defining disability as 'the measurable, functional loss resulting from an impairment' and handicap as 'the consequence of environmental and social conditions which prevent a person with a disability from realising his or her maximum potential'. This distinction is relevant to our educational beliefs, attitudes and practices. It is not within a school system's power to prevent disability; it is within its power to try to prevent handicap. It is this which provides a rationale for the equitable but not necessarily equal distribution of resources within the Hong Kong school system. Prejudices against the disabled need to be overcome in the face of superstition and ill-founded stereotyping. A community which sees its disabled members as having flaws rather than needs not only diminishes and impedes its disabled members, but also itself.

III.7.5 ... we begin from the position that there are not two populations of children in Hong Kong schools - the able and the disabled - but a single population of children; and that individual differences are matters of degree, distributed along a continuum. Some children (perhaps

three to five per cent of the total) have long-term and complex special needs and many (between ten and twelve per cent) at one time or another during the schooling process have short-term, transient special needs.

- III.7.6 The concept of concentrating on needs rather than flaws enhances the individual by focusing on his or her strengths and potential contribution to society. This necessitates a move away from the category-based provision of services (e.g. of moderately mentally handicapped; maladjusted and socially deprived) to one which is needs-based and socially deprived) to one child. It is the child and his or her individual needs rather than some clinical type or category or cause which should be the focus for education. Steps should be taken to re-orient the delivery of educational services for atypical children from K onwards by focusing on the nature of the provision offered rather than on labelling children according to their ostensible disability.
- III.7.7 Children have a right to be educated in the least restrictive environment. For the minority of severely disabled students there is obviously still a place for special schools and special classes. For the large majority of disabled students this might mean a regular school within their respective nets: this would reflect the major changes now taking place worldwide in special education provisions. Although segregated provisions are apparently cost-effective in that there is an identifiable provision to which additional resources can be directed, this is outweighed by the inevitable labelling and stigmatisation that flows from segregation....
- III.7.8 ... Optimum preparation for a satisfying and productive adult life requires maximum opportunity, consistent with needs, for membership of the regular school community.... New patterns of service must be designed to cater more effectively for the increasing diversity of needs which are being recognised. In view of our advocacy of a 'least restricted environment' policy, with its implications for closer liaison with regular educational services, it seems appropriate to vest the responsibility for special education with the Secretary for Education. Such a move would ensure consistency in policy and administration and would ensure that children with special needs could make full use of available educational opportunities and facilities.
- III.7.10 The recognition of a need for atypical provision to cope with factors which affect the pace, style and content of children's learning is of considerable policy significance.... Given the Programme/ Branch/ Department structure of public administration in Hong Kong, it might be advisable to develop and monitor a 'children's services' policy so that there is harmonisation of the Education, Health, Welfare, and Employment arms of government in respect of disabled children.
- III.7.11 School principals must assume increased responsibility for the education of children with special needs, whether they be the least or the most able.... School staffs generally will have to become more sensitive to these students and be expected to apply a wider range of teaching techniques. Pre-service teacher education should give more emphasis to preparing all teachers to deal with atypical children in the ordinary classroom... Priority should be given by the Curriculum Development Committee to programmes for children in special need given that there is a need to improve the school curriculum for this group. It seems appropriate that the main thrust of the work should come from within the Special Education Section.
- III.7.12 From our own diverse experiences, we can identify four styles of providing resources in support of services for special groups. For most, multiple styles and services could apply ....

The nature and severity of the disability largely determine the style of provision and type of service that is most practicable. The diagram below shows some of the options available.



III.7.13 ... As for long term organisation and planning, we see the need to provide a more unified and coherent advisory and support service for special education to ensure that such education starts before school and goes on after school. The prospects for adult and continuing education for disabled adolescents and adults should be explored further.

### Resource teachers

III.7.18 (See original document)

### New technology

III.7.19 – III.7.21 (See original document)

## Chapter 8 The Teaching Service

### An assessment of needs

III.8.1 No rational education system can expect to have all its teachers of first-rate quality, yet this is something to aspire to. The problem of teacher quality in Hong Kong is attributable in large part to the responsive and rapid build-up in enrolments due to the virtual explosion in demand for education services over the past twenty years. Indeed, the successful implementation of mass education through to FIII during the 1970s accentuated an already evident teacher shortage. Hong Kong's expectations of its teachers are unusually high: many teachers should be (but are not) competent in two languages. Further, our proposals in the previous chapter would extend bilingualism to the primary grades and so require even more teacher retraining and upgrading.

III.8.2 A systematically phased-in plan for improved professional preparation of teachers is the necessary first step to raising the general quality of educational services. Each element of the education enterprise, and especially teacher training institutions, should have an integrated role in this plan. Teacher education faculties and facilities have not been able to keep up with the demand both for more teachers and for different training patterns. Government policy has required a simultaneous strengthening of training programmes (such as lengthening courses by a year) and increased output of new teachers. Now there is an

increasing concern with the nature and rigour of preparatory programmes for kindergarten teachers and with acceptable child: teacher ratios in early childhood services.

- III.8.3 Life in the schools is by no means comfortable and the role of the teacher is being fashioned anew as a result of education expansion. Class sizes are very large by western (OECD) standards with 35 to 45 pupils being not unusual. Though there are several teachers' organisations (e.g. the Government Schools No-graduate Teachers' Union, the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union, the Association of heads of Secondary Schools, Association of Lecturers in Colleges of Education) these by no means attract full membership, nor did they lobby us emphatically on key education issues, especially when compared with some of the lay bodies. However this is par for the course in Hong Kong where unions do not yet have much political leverage. Perhaps this is why the strikes and resignations so typical of teacher behaviour in the west during a similar phase of expansion and restyling in the 1960s are absent in Hong Kong.
- III.8.4 With the role of government in several sectors of education likely to expand, more and better teachers will be required. Provision for the disabled and for pre-school children are two areas where the government is committed already. At this point, however, there are insufficient teachers in training to secure these objectives. Moreover, as the post-FIII participation rate increases, more teachers will be needed.
- III.8.5 While quantitative needs loom large, there is also the need to upgrade the quality of many long-serving but inadequately prepared teachers. Many primary school teachers have completed only one or two years of pre-service training and have had little access to inservice courses. The generally poor command of spoken and written English that we observed, together with often uninspired and stilted pedagogical approaches, suggests to us that major changes are warranted. This problem is not unique to Hong Kong. All nations are faced with the obligation of continually equipping both new and experienced teachers with the latest developments in curriculum and teaching techniques, and providing them with the opportunity to become acquired with trends in educational thought.
- III.8.6 Quantity and quality of teaching resources is related closely to the ability of education systems to recruit and retain the right kind of people. Recruitment depends partly on occupational prestige and remuneration levels, and partly on a vocational commitment to helping young people.
- III.8.7 The quality and quantity issues surrounding the teaching service are so large and multi-dimensional that bold and urgent policy responses are required. We found little evidence of a staffing strategy with projections, forecasts, targets, and timetables for meeting teaching force requirements. There is only a rudimentary planning scheme to harmonise the build-up of teacher education institutions with changing professional manpower requirements. A blend of preparation modes (in-service versus pre-service) should be part of such a plan.
- III.8.8 The experience of OECD nations regarding the benefits of expanding the number of teachers in order simply to reduce class size is instructive. While a strong case can be made for substantial reductions in pupil-teacher ratios, the large outlays involved in financing such a policy will not only be worthwhile if teachers are willing and able to work differently with their fewer pupils. There is little to be gained by teaching 30 pupils in the same way as 40 might be taught. At present, teachers in Hong Kong have little opportunity to experiment with flexible small group techniques because their classrooms are packed and the physical facilities are not conducive. In order to capitalise on the potentially high-yield investment in class size reduction, resources must be allocated simultaneously to allow for in-service activities to help teachers adapt their teaching styles to this situation.

## Pre-service preparation

- III.8.9 It was never envisaged that the colleges of education would perform the task of preparing large numbers of teachers for the mass education role that is now expected of them. The colleges are small and have a consequent limitation on specialist facilities and depth of faculty, yet are expected to train a broad array of types and grade levels of teachers to cope with contemporary and likely future situations.
- III.8.10 The high drop-out rate experienced by the colleges in the first term indicates that teaching is by no means in the top vocational choice for all who begin at college. Further, many university graduates see teaching as a second choice and those with good degrees easily obtain more highly remunerative commercial or industrial employment. Many who become teachers often seem to be in search of an opportunity to raise their social and professional status.
- III.8.12 Pre-service training is available for every type of teacher. For example, the Hong Kong Technical Teacher's College offers courses for qualified students wishing to teach in technical schools. The schools of education in the universities have increased their intake of secondary teachers to part-time in-service training programmes. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of the secondary school teaching force is without professional training. Pre-service teacher education should be conducted in a diversity of settings – universities, the Polytechnic and single purpose colleges of education – both as vocational preparation and as a component of more general 'educational studies' course. Teacher education institutions should involve their associated schools in the formulation of goals and objectives for practice teaching and in the evaluation of student progress towards them. Further, for each school in which a substantial number of students are practice-teaching, institutions should ensure adequate liaison with the school. Teachers who are engaged in the supervision of practice-teaching should have an appropriate time allowance built into their daily programme rather than, say, supplementary remuneration. Close and co-operative relationships should be fostered, both formally and informally.
- III.8.13 Primary school teaching in particular lacks prestige. This is aggravated by the fact that there are no degree courses to prepare primary school teachers, nor even a separate salary scale for primary graduates. Such omissions should be rectified. This, combined with a limited career structure, accounts for the number of primary school teachers who seek to work in the lower secondary forms for which they are also qualified or who move out of teaching. In order to extend career opportunities (as well as to raise the level of teaching competence in certain areas) a further one-year training course is offered in selected subjects. This also enables some non-graduates to teach in FIV and above. Further, primary school teaching staffs are composed largely of women. There is lower status attached in Hong Kong, as in many parts of the world, to occupations largely staffed by women. The casual connection is not obvious. Indeed, the problem is not easily solved despite the parity of salaries with other civil service positions requiring comparable basic qualifications: there is no compelling reason for the Government to raise salaries or improve conditions in order to attract the 'right' kind of teacher. Furthermore, teachers' unions, in keeping with most unions in Hong Kong, do not have much industrial muscle. So far the Education Department has little option but to train a greater quantity of those who are prepared to work under the present arrangement, or to defer retirement and recall retired officers.
- III.8.17 Given the interactive nature of these teacher education problems, the government is rightly concerned that overall policy development and co-ordinating mechanisms be established rapidly. There is already an expressed willingness to co-operate among the training institutions themselves, such as in the planning and operation of new Pre-school Teacher Training Institute. Machinery for the harmonisation and balanced development of teacher

education should be established – for example, a Teacher Education Committee of the Hong Kong Teaching Service (see paragraphs III.8.31-35) – with a brief to monitor and advise on the professional development needs of all types of education personnel.

### Induction and in-service

- III.8.19 Since regular classroom teachers work an average of six of the eight periods in a day, they have little time for self-initiated professional growth once they leave training college. Somehow this must change if the Hong Kong education system is not to become a horse-and-buggy institution in a jet age. A mark of a highly skilled occupation is that its practitioners have a high level of preparation according to standards set by the practitioners themselves. A major rationale for in-service of teachers in Hong Kong is that pre-service training is often too short. In this situation the temptation to try to cover too much ground in the initial courses is very strong; it can lead to superficiality and a loss of effectiveness. The chances of securing, in the near future, further widespread extension in the length of initial teacher education would appear to be slight; indeed, its desirability is somewhat dubious given the present world-wide uncertainty about the efficiency of traditional modes of pre-service education. Nevertheless, the provision of in-service courses for teachers could be stepped up. Now that policy requires all newly qualified teachers to attend certain in-service courses over the beginning years of their active professional life, initial courses of teacher education could presumably be made more effective over a narrower arena of professional education, in the knowledge that these pre-service courses were recognised to be only the first stage of an explicitly continuous process of professional growth. This would be especially profitable if, during their first year of work, beginning teachers were to enjoy a reduction in teaching load and professional responsibility.
- III.8.30 Teachers should be encouraged to accept responsibility for their own continued professional growth. The way forward lies in career incentives, the establishment of teachers' centres and the fostering of whole-staff development activities as well as he already approved policy of release time.

### A teaching service

- III.8.32 We have deliberately avoided thinking of teachers as civil servants in the technical sense of that term, even though most teachers have their salaries subsidised from the public purse and some are in fact government officials. By and large careers across the Civil Service are not freely open to teachers, nor are teachers particularly interested in working outside their chosen field. It would be undesirable for the professional arm of the Hong Kong education system to be thought of as being governmentally controlled. Further, we support the principle of the authority responsible for a school or school system having maximum freedom to determine the number and type of persons needed within the resources available and to deploy those resources. Nevertheless, we are concerned with the lack of cohesion and indeed the absence of a sense of there being a teaching profession in Hong Kong as distinct from groups of teachers who work in particular schools.
- III.8.33 We believe this adds up to a case for consideration being given to the creation of a Hong Kong Teaching Service (HKTS) to which all practising education professionals would have to belong and with which aspiring teachers would have to be registered. The HKTS, perhaps administered as a statutory agency, with appropriate linkages to the Public Services Commission concerning the determination of pay and working conditions, would thus constitute a pool of registered teachers with a view to safeguarding the public interest. The various employing authorities (for government, subsidised and private independent schools from Kindergarten through to FVII) would draw their staff from the HKTS. A concomitant of registration would be the establishment by the HKTS (in collaboration with the Government

and after consultation with interested parties) of 'floor level' salaries and conditions of work for all professionals. This should not be equated with uniformity and conformity. Different employment packages could be offered by the various school and school system authorities. We believe that the teaching profession should be given a new structure to improve its effectiveness through controlling the credentials of and, as a corollary, affording recognition to its members. It is timely for the Government to intervene in the setting and monitoring of standards required of teachers in all schools by creating a Teaching Service which would lay down foundation conditions of work which would be applicable to all teachers. The question of the advantages and disadvantages of an Education Service comprising all staff (ancillary as well as professional) is also worthy of consideration at a later stage.

III.8.34 The HKTS could also have considerable influence in persuading teacher education institutions about appropriate programmes; in promoting suitable induction of new professionals; and in encouraging cross-fertilisation of personnel practices across the sectors. For the different authorities which operate schools would continue: there is no question of all the sectors being coalesced into one monolithic system.

III.8.35 As far as conditions of service are concerned, we think there is a case for the promotion structure and procedures to be amended in order to create new types of positions, possibly of limited tenure, which are open to members of the HKTS allocated to the particular sector containing the position. Limited tenure appointments should be entertained for some promotions positions. Consideration should be given to ways of encouraging more women to accept positions of managerial responsibility in schools and in the Education Department.

### Suggested Action

III.8.36 The government should formulate and publish a plan for providing adequate in-service upgrading opportunities for existing teachers and for attracting and retaining an appropriate number of first-rate and well-prepared professionals in the teaching force. This plan should specify the roles of universities, colleges and other preparatory institutions, and the part to be played by Education Department officials and by people in leadership positions in the schools themselves. The plan should also provide for a phase- in schedule. Because of resources constraints, priorities must be set among competing needs: for example, as between teachers for kindergarten, FV and beyond, and for the handicapped.

III.8.37 One focus should be an effort to prepare the faculty who will subsequently train the teachers. Prospective teacher training faculty should be sought from all schools which are publicly operated or subsidised. Enlarging the pool of teacher educators is a necessary first step in the expansion of pre- service and even in-service activities.

III.8.38 It will take a long time using traditional approaches to acquaint many of those currently employed with new methods or to prepare them for new types of pupils (such as the handicapped and young kindergarten children). One promising strategy is to have 'key' or 'master' teachers who are prepared intensively at a college or university. These teachers would then return to their schools and organise in-service courses for their colleagues either in their own school or at a teacher centre.

III.8.40 We believe that an amalgamated college of education within an existing or new higher education institute (such as a polytechnic) would be desirable. This is based on the premise that teacher education institutions ought not be isolated, single purpose establishments but should be linked with strong and broadly-based institutions. If this is not immediately feasible, then the existing colleges should be federated to the maximum extent - including administration and staffing - leading to a comprehensive curriculum that assigns specialities

(such as kindergarten teacher training) to particular campuses. It would be desirable to award a Bachelor of Education degree from such a college in recognition of the quality of the programme offered and to give incentive to students whose first preference is to attend a degree-granting institution....

- III.8.41 In order to retain good teachers we are of the view that there should be an expansion of opportunities for the classroom teacher to play an active role in curriculum development and in other school-level professional decisions. Teacher quality depends on professional satisfaction. Schools should be encouraged to adopt a more participatory form of decision making, especially in professional matters such as school organisation and programme. The up- grading of the physical condition of schools through improved building programmes would serve to keep good teachers within the service, who might otherwise be attracted by superior and more congenial work conditions in private enterprise.
- III.8.42 Teachers in schools should have an influential role alongside college and university faculty not only in supervising practice teachers but also in identifying in-service and pre-service needs and in formulating means of meeting them. Senior members of school staffs should assume the professional responsibility for guiding beginning teachers: this should be formally recognised and rewarded.
- III.8.43 The isolation of teachers from the world outside school is a very real contributing factor to student's and schools' isolation from the community. It would be advisable to provide opportunities for teachers to gain some experience in fields outside teaching; in the same way it would be useful for schools to be more directly exposed to 'experts' other than teachers (e.g. artists, technicians). They could be given access to schools as workplaces or perhaps an exchange scheme with teachers could be devised. Colleges of education should consider giving more credit, in terms of priority for entry, to mature age applicants with outside work experience. Some thought might be given to the development, in the long term, of an 'interchange' scheme whereby members of the teaching service could earn occasional paid working leave and become attached to a public or private enterprise organisation, thus gaining a valuable professional development experience....
- III.8.44 The new consultative arrangements between management and teachers at the school level and between schools and the Education Department seem to many at the 'chalk-face' to be still more in the nature of aspirations than actualities. The distinct teacher labour markets for government and aided sectors is clearly detrimental to the notion of a Hong Kong teaching service. Rank and file teachers have no effective say in the policies of the schools in which they work, let alone in the system as a whole: hence they find it hard to identify with and feel loyal to the overall policy goals of the system.
- III.8.45 ... Steps need to be taken to foster a sense of corporate professional identity through providing opportunities for teachers themselves (rather than vicariously through colleges of education or the universities) to take the initiative in setting up professional development schemes. Further, teachers in positions of responsibility must be afforded the time and the incentive to attend to their important professional leadership role in relation to more junior colleagues. Teachers in leadership positions should be given opportunities to participate in in-service courses designed to bolster their professional expertise. Provision should be made to increase the supply of part-time and casual teachers to take the place of colleagues attending in-service courses.
- III.8.46 Our options for future policy have concentrated on the point of maximum leverage - teacher preparation. However, we believe that teacher effectiveness and management would be enhanced by the creation of a Hong Kong Teaching Service which would make available registered teachers to the respective authorities of all types of schools in the territory. A

progressive implementation is warranted, to allow for those teachers presently employed whose qualifications and experience would deny them entry to such a Service.

[In the following extraction from *paras. IV.1 to IV.13*, the Report offers a diagnosis of the problems arising from the rapid expansion in basic education in Hong Kong. It also suggests a prioritised list of strategic measures that Hong Kong could adopt to ensure the continuous development of its education system. *Editors.*]

## Prospects and Priorities

- IV.1 It is clear that the expansion of education in Hong Kong has been very rapid in terms both of the size of the system and the range of services it provides; nevertheless there is still very considerable room for further expansion, coupled with improvement in quality in most sectors....
- IV.2 We recognise the vast achievement of the last thirty years in welding a disparate and *ad hoc* collection of schools (reduced to virtually nothing during the Second World War) into the large and complex system that operates today. However, this rapid development has had certain consequences: in creating climate for change it has also spawned a host of problems which have been exacerbated by sharpening public awareness. The call for their solution is making the search urgent.
- IV.3 The motivation behind this push for expansion has been and continues to be social demand by a society which is culturally committed to education and mindful of its social status and mobility value. The prevailing ideology is an individually competitive one. Individuals can easily be thought of in ways which ignore the differences in economic and social power of the groups to which they belong. The needs of special groups must not be dissolved into a solution of atomised individual needs. All this underpins broader social considerations - particularly those to do with a growing economy. There is a need for a qualified labour force to fuel the economy; in turn, the economy will sustain further educational development....
- IV.4 There is a deepening understanding in Hong Kong of the role of education as a public service. This brings with it more explicit pressures for a more equitable sharing of its benefits across society as a whole. Rising levels of education are affecting the social aspirations of various groups of society, across the board.
- IV.5 Many of the system's problems are very obvious and therefore demand attention. It is as well to accept that some of these difficulties are perennial: for example, issues of equity and quantity. Though the focus and target of the social spotlight will alter as positions and viewpoints change, an important capacity on the part of planners and policy makers is to identify trends and to develop coping strategies: this is the long-term agenda of educational governance in Hong Kong. The short-term need is to draw up a list of key priorities which warrant special attention, thus stating a claim for the resources and support required if education services are to be developed in the desired directions.
- IV.6 It seems to us that there are five critical areas which bear on the immediate future development of education in Hong Kong. They all warrant urgent policy attention - as a basis for a coherent plan of action and to secure the resources necessary for their implementation. The order in which they are presented is not indicative of their ranking; they are all of top importance and should be handled concurrently. One priority is the establishment of a comprehensive language policy for the education system which does not neglect the current emphasis being placed on English in schools. Lack of language confidence and competence is one of the main impediments to learning throughout the

population. Irrespective of the package of solutions chosen, a very significant investment will be needed in the scientific and technical knowledge base in order to apply solutions at the practical level: there will need to be research, experimentation and policy commitment to any chosen solution - this should not be underestimated. We favour a shift towards the universal use of the mother tongue in the formative years accompanied by the formal teaching of English as a first foreign language; this would lead progressively to genuine bilingualism in the senior secondary years.

- IV.7 A second priority is related to teacher improvement, given that the effectiveness of any education system is largely determined by the capacity and commitment of the teaching service. A critical issue is the language competency of teachers in Hong Kong schools, which largely falls short of the bilingual proficiency needed for effective teaching. There are qualitative problems in raising the standards of the teaching service as a whole - those concerned with training and professionalism. There are also quantitative problems particularly as a result of new policy initiatives in the involvement of Government in kindergarten and the education of disabled children. Others are related to the cost, for example, of reducing pupil: teacher ratios.
- IV.8 A third priority concerns the efforts being made to attenuate selection and allocation as it operates throughout the school system. Examinations dominate the Hong Kong education system, to its detriment. There is a need to relieve the strain of the present examination system on both teachers and students; there is also a need to improve the curriculum by making it more relevant to the developmental needs of students rather than allowing it to be dominated by administrative procedures within the system.
- IV.9 A fourth priority is related to the organisation of post-school education and access to it. Tremendous social pressures from students, parents and industry reveal a need for greater diversification of the educational opportunities available beyond FVII, so that pressure on tertiary institutions can be relieved and individuals encouraged to choose from more varied provisions related more closely to their interests, to the requirements of the labour market, and to the community generally. Until a new institution is built to cater for the vast numbers of qualified and aspiring students presently denied entrance to tertiary institutions, many will be forced to continue to study overseas, if they are to have access at all to higher learning.
- IV.10 A fifth priority is the need to build up a standing capability to conduct research, to analyse and formulate policy options and to plan developments. This impinges on the community, the profession, the bureaucracy and statutory policy-making bodies. The governance machinery needs to be thoroughly overhauled.
- IV.11 As for resource allocation, without becoming bogged down in the arithmetic of international comparisons and in the debate about which countries' efforts Hong Kong's should be related to, the aggregate of resources (public and private) going into the education system is, on a per capita basis, still unimpressive. This is so in terms of criteria such as financial outlays per student, capacity-to-pay of the economy, and sectoral emphases. We do not underestimate the magnificent rate of increase in public expenditure on education over the past twenty years - but then the base was very low. It is indubitably the case that whichever social and economic path Hong Kong follows, it will require greater allocation of staff, buildings and equipment for educational purposes. On the evidence we received we formed the conclusion that more could be allocated without detracting from other human-welfare services. The emphasis, in per capita expenditure terms, should be tilted more favourably towards the junior (rather than the senior) and the vocational (rather than the academic) branches of education.

- IV.12 It should be noted that we have not touched on all issues. For example, the financing of education is of major significance - public versus private obligations, fiscal equity, fees, vouchers, 'user-pays' principal, consumption versus investment, interpretations of social demand - but it is not central to our terms of reference and so we have dealt with this vital matter only tangentially. This is simply one instance of a range of topics which should be scheduled for study in an ongoing programme of policy analysis of educational issues.
- IV.13 What we have described above demands a forging of new relationships between the practical and the theoretical - even to the extent of rethinking the traditionally accepted structures of knowledge on which the institutional framework of education is based. How do we educate both for intellectual vigour and for confident, competent persons? How do we balance the need for developing expert and technological literate people against the need for cultural transmission which not only speaks to people in their fundamental humanity but also provides a basis upon which social and technological developments may themselves be evaluated? Here we end where the people of Hong Kong must begin: by talking about curriculum, by coming to grips with those theories of education, structures of knowledge and cultural maps which are to be harmonised so that their education system may flourish and hence their society continue to prosper.

**Appendices I - X** (*See original document*)+