



27 March 2012

2011/2012 Newsletter No. 2

Dear Colleagues,

It hasn't been a long time since I wrote in the last Newsletter, but a lot of things have taken place since. I trust all of you are having a busy time planning for the next academic year while devotedly and painstakingly completing the current year as planned. Time really flies and let's get hold of every opportunity of it!

1. Happy Hour Forums

The Executive Committee are very glad to see your positive response to our first Happy Hour Forum held on 13 February 2012 during which Professor Hau Kit Tai shared with us on "Lessons from Teaching Reform in Mainland China". We had a very good discussion and exchange of professional views and the Forum was indeed a very good prologue to our forthcoming Study Tour to Shandong in April.

The second Happy Hour Forum will be held at 4:00p.m. on 26 April on the topic "Sexual internet crimes and compensated dating". We have invited Ms. Lee King-hei, Frances (李經晞) Senior Inspector, Regional Crime Unit 5B Kowloon West (西九龍總區刑事總部重案組第五B隊) to share with us on the topic. Ms. Lee is responsible for all sexual internet crimes and she can give us first hand data and information. In her talk, she will provide real cases as illustrations. Please reserve the time slot. A separate registration form will be sent to you in due course.

2. Shandong Study Tour

The Tour to Shandong will be held from 8 to 12 April 2012 for participants to learn from the educational reform experience in Shandong. We will visit three schools and exchange views with educational officials, school administrators and front-line teachers. The focus will be on "Education reforms in China: motivational and self-regulated Learning". We are very much honoured that the tour is supported by the Faculty of Education of the Chinese University of Hong Kong with Professor Hau Kit Tai and Professor

Leung Sheung Ming as our advisers. We look forward to sharing with you on the experience in our coming Annual Conference.

3. Annual Conference

The Annual Conference this year will be held on 20 June 2012 (Wednesday) from 9:00a.m. to 1:30p.m. (including lunch). We are very pleased to have invited Professor Hau Kit Tai again to share with us on the theme " Learning and Assessment: misconceptions and implications for 334". At the same time, the Study Tour participants will also share with us the inspiration gained from the experience. The relevant information and registration will be sent to you in due course.

Please mark the date and time in your diary. We do value your attendance at the Annual Conference and please also stay for lunch to enjoy some relaxing moments with your colleagues.

4. Meeting with Secretary for Education and Permanent Secretary for Education

The Joint Committee of the Secondary School Councils and Secondary School Principals' Association of 18 Districts (中學議會與十八區中學校長會聯席會議) met with Mr. Michael Suen, Secretary for Education and Mrs. Cherry Tse, the Permanent Secretary for Education on 15 February 2012. Topics of discussion included:

- a. the review of the teacher-class ratio adopted for aided secondary schools
- b. the issue of class size
- c. the review of the criteria which is set at 61 S1 student intake for "school survival"
- d. the review of the various grants to schools
- e. the introduction of relieving measures for districts with insufficient P6 students in 2012 SSPA cycle.

The result of the survey report on the implementation of NSS released by the Joint Committee in November 2011 was also discussed in the meeting.

The meeting was not as fruitful as representatives have expected especially when the EDB held the stance that schools are already very well-provided as reflected from the 'surplus' of funds in many schools.

After the meeting, the Joint Committee wrote to Mr. Suen to express its stance with the following highlights:

Regarding "surplus"

- a. The Committee did not agree to the EDB's view on surplus. In fact, 'reserve' should be a better description for schools have long-term planning in their use of funds.
- b. There should be mutual respect between the EDB and schools on their discussion of those 'reserves'. At the same time, EDB should have open discussion with schools on their use of reserves. It would be extremely inappropriate for the EDB to regard the reserves are surpluses and implement new measures assuming that school would have enough money to foot the bill.
- c. To start a genuine discussion with schools, the EDB should reveal a full picture instead of very general comments on "schools have a lot of surplus".
- d. To respect the spirit of School-based management, EDB should respect individual school's rationale on the utilization of reserves
- e. In face of queries on "surpluses" from other government departments, the EDB has the responsibility to explain to external parties the spirits of School-based management, the accountability system and the importance of the reserves for the enhancement of quality education.

Regarding NSS survey

As the EDB has put forward queries on the reliability and validity of the survey results, the officials are urged to call for another meeting for a professional dialogue.

Regarding the aforementioned issues, the Joint Committee also summed up Mr. Suen's summary for EDB's confirmation for dissemination purposes as follows:

- a. The EDB adopts an open attitude towards the review of staff establishment but there is no definite timetable;
- b. Schools that have problems with staff provision in 2012-2013 can approach the EDB individually. The "surplus" in those schools would be a critical factor for EDB's consideration for assistance.
- c. The minimum number of classes for school's "survival" will not be reduced from three to two. However, the EDB would consider reducing the minimum number of students per class for schools facing difficulties in student admission. As far as relieving measures are concerned, district-based solutions would be allowed.

The Joint Committee is still waiting for the response from the EDB and if you have comments and queries on these issues, please approach the Chairman.

5. The Review of the implementation of NSS

Our Task Group on 334 has been working hard on the various issues through different platforms. Thanks to their hard work, some relief measures have been introduced resulting in the revised proposals of the SBA in different subjects.

In our view, the revised proposal is just a first step to the modification of SBA. The ultimate goal is to start the overall review of the whole SBA system as early as 2012. Not only should we look into the procedures, but more importantly we also need to discuss the breadth and depth, the types and modes of assessment, in relation to the existing curriculum and actual teaching time, considering the workload of students and teachers.

We are very much concerned with the following issues:

- a. The Electronic Advance Application System for Post-secondary Programmes) E-APP

We have had deep concern for the less-privileged students who would have difficulty in paying for the application fees. At the same time, EDB should review its policy for subsidies and the institutions concerned should consider cutting their fees and deposits, setting a quota of choices, and standardizing their refunding as well as subsidy policies.

- b. The progress of Applied Learning
Possible subsidies from EDB to support schools in offering Applied Learning course are being explored.

- c. Multiple pathways and support for students on the D-day
- d. Implementation of Liberal Studies: curriculum, assessment and support measures
- e. The examination timetable and date of release of result for 2012-2013

If you have any comments and queries, you are free to contact us (Dr. Ho Sai Mun Stanley, Ms. Ng Fung Han and Ms. Lau Yiu Hung)

6. Retreat for the Executive Committee Members

The Executive committee has a very fruitful retreat on 3-4 February 2012 in Honeyville, a very nice retreat centre facing the sea in Mount Davies. It was a very good experience with Mr. Wai Yu Michael Wong, Sister Wong May May and Dr. Yuen Pong Yiu leading the inspirational sharing and discussion on professionalism of principals and the future development of the Association.

7. Farewell to outgoing principals and subscription of Associate membership for the Executive Committee Members

The Executive Committee would like to send our greatest appreciation to those who have served in schools for so many years and will be retiring or taking early retirement in the coming September. While reluctantly bidding you farewell, we earnestly appeal to your continued support. Just fill in the attached subscription form and send it back together with the cheque to our treasurer. We can then keep in contact. This is a one-off good act that you should not miss.

We welcome your valuable feedback and we are sure that our efforts will help foster the education quality in Hong Kong. In the mean time, do take care of yourselves for this is usually the busiest time of the year. Keep up your spirits and I will write some time after the new school year commences.


Mrs. Ruth Lee
Hon. Secretary

