

LCQ2: Cultivating cultural literacy in schools and community

Following is a question by the Hon Emily Lau and a reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (March 5):

Question:

Regarding the cultivation of cultural literacy at schools and in the community, will the Executive Authorities inform this Council:

(a) given that the domestic pay television programme service licence issued to the Hong Kong Cable Television Limited stipulates that it shall, within six months upon receipt of written notice, make available to the Government not more than three channels free of charge and expense, whether the Government will exercise this right in the near future to launch an arts and cultural channel, so as to provide a platform for practitioners in the arts and cultural sectors to perform and to provide more cultural programmes for the enjoyment of the public;

(b) of the new measures concerning the arrangements for the curricula and extra-curricular activities of primary and secondary schools, to be put in place to encourage students, teachers and parents to attach greater importance to arts and cultural studies in primary and secondary schools; and

(c) whether the relevant authorities will review if the number of places of the relevant courses provided by the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and other publicly-funded tertiary institutions and the resources available to them are sufficient, in the hope that the graduates of these courses can assist primary and secondary schools in enhancing education which aims at promoting performing arts and culture?

Reply:

Madam President,

(a) Through the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC), the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) is examining how to realise the proposal for an arts and cultural channel. We will take into account the views of the arts and cultural sector and other stakeholders in the process.

In 2003-04, the HKADC approached carriers, including the Hong Kong Cable Television Limited (Cable TV), on the subject of developing an arts channel. As the HKADC could not find a suitable content provider as partner in the exercise, it postponed the plan for setting up an arts and cultural channel at the time.

In the light of the development of the arts and cultural scene and the development of the free-to-air digital television broadcast last year, the HAB and the HKADC approached different television broadcasters once again to continue to explore the feasibility of setting up an arts and cultural channel. We will also contact Cable TV again for discussion on making use of the relevant condition in its licence to provide a free channel for arts and cultural programmes.

(b) To encourage students, teachers and parents to attach greater importance to arts and cultural studies in primary and secondary schools, the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) recommended in the "Arts Education-Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (P1 - S3)" drawn up in 2002 that schools should allocate time slots for students to learn the arts: about 10-15% of the total lesson time at primary level and 8-10% of the total lesson time at junior secondary level. In 2003, the CDC published the "Music Curriculum Guide (P1 - S3)" and the "Visual Arts Curriculum Guide (P1 - S3)" to provide schools with specific directions, teaching and assessment strategies as well as relevant examples.

In the New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum to be introduced in 2009, more diversified learning pathways for the arts will be provided. These pathways include:

- (i) Learning Experiences of "Aesthetic Development";
- (ii) Music and Visual Arts as elective subjects;
- (iii) Arts-related "Applied Learning" courses; and
- (iv) Selecting "Art" as a theme for the "Independent Enquiry Study" under Liberal Studies.

With the introduction of the Learning Experiences of "Aesthetic Development", schools will provide no less than 135 hours of learning time for each senior secondary school student to further develop his/her creativity, aesthetic sensitivity and critical thinking skills relating to the arts, and to foster a life-long interest in the arts.

As regards extra-curricular activities, the Education Bureau (EDB) supports and encourages schools in providing students with diversified arts learning experience. For example, students are encouraged to participate in arts-related interest classes, arts performances and competitions, to attend concerts and exhibitions, and schools will also invite artists and arts groups to provide training and to stage performance at the schools so as to enrich students' experience in arts learning.

Moreover, the EDB also encourages schools to participate in international arts and cultural exchange programmes to enable students to understand and respect diversified cultural traditions and to help them broaden their horizons, and develop proper values and attitudes.

To cater for primary and secondary schools' need for extra-curricular activities in culture and the arts, apart from the EDB, the Leisure and Cultural Services

Department also provides different programmes and activities. These programmes include music training courses provided by the Music Office, programmes under the School Arts Animateur Scheme, the School Culture Day Scheme, the Pilot Scheme for Senior Secondary School Students, arts education activities organised by the museums as well as activities organised by the public libraries in Hong Kong.

To inspire parents to attach greater importance to arts education, many schools also organise activities such as evening gatherings for parents, variety arts performances and visual arts exhibitions, to showcase students' achievements in arts learning and to encourage parents to support their children's pursuit in the field of the arts.

As regards encouragement for teachers, the EDB has been developing learning and teaching resources for them as well as organising professional development programmes to support them in the delivery of arts education in schools, such as preparing a series of teaching materials for arts appreciation and criticism, Chinese music and popular music, and conducting training courses designed for secondary and primary school teachers.

(c) The training provided at the five schools of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA), namely the Schools of Dance, Drama, Film & TV, Music and Theatre & Entertainment Arts, is to nurture talents for the relevant performing arts sectors with the objective of preservation, succession and development of these performing arts.

Since 1992, the five schools have included elements of arts education in their bachelor's programmes in line with the Academy's strategy to nurture talents who can "both act and teach". Since 2006, the HKAPA has offered master's programmes in the Schools of Dance, Drama, Music and Theatre & Entertainment Arts. These master's programmes also cover elements of arts education.

Apart from the degree programmes of the five schools, the HAB granted an

additional provision of over \$2 million to the HKAPA in the 2007-08 academic year to support the establishment of a Performing Arts Education Centre to help meet the Government's objective of cultivating cultural literacy in students and the general public. Over the past year, the Centre has developed a series of arts education programmes which include programmes to assist serving teachers in conducting courses on Learning Experiences of "Aesthetic Development" under the "NSS curriculum" to be launched in 2009. Examples include developing and organising "Applied Learning Courses" relevant to the NSS curriculum, and staging the "Public Lecture Series in Performing Arts Education".

The HKAPA will carry out a "Review on the Academy's Future Direction and Strategy" in the second half of 2008 to re-confirm its role and overall objective. The review will also cover areas such as the possible role of the Academy in arts education, the Academy's structure, resource allocation and enrolment capacity.

As regards the other publicly-funded tertiary institutions, all University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions were set up in accordance with their respective ordinances and they enjoy institutional autonomy. Academic plans and curriculum design, including the provision of culture-related programmes, all fall within the scope of institutional autonomy. At present, some UGC-funded institutions do provide such programmes like music, visual arts and communication studies. The EDB will, from time to time, reflect to the institutions the manpower needs of the various professions both within the Government and in the community. All along, the Government has exchanged views with different sectors on the arts and cultural subjects.

To tie in with the NSS curriculum, the EDB is organising arts and cultural courses for serving teachers through the tertiary institutions to meet their needs in teaching the Learning Experiences of "Aesthetic Development" under the NSS curriculum to facilitate the implementation of the new curriculum.

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