SUMMARY

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to set out the general directions for curriculum development in Hong Kong for the next 10 years, to fulfil the vision of enabling students to attain **all-round development** and **life-long learning**. The report makes recommendations on **strategies** and **actions** for the short-term phase (2001-02 to 2005-06), the medium-term phase (2006-07 to 2010-11), and the long-term phase (beyond 2011) for the government, schools, teachers, teacher educators, parents and members of the community who make a contribution to curriculum development. The recommendations are supported by authentic and practical experiences in Hong Kong schools as illustrated in the folder of <u>Exemplars of Curriculum Development in Schools</u> accompanying this report. The new curriculum guide for each KLA will be published in 2002, and subject guides for revised or new subjects will be prepared in subsequent years. These guides will give further suggestions on learning, teaching and assessment, as well as measures and resources to support schools and teachers.

A Holistic Review of the School Curriculum

2. The Curriculum Development Council (CDC) has conducted a holistic review of the school curriculum during 1999 and 2000 in order to offer a quality school curriculum that helps students meet the challenges of a knowledge-based, interdependent and changing society, as well as globalisation, fast technological development, and a competitive economy. The directions and recommendations set out in this report are based on the vision and overall aims of education for the 21st Century laid down in the Education Commission's (EC's) Report on <u>Learning for Life, Learning through Life - Reform Proposal for the Education System in Hong Kong</u> published in September 2000, and the public responses to the set of consultation documents <u>Learning to Learn - The Way Forward in Curriculum Development</u> (CDC, November, 2000). The recommendations are also based on authentic and practical experiences of schools, local research, policy contexts of Hong Kong, and different perspectives of international development, rather than to copy models of respective countries and a single theory. The recommendations have emphasised the actions that would have impact on effective learning, teaching and assessment in the context of Hong Kong schools, and measures and resources to support them.

The Way Forward in Curriculum Department

Guiding Principles

3. The recommendations made in this report are based on the following eight guiding principles:

    (i)   The overarching principle is to help students learn how to learn.

    (ii)   All students have the ability to learn and in order to do so they should be offered essential learning experiences.

    (iii) A learner-focused approach should be used to make decisions in the best interests of students. Diversified learning, teaching and assessment strategies should be used to suit the different needs of students.
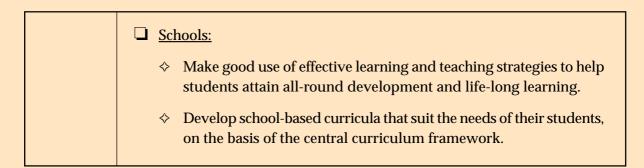
(iv) Development strategies should be built on the strengths of students, teachers, schools and the wider community of Hong Kong.

(v) Practices should be adopted to achieve a balance across different purposes and conflicting interests and views, e.g. across the academic, social and economic goals of the curriculum and diverse learning and teaching strategies. The purpose and modes of learning, teaching and assessment should be consistent with one another.

(vi) Schools have the flexibility to design their school-based curricula to satisfy the needs of their students, so long as the requirements set out in the central curriculum framework are fulfilled.

(vii) Curriculum development should be a continuous improvement process to help students learn better.

(viii) Positive thinking, with patience, celebration of small successes and tolerance of ambiguity are essential to ensuring the sustainability of change and improvement.

Development Strategies

4. The following strategies are recommended for the curriculum development proposals:

(i) To take gradual steps:

⇨ The Education Department provides adequate support to schools by offering central curriculum guides, teacher and principal training programmes, on-site school-based support and other supportive measures.

⇨ Each school builds on its existing strengths and plans its curriculum development at its own pace according to the readiness of its teachers, school conditions and the characteristics of its students.

(ii) To accumulate experiences and build up capacity:

⇨ Capacity is built up to help try out and review existing practices.

⇨ Experiences are generated and accumulated for dissemination and application.

(iii) To work in partnership :

⇨ Different parties are to work in partnership to achieve the common goals.

5. To put in place the above strategies, the following schedule, which adopts a gradual approach (10-year plan), has been worked out:

Short-term (2001-02 to 2005-06)	❑ Government: ◇ Renders support to schools by providing curriculum guides, teacher and principal development programmes, on-site school-based support, etc. (The new curriculum guides for all KLAs and individual subjects, where necessary, will be issued from 2002 onwards.)

	◇ Works in partnership with schools and tertiary institutions to conduct "seed" projects to generate and disseminate successful experiences for the reference of other schools. ◇ Conducts a review by the end of the short-term phase to take stock of the overall progress and to consolidate successful experiences. ❏ Schools: ◇ Different schools may have different starting points. Each school should review its current position and formulate its own curriculum development plan according to its own readiness and circumstances. ◇ The baseline is to promote learning to learn through four key tasks (moral and civic education, reading to learn, project learning and use of information technology for interactive learning) and to enhance learning and teaching in various KLAs, as recommended from P.30 to P.65 including strengthening critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills in all KLAs. ◇ Schools which are ready to do so are encouraged to begin developing school-based curricula. They may start on a small scale first, using one of the approaches suggested on P.69 of this report.
Medium-term (2006-07 to 2010-11)	❏ Government: ◇ Consolidates and disseminates systematically the experiences accumulated during the short-term phase to help schools develop school-based curricula and improve learning and teaching strategies. ◇ Continues with the tasks undertaken in the short-term and improves plans and actions based on the review in 2005-06. ❏ Schools: ◇ Build on the strengths and experiences developed during the short-term phase, and based on the central curriculum framework, proceed to the next stage of their schools' curriculum development plans to develop school-based curricula. Improve learning and teaching strategies further.
Long-term (Beyond 2011)	❏ Government: ◇ Continues to update and improve the curriculum framework according to the needs of society and students. ◇ Continues to work in partnership with schools and various concerned parties to generate and accumulate successful experiences with a view to helping schools further improve the quality of education.

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❏ <u>Schools:</u>

    ◇ Make good use of effective learning and teaching strategies to help students attain all-round development and life-long learning.

    ◇ Develop school-based curricula that suit the needs of their students, on the basis of the central curriculum framework.

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Tasks Ahead for 2001-02 to 2005-06

6. In order to have impact on the current situation of learning and teaching and to raise student achievement levels , the following imminent tasks for 2001-02 to 2005-06 are recommended:

    (i) **Create more space** in curriculum planning and implementation, as well as in school management, for students (to think and learn) and for teachers (to teach effectively, reflect and focus on professional work), through various means, including:

        ⇨ <u>Trimming</u> and restructuring the curriculum;

        ⇨ <u>Re-engineering</u> work process in schools, reducing unnecessary administrative workload of teaching staff;

        ⇨ <u>Reducing</u> excessive tests, examinations and dictations;

        ⇨ <u>Planning</u> the time-table flexibly;

        ⇨ <u>Making</u> good use of various grants; and

        ⇨ <u>Sharing</u> good practices and learning and teaching materials with peers.

    (ii) **Motivate** every student to learn in various environments (school, home, community) using diverse and appropriate strategies. Minimise or remove practices that de-motivate students.

    (iii) Use the four key tasks as tools to promote effective learning and teaching:

        ⇨ **Moral and civic education** to help students establish their values and attitudes; **(responsibility, commitment, perseverance, respect for others,** and **national identity** as a priority for personal development and improving society);

        ⇨ **Reading to learn** broadly with appropriate strategies to learn more effectively;

        ⇨ **Project learning** to develop generic skills and build knowledge; and

        ⇨ **Using information technology** for interactive learning.

    (iv) Use effective learning and teaching strategies to help all students acquire **basic competencies in Chinese, English** and **Numeracy** appropriate to their level of study as enabling tools for learning.

(v)   Accord priority to **critical thinking, creativity,** and **communication skills** among the nine generic skills, as they are crucial for helping students to appreciate the pleasure of learning to learn and to reduce their dependency on transmission of knowledge. Effective learning and teaching strategies to strengthen these generic skills in existing subjects are encouraged.

The School Curriculum – What is Worth Learning?

Overall Aims of the School Curriculum

7. The school curriculum should provide all students with essential life-long learning experiences for whole-person development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physical development, social skills and aesthetics, according to individual potential, so that all students can become active, responsible and contributing members of the society, the nation and the world.

8. The school curriculum should help students learn how to learn through cultivating positive values, attitudes and a commitment to life-long learning, and through developing generic skills to acquire, construct and communicate knowledge. These qualities are essential for whole-person development to cope with the challenges of the 21st Century.

9. A quality curriculum for the 21st Century should therefore set the directions for learning and teaching through a coherent and flexible framework which can be adapted to changes and the different needs of students and schools.

Curriculum Framework

10. From the above-mentioned Guiding Principles and Overall Aims of the School Curriculum, the CDC develops a Curriculum Framework as the basic structure for learning and teaching throughout all stages of schooling. The Curriculum Framework allows for different interpretations of contents and flexible use of different learning strategies and styles to suit individual needs. It has three interconnected components: (i) <u>Key Learning Areas,</u> (ii) <u>Generic Skills</u> and (iii) <u>Values and Attitudes</u>

(i)   <u>Key Learning Areas (KLAs):</u> The organisation of the school curriculum is structured around fundamental and connected concepts of major knowledge domains. These provide the context for the development and application of generic skills, values and attitudes.

⇨   The existing subjects are grouped into the following eight KLAs:

◇ Chinese Language Education

◇ English Language Education

◇ Mathematics Education

◇ Personal, Social and Humanities Education

◇ Science Education

◇ Technology Education

◇ Arts Education

◇ Physical Education

⇨ Schools are urged to choose subjects from each KLA to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all students. All students should be given opportunities to obtain learning experiences in all the eight KLAs throughout primary and secondary education.

⇨ Schools can also organise their own curricula in different ways using a combination of subjects, units, projects, etc.

⇨ Chinese history and culture should be duly strengthened throughout all stages of schooling.

(ii) <u>Generic Skills:</u> Generic skills are fundamental to helping students learn better. They are to be developed through learning and teaching in the contexts of different subjects or KLAs and are transferable to different learning situations. The nine generic skills are:

⇨ Collaboration skills

⇨ Communication skills

⇨ Creativity

⇨ Critical thinking skills

⇨ Information technology skills

⇨ Numeracy skills

⇨ Problem-solving skills

⇨ Self-management skills

⇨ Study skills

For 2001-02 to 2005-06, priority should be placed on critical thinking skills, creativity, and communication skills.

(iii) <u>Values and Attitudes:</u> Values are qualities that students should develop as principles underlying conduct and decision-taking, while attitudes are personal dispositions needed to perform a task well. Values and attitudes mutually affect each other. The enhancement of values is given high priority in the review, and moral and civic education, which is value-oriented, is one of the four key tasks.

Trimming and Restructuring the Curriculum

11. To create space for enhancing student learning and to cater for students' needs and abilities, the approach to "trimming" involves:

   • removing less important and outdated content (e.g. the trimming of the existing General Studies curriculum)

   • identifying core and extended parts of the curriculum (e.g. the Junior Secondary Science curriculum and the Mathematics curriculum)

   • flexible modes of organising study content (e.g. the Technology Education curriculum reorganised around common themes)

   • using the open curriculum framework of learning targets

12. This report, however, does not present the detailed framework of learning targets or contents of each Key Learning Area (KLA), nor is it a manual of prescriptive actions. The CDC will provide guidelines and advice on how to work on the curriculum contents in the new curriculum guides to be issued.

Focuses for Action in the Eight Key Learning Areas and General Studies for Primary Schools in 2001-02 to 2005-06

13. Recommendations concerning the focuses for action to be taken in the first phase (2001-02 to 2005-06) to enhance learning and teaching at the four Key Stages in each KLA and the curriculum of General Studies for Primary Schools are outlined from P. 30 to P.65 of this report.

How to Act - Effective Learning, Teaching and Assessment

14. The following thirteen areas of action are recommended for improving learning, teaching and assessment to enhance students' independent learning capabilities. They are informed by authentic and practical experiences within the Hong Kong context, as well as by local and international research.

   Actions via school structure, processes and management

   (i)   *Learning Opportunity and Learning Environment*

         All students should be provided with learning opportunities in an environment which provide relevant, authentic and meaningful experience for whole-person development.

   (ii) *School-based Curriculum Development*

         The development of a school-based curriculum does <u>not</u> mean that all learning and teaching materials are developed by the schools and teachers themselves. The essence of a school-based curriculum is to work out a holistic and coherent curriculum and learning plan to suit the needs of students, according to the broad goals of the school curriculum. Schools may incorporate flexible use of time, space, different learning environments and resources available within and outside school. They may make use of textbooks, teaching packages and exemplars provided by ED and other sources as

well as authentic learning materials (e.g. newspapers) in designing their school-based curricula.

(iii) *Collaborative Lesson Preparation*

Collaborative lesson preparation provides a good opportunity for teachers to discuss, share experiences and make joint efforts in designing the curriculum, learning and teaching strategies, as well as assessment modes, etc. to improve students' learning. It helps to promote peer support and a collaborative culture among teachers and serves as an effective means to enhance teachers' professional development.

(iv) *Learning Time and Time-table*

Learning time includes lesson time, other school time and holidays. Schools are encouraged to review how school time is currently utilised so as to ensure that students have equal opportunities to engage in learning and teaching activities for whole-person development. Preparing the lesson time-table flexibly can facilitate the effective use of lesson time for meeting students' needs, promoting collaborative learning and teacher-pupil interactions, etc.

Actions with direct impact on learning and teaching inside and outside classrooms

(v) *Effective Learning and Teaching Strategies*

Effective learning takes place when students are motivated. Principles for motivating students include expressing what is expected of them, building learning and teaching on their success, using a diversity of resources and teaching strategies, and choosing learning materials relevant to their daily experiences and ability level.

(vi) *Assessment for Learning*

A diversity of assessment modes should be adopted to meet the purposes and processes of learning. Both formative and summative assessment help to provide information for both students and teachers to improve learning and adjust teaching.

(vii) *Four Key Tasks*

The four key tasks highlighted in the review are:

<u>Moral and Civic Education</u> – Learning opportunities should be provided for students to develop and reflect on their values and attitudes, such as perseverance, commitment to society and nation, respect for others, and sense of justice.

<u>Reading to Learn</u> – Reading helps develop thinking skills, enrich knowledge, enhance language proficiency and broaden life experience. Emphasis has to be placed on providing students with proper guidance, opportunity and motivation for them to enhance their learning capacity through reading.

<u>Project Learning</u> – Project learning is a powerful learning and teaching strategy to help students acquire and construct knowledge, and develop various important generic skills through a variety of learning experiences. While and after conducting projects, students need to be given appropriate guidance and feedback on setting their learning

objectives, identifying and accessing information sources, analysing issues, making recommendations, presenting their ideas and reflecting on their own performance.

<u>Information Technology (IT) for Interactive Learning</u> – Appropriate use of IT inside and outside classrooms enhances effective learning and teaching.

(viii) *Effective Use of Textbooks and Learning/Teaching Resources*

Textbooks are learning materials for students, not merely teaching materials for teachers. Selective use of textbooks is important so that there is space to equip students with a repertoire of generic skills and a capacity for life-long learning. Learning and teaching materials may be enriched by making use of good quality materials available from various sources (e.g. mass media, the internet, etc.).

(ix) *Catering for Learner Differences*

Actions to cater for learner differences do not necessarily narrow the gap between more "able" and less "able" learner; they draw out the potential of students so as to maximise the effectiveness of learning. The strategies that may be adopted include raising the self-esteem of students, using different assessment modes and varying the methods of learning and teaching.

(x) *Homework*

Quality homework encourages **independent** learning at home. It helps students consolidate, apply and further develop what is learnt at school. However, excessive homework should be avoided.

Actions via partnership with organisations and partners

(xi) *Life-wide Learning Opportunities for Whole-person Development*

Life-wide learning provides learning in real contexts, complements some aspects of learning in the eight KLAs, enables experience of interdisciplinary studies, and provides experiential learning that cannot be provided in classroom learning.

(xii) *Smooth Transition between Kindergarten and Primary School, Primary and Secondary School*

Kindergartens, primary and secondary schools should collaborate closely on goals, learning and teaching methods, and assessment to ensure smooth continuity from one level of schooling to another. Strategies include establishing partnerships between schools at different levels, and between parents and schools, providing a warm social climate in school, and organising induction programmes for new students.

(xiii) *Home-school Co-operation*

Parents should have the right participative and encouraging attitude towards their children's learning. Parents should be helped to understand the purposes of assessment, and the importance of diversified learning and teaching styles, strategies, contexts, resources and communication with teachers, in order to help to maximise the potential of students.

Measures and Resources to Support Schools and Teachers

15. Multiple measures are taken to cater for the varied contexts and different needs of schools. The provision of resources and supportive measures takes the form of <u>curriculum resources and support materials, collaborative research and development ("seed") projects, teacher and principal development programmes, library development, school-based support to curriculum development, creating time and space for teachers and learners, dissemination strategies and networks and local and international consultants.</u>

Curriculum Resources and Support Materials

16. A variety of curriculum resources and support materials will be developed, such as:

- Curriculum guides, which assist schools in planning their whole school curriculum and developing various modes of curriculum organisation using the open and flexible curriculum framework.

    ⇨ The new curriculum guides for all KLAs will be issued in 2002.

    ⇨ Schools which are ready to do so may start to develop their school-based curricula step by step according to the new curriculum framework. In parallel, CDI will work jointly with some tertiary institutions, experts and schools to conduct "seed projects" to try out different modes of curriculum organisation and learning and teaching strategies to implement the new framework. CDC/CDI will review and consolidate all the experiences generated in the short-term phase and disseminate them to schools for reference. Schools may then consult these experiences when planning which mode of curriculum organisation best suits them.

    ⇨ All schools should start to implement the new curriculum framework gradually, starting from 2006-07, with a view to putting it into full implementation by 2010-11.

- A curriculum bank of authentic exemplars is available at <u>http://cd.ed.gov.hk</u> to inform daily practices, provide ready-to-use learning and teaching resources, enhance teacher development through use of the exemplars and serve as a platform for sharing experiences.

- Textbooks should be used by teachers flexibly to enhance learning effectiveness. A web site is being developed at <u>http://www.hkedcity.net</u> for teachers, parents and students to express their views on the standards of textbooks.

- A series of learning and teaching materials will also be developed (e.g. guidebooks, multi-media packages, CD ROM curriculum planners), for example on action research and assessment for learning.

- All concerned parties, including ED, QEF, DTN and SCOLAR, will coordinate closely and collaborate with tertiary institutions and schools to disseminate good practices and resource materials.

Collaborative Research and Development (RD) "Seed" Projects

17. The aim of the collaborative RD projects is to generate useful experiences for the reference of schools, develop a critical mass of curriculum change agents and leaders, and acting as an impetus to school-based curriculum development. A range of research and development projects will be conducted in partnership with schools and consultants/universities beginning in 2001, covering general learning and teaching strategies, Key Learning Areas, moral and civic education, and school-based curriculum development.

Teacher and Principal Development Programmes

18. Various modes of teacher development (e.g. web courses, fixed hour courses, action learning) are planned. "Learning through practice" is a key feature of the programmes. From 2001-02 to 2005-06, priority will be given to programmes on curriculum leadership, the four key tasks, critical thinking and creativity, assessment for learning and catering for learner differences. As an incentive to teachers and teacher libraians, a review of professional career development will be conducted, to give due recognition to teachers participating in such programmes.

Library Development

19. Examples of strategies to support library development include the promotion of collaborative planning and teaching, providing a uniform cataloguing system, library automation and developing an interactive problem-solving web site for primary students. Meanwhile measures are being drawn up to enhance teacher librarians' professionalism, refresher training course for serving teacher librarians, and close liaison with professional associations to promote collaboration between teachers and teacher librarians.

School-based Support to Curriculum Development

20. The CDI school-based curriculum development (primary and secondary) teams will provide on-site advice to help schools to strengthen learning to learn in the existing curricula, to promote curriculum leadership, and develop a school-based curriculum along the lines of the new curriculum framework, through collaboration in research and development projects or on the basis of their own plans.

Creating Time and Space for Teachers and Learners

21. Some possible ways of creating time and space for teachers could include, for instance, "trimming down" the curriculum, re-engineering work process in schools, reducing unnecessary administrative workload of teaching staff, reducing the number of tests/ examinations, designing flexible time-tables, making good use of the Capacity Enhancement Grant (CEG) and sharing useful practices and learning and teaching resources with other teachers. Learners can gain more "space" of learning in life-wide learning activities outside the classroom organised by different parties. Learners are also encouraged to read more, see more, think more, ask more and reflect on the answers.

Dissemination Strategies and Networks

22. Schools and teachers will be networked to facilitate the sharing of experiences and dissemination of good practices through the Regional Education Offices (REOs), the District Teacher Network (DTN), learning communities in RD projects, the principals' network and professional associations.

Involvement of Experts

23. Local and international experts will be invited to advise on the above development strategies whenever appropriate, for example on each KLA, on curriculum evaluation, on curriculum areas such as moral and civic education, and on assessment for learning.

Conclusion

24. The Curriculum Development Council takes the view that there is no fast track to curriculum development. Curriculum development is a continuous improvement process, in which, quality that matters more than quantity. The Council will undertake a review in 2005-06 to take stock of the progress and experiences accumulated during the first phase (i.e. from 2001-02 to 2005-06) to provide a basis for mapping out the detailed action plan for the medium-term phase (i.e. from 2006-07 to 2010-11).