

1 " A Consultative Legal Draft for 'The Educational System of Macau, SAR' " Points of Emphasis



In June 2003, the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau of Macau, SAR, suggested the "Keep Improving & Developing ---- Revision of the proposed Educational System of Macau, SAR." After a consultative period of eight months, with more than 10 sessions of explanations and through various channels, over five hundred items of suggestions were systematically collected.

After listening to and deep investigating into the opinions of the educational professionals and the general public, as well as delving into the comments of the legal advisers and jurisdictional officers, the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau presented "A Consultative Legal Draft for 'The Educational System of Macau, SAR.' "

To enable the general public to have an overall view of the above mentioned consultative legal draft, we would like to explain its points of emphasis.

The aim of education in educational system holds a very important stand. Its objectives must be guided by an appropriate concept and be cautiously handled. The new legal draft reinvestigates and readjusts the general aim of Macau Education and its objectives for different levels of education.

The concept of the aim of education to be adopted:

- (1) knowledge impartation is not the only aim,
- (2) full response to the requirement of the present time has to be noted, laying special weight on the motivation and capability of lifelong learning, creativity, critical thinking, capacity of the employment of information technology, possession of the sense of cognition and the sense of belonging toward the society and the mother country, fine democratic disposition appreciating multi-culture and having the temperament of being harmonious with nature,
- (3) close concern about the distinctive features of Macau and its future needs has to be nourished, and,
- (4) pay close attention to the special needs of the various educational levels,

The Draft lists the school education into different levels: infant education, primary education, junior secondary education, senior secondary education, and tertiary education. Among them the first four items form the fundamental education, of which, the third year of infant education, primary education and junior secondary education are included as compulsory education.

This adjustment is set in accordance with the result of a research study of infant education, the practical and beneficial educational experiences of Macau, as well as many other regions of the world.

There should be a stronger link between infant education and primary education. However taking the originally infant education session to be a preparatory year for primary school tends to transform the infant education into the primary education, increasing the burden of the students while hindering the growth and development of the children. The present pre-primary education of Macau holds the learning materials and practice very similar to primary education even though the students are still in the stage for infant education. Integrating the preparatory year for primary school education into infant education demonstrates the specific physical and psychological development as well as the disciplinary requirement to be manifested at childhood.

As for the types of education, there are home education, general education (mainly the education of general cultural and scientific knowledge, excluding special education, professional technological education, vocational training and the continuing education which is not recurrent education), regular education (the fundamental education imparted by qualified educational organizations offered to the school age students prescribed by law), continuing education (including recurrent education and other types of education which do not belong to regular education or training activities), etc.



Continuing on P.7

In Macau the organization of the preparatory year for primary school classes follows the same system as that of the first and second year of infant education while sharing the same (kindergarten) venue. This new arrangement is feasible to be put into practice.

The new Legal Draft stipulates: "An educational organization should not, for any reason, detain a student of the infant education session from being promoted to the next grade, unless his/her parents apply for it." Generally speaking, the quality of infant education in the Chinese society is a bit too excess, starting at too early of a child's life time. In Macau there are still cases of unqualified to be promoted to the next grade in infant education. This sure carries a certain negative effect influencing the child's physical and psychological development in the future. We expect the new regulation to be able to enhance the healthy development of infant education.



To match with the revised proposal of the senior secondary system, the administrative authorities of the Education Department will provide enough time to the schools to adjust the syllabus and requirement for the transition.

The new Legal Draft lays much weight on the various learning needs of the junior secondary students. To allow room for multifaceted development so as to guarantee a substantial system, as well as to strengthen the vocational & technical education and vocation training, it is specified that "the educational programme of vocational & technical education can be organized by the said education specialties or any general educational organization." "Vocational & technical education programme holds the same standard as that of the senior secondary level and is sure a variety of school education. The respective graduates may choose to be employed to serve the society or to be enrolled in tertiary educational institutions for further studies."

The new Legal Draft counts home education as an important type of education, setting a special clause for its regulation. It is because home education is not only the cradle of human education but also the foundation for school education which is a vital portion of the composition of the contemporary education. Of all the many current educational problems of Macau, especially cases of students discontinuing schooling or students with special personality, are all tightly linked up with their family situations.

From now on, Macau not only has to insist on keeping a wide range of education, but also has to pay great attention to home education while instigating parenting education and encouraging close cooperation between families and schools.

The present educational system utilizes the concept of "adult education" to cover any type of education which is not regular education. However, the new Draft tries to start from the theory of lifelong learning and includes recurrent education and different types of education other than regular education or training activities as "continuing education." Moreover, the attendance can be people of any age.

The following three types hold different implications with some overlapping scopes. The range of fundamental education means infant education (3 years), primary education (6 years) and secondary education (6 years) that makes a total of 15 years.

Compulsory education means the education which children between five and fifteen have to undergo. The range includes the third year of infant education, primary and junior secondary education, making a total of 10 years.

All Macau SAR students attending compulsory education at schools within the free education network may enjoy free education. However, the government offers tuition fee allowance during the compulsory education stage for the students attending schools that are not in that net.

At present, the qualification of the recurrent education bears the same weight as that of the regular education. Nevertheless, there are certain differences between their curriculum planning, subject arrangement and hours of attendance. Furthermore, the learning requirements are also different. To guarantee the quality of recurrent education, as well as offering more different channels for the self-study students to gain a qualification, we presume one must undertake a certain examination of some core subjects to obtain a standard recognition before being awarded the recurrent education qualification.

The new Legal Draft suggests that there should be a board of directors in each school with a well set constitution. This suggestion is made under the consideration that the board may offer extensive advice for the management and development of the school.

It is proper that each region should have its typical educational standard. The present schools of Macau hold various unique features. However, there is quite a difference in quality, making it not too beneficial, in the long run, for the social development of Macau. The Macau education should continue to manifest its own merits so that all the schools may demonstrate their own distinctive features. Nevertheless, seeing into the needs of its situation and being in tune with the progress of the society of Macau, a regional frame and standard of education have to be established. Continuing on P2



The regional frame and standard of education are the basis to be adopted. All schools may develop their own scholastic programmes autonomously and are free to practise their own teaching materials as well as pedagogy.

To grade a student only through written examinations may easily make him/her a loser causing him/her to have the emotion of detesting to learn. The content for appraisal should not be based only on the outcome of wisdom but also the attitude of consciousness. The methodology of appraising can be multidimensional, emphasizing specially the outcome of formative evaluation.

Furthermore, the purpose of evaluation has to hold the aim of enhancing the success of learning. Therefore, we are most ready to execute multidimensional evaluation with the purpose of spurring the students to a greater learning success.

As we all know that the key point for the transition of schools does not lie in the improvement of the material situation but the transformation of the culture of education and pedagogy. Traditional schools are knowledge-centred and pay much attention to competitive examinations. There is little communication and exchange of views among the teachers of those schools. At the same time, their educational mechanism holds no flexibility at all, imparting information unable to keep pace with the daily life. This type of educational culture is totally incompatible with the need of the epoch of today.

The load of the reformation of the Macau school educational culture is heavy and the road is long. There is the need of transforming the classes into a "Learning Community" to manifest the importance of the multifaceted development and life experience of the students. The promotion of exchange of practice among teachers and schools should be instigated, laying great emphases on the self-motivation and the spirit of investigation of the students while discarding the culture of "examination-centre". It is necessary to allow the teachers to own a wider range of pedagogical administrative system and the students to practise a greater space of creativity so as to establish schools of "model organizations of learning".

The setting of grades for the teaching staff is proper to safeguard the right as well as the interests of the teachers, and is vital for the primary and secondary education. This is an item which the Special Administrative Region Government and the education personnel are taking much concern about. Therefore, the SAR Government will be responsible to arrange for the teaching staff a systematical frame including the nature of their work, their grade, their qualification, the reasonable workload and remuneration, as well as their rights and obligations.



The professional development of the teachers is something which the general public, as well as the governments of various countries pay much attention to and show great concern about. Furthermore, more and more people believe it to be a theme to remain consistent from the start to the very end throughout the teaching profession. The SAR Government is considering "to establish a mechanism connecting the allowances and professional development of the teaching staff." However, it does not mean that the present direct allowances of the teachers will be replaced by the professional development allowances or the allowances of the teaching staff will be diminished.

The aim of establishing the Educational Development is : (1) To improve the employment of the SAR Government Educational Expenditure so as to support the educational development. (2) Through the particular educational financial assistance to the schools motivates the preferential development of Macau Education.

The SAR Government also offers financial help to the school development plans set by the schools. On one hand the autonomy of the various schools is respected, and at the same time, the school development and the policy motivated by the SAR Government can be harmonized.

You are cordially invited to put forward your opinion of this Draft. Thank you.

Education and Youth Affairs Bureau, 2004.

