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21 September 2012

To: Supervisors/Principals of all government, aided, caput, DSS secondary schools
and special schools with senior secondary classes

Dear Principal,

Review of New Academic Structure – Senior Secondary Curriculum, Assessment, Interfaces

First of all, we would like to thank you and your colleagues for the great efforts in implementing the first cycle of the 3-year senior secondary education under the New Academic Structure (NAS) as well as the on-going valuable feedback all along. The delivery of the new senior secondary (NSS) curriculum and the inaugural Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination is generally smooth. Students have gained fruitful learning experiences and encouraging results in the HKDSE. The enhanced distributed leadership and collaborative learning among teachers and schools are invaluable to the changes. All these have impressed the international arena.

While it takes time for the experiences to be consolidated, we are pleased to inform you that the Education Bureau (EDB), the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) have joined hands to review the first cycle of NSS with engagement of the Education Commission and stakeholders from the school sector, the tertiary education sector, professional associations, students, parents, employers, etc. As deliberated in various policy and stakeholder groups, the broad objectives of the review are to: (1) study the implementation and policy outcomes at systemic, school, curriculum, assessment and student levels; (2) identify the strengths, good practices and challenges with a view to making recommendations for facilitating continual implementation, student learning and enhancing human resource development for Hong Kong.

We have taken the practical concerns of schools and students to our heart and adopted a strategic approach with multiple stages. The short-term phase from now to the early quarter of 2013 would focus on the key curriculum, assessment and interface issues in the interest of students and schools such as planning and design, lesson hours, School-based Assessment, catering for learner diversity, admission to further studies, pathways and policy outcomes. Timely recommendations could then be made to benefit S4 students with effect from the 2013/14 school year and earlier cohorts if feasible. In parallel, we would work with you on matters to be reviewed in the

medium/longer term phases in consideration of the feedback.

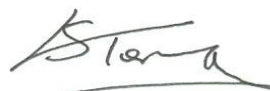
A series of seminars, liaison meetings and focus group meetings have started to solicit feedback from the education sector including students, subject teachers, counselling/career and guidance/form teachers, teacher librarians, middle managers, school leaders, professional associations and other stakeholder groups. HKEAA, CDC and joint meetings are conducted concurrently to consider the feedback received and to make appropriate proposals. Seminars and workshops for school principals/leaders would be held soon in October as part of the review. A major survey for school leaders and teachers on the proposals is scheduled to be conducted in late November 2012. The review would also build on relevant quantitative data and qualitative information collected from different studies during the first phase of implementation and submissions by different organisations. Regular reports to the Education Commission would be made to seek advice. We would continue to share good practices, findings and observations through different channels including professional development programmes, workshops, school-based support services, resource and assessment banks, websites, public seminars, publications, reports and the media, etc.

We appeal to your generous professional advice and collaboration again in the review in the best interest of students and schools. We would provide details of relevant activities through regular channels and update the NAS website (<http://www.edb.gov.hk/nas/en>) continuously. Secondary 6 students, schools and parents can visit the website for information on multiple pathways and examination, etc. Please feel free to send your comments and suggestions on the review to:

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