

Position Statement on Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA)

The Territory-wide System Assessment (“TSA”) is a territory-wide test administered by the Education Bureau in Hong Kong since 2004 for assessing Primary 3, Primary 6 and Secondary 3 students for their performances in Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics. TSA results are intended to provide an overview of students’ performance in each school against the territory-wide basic competency standards and not meant for comparison for individual school or student. However, the TSA for Primary 3 students is currently facing orchestrated wrath of concerned parents and teachers because of the tremendous stress created from excessive TSA homework and drilling.

In response to this ad hoc challenge on child health, a Professional Forum on TSA was organized, by the Hong Kong Paediatric Society and the Hong Kong Paediatric Foundation (HKPF), the professional bodies on child health, at Queen Elizabeth Hospital on 12 January 2016 and chaired by Dr. Chan Chok-Wan, the board Chairman of HKPF and well attended by paediatricians and other child health professionals. Keynote speakers included Professor HAU Kit Tai, Department of Educational Psychology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Ms Doreen HO Mei Yee, Convenor for the TSA Concern Group, and the Honourable Mr. IP Kin Yuen, Legislative councillors for the Education constituency and the following conclusions were reached:

1. TSA is just an assessment tool for the overall intellectual ability of Hong Kong students serving as an evaluation reference for future education policy.
2. TSA results should only be used for overall education planning by the Education Bureau (EB) rather than disclosing to individual schools or school operation bodies to avoid unnecessary stress and drilling on students.
3. Education Bureau should be fully accountable for the use of TSA results and the implementation of education policies in Hong Kong.
4. The appropriateness for TSA assessment at Primary 3 should be critically reviewed based on the developmental needs and core learning values at this young age. TSA for Primary 3 students should be suspended before a well thought out consensus on a revised format can be implemented.
5. A focused survey should be conducted on the TSA affected students, their parents and teachers, to assess the impact of the test and its associated drills. Data collected will help the planning for the best courses of action for administering the contended test.
6. Education for young children should cultivate a positive attitude and happy environment towards learning. The current teaching curriculum that is TSA orientated should be revised.

Appendix 1 – Summary of discussion at the Professional Forum