



Council on Professional Conduct in Education

Newsletter Issue No. 23

November 2008

(Translated from Chinese version)

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Published by: Council on Professional Conduct in Education

The Seventh Council on Professional Conduct in Education (2006-2008) Report on Case Progress

A total of 100 cases, including 99 complaint cases and 1 case study, were received by the Council on Professional Conduct in Education in the 7th term. A breakdown of the cases is given below:

1. Breakdown by complainants' identity (complaint cases only):

Principal	Teacher	Parent	Student	Others [#]	Total
8	40	33	13	5	99

[#] Others: Anonymous complaints, or complaints lodged by non-teaching staff of a school, members of the public, etc.

2. Breakdown by alleged persons' identity (complaint cases only):

School Manager/ School Supervisor	Principal	Teacher	Others*	Total
3	31	53	12	99

* Others: EDB staff, persons of unknown identity or more than one educator were involved in a single case, etc.

3. Alleged misconduct (complaint cases only)

Nature of complaint	Alleged persons' identity			Total
	School Manager/ School Supervisor/ Principal	Teacher	Others	
Maladministration	12	2	8	22
Mishandling of personnel matters	6	1	0	7
Failure to carry out teaching duties properly	5	7	1	13
Improper behaviour	10	37	2	49
Poor attitude	1	6	1	8
Total	34	53	12	99

- Maladministration : Improper handling of students' failure to submit homework, teachers' duties, complaint cases, students' information, teachers' information, etc.
- Mishandling of personnel matters : Improper handling of matters regarding recruitment and dismissal of teachers, surplus teachers, etc.
- Failure to carry out teaching duties properly : Improper handling of student issues, improper punishment and dismissal of students from school, insulting students, negligence of students' safety, etc.
- Improper behaviour : Harassment, infringing public interest, bringing colleagues into disrepute, indecent gestures, dishonesty, use of vulgar language, etc.
- Poor attitude : Hostile attitude against colleagues, failure to cooperate with colleagues, speaking / behaving in a non-teacher-like manner, etc.

4. Case Progress (as at 30 April 2008, including complaint cases and case study)

Allegation found substantiated after the inquiry	Allegation found unsubstantiated after the inquiry	Case Closed				Pending (including case study)	Total
		Reconciliation reached after the inquiry	Case not filed [€]	Case withdrawn	Case not accepted [@]		
1	0	1	19	11	28	40	100

[€] Reason of not filing the cases : Insufficient evidence (19)

[@] Reasons of not accepting the cases : Allegations found unrelated to the professional conduct of educators (11), anonymous complaints (10), complaint form not submitted (4) and information incomplete (3)

Remarks:

According to the Case Handling Procedures, cases fall into two categories:

(1) Complaint cases:

Cases where complainant(s) and alleged person(s) are involved. The Council may suggest punishment or other recommendations to the Permanent Secretary for Education in the case of professional misconduct.

(2) Case study:

Cases where no complainant or alleged person is involved. No judgements shall be made against any person involved in the case and no recommendations whatsoever shall be made to the Permanent Secretary for Education for punishment to be imposed upon any person. Remarks shall only be made on certain types of behaviour and the extent to which they are in compliance with/violation of the professional conduct.

Summary Report on the Work of the Seventh Council on Professional Conduct in Education (May 2006 to April 2008)

The Three Terms of Reference of the Council

- (I) To advise the Government on measures to promote professional conduct in education
1. On 12 December 2006 and 22 August 2007, the Council wrote to the respective Chairpersons of the Education Commission and invited them to discuss matters about the establishment of a General Teaching Council (GTC). The Deputy Secretary of Education met CPC Members on 13 February 2008 to exchange views on ways to promote profession conduct in education and the establishment of GTC.
- (II) To draft operational criteria defining the conduct expected of an educator and to gain widespread acceptance of these criteria among all sectors of the education community through consultation
1. All newly recruited teachers and serving teachers have been given a copy of the *Code for the Education Profession of Hong Kong* through EDB or the Council Secretariat. The Code has also been uploaded to the Council's homepage (<http://cpc.edb.org.hk>) for publicity and promotional purposes.
 2. A total of 55 talks on the professional conduct of teachers were organised for students of the Hong Kong Institute of Education as well as newly recruited and serving teachers. These talks have altogether attracted 2859 participants. The post-talk surveys revealed that more than 96% of the participants agreed that the talks had increased their awareness of teachers' conduct; and more than 79% opined that they would recommend such talks to their colleagues.
- (III) To advise the Permanent Secretary for Education on cases of disputes or alleged professional misconduct involving educators
1. The Council has adopted the Case Handling Procedures revised in March 2002 for case investigation.
 2. The Seventh Council had to handle 131 cases (including both cases received within and before the Seventh Council's term of office), of which 89 have been completed and 42 are in progress. The Council has also rendered its advice on individual cases to the Permanent Secretary for Education.
 3. The Council has been following up on two cases referred by the Education Bureau (EDB) and is preparing the case study reports.
 4. *A Memorandum for the Case-filing Panel*, which is a summary of the experience on case handling by the Council, has been compiled for easy reference in future.

Other Achievements

1. The Council has convened 13 Council meetings, 13 Executive Committee meetings, 11 Case Study Sub-committee meetings, 6 Promotion Sub-committee meetings, 8 Professional Autonomy Sub-committee meetings and 4 joint meetings of the Professional Autonomy Sub-committee and the Promotion Sub-committee.
2. *CPC Newsletters (Issue Nos. 19-22)* have been published and distributed to all local schools (including primary and secondary schools, kindergartens, kindergarten-cum-child care centres, and special schools), educational organisations and teacher education institution. They are also available at the Hong Kong Teachers' Centre, Central Resource Centre of EDB, the Council Secretariat and the CPC website for collection / downloading.
3. To enhance local educators' awareness of the importance of professional development and professional autonomy, the Council and the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIED) co-organised a "Seminar on Promoting the Professional Autonomy of Teachers in Hong Kong" on 20 November 2007. Local academics and educators were invited to share their ideas and opinions on ways and practices of promoting the professional autonomy of teachers.

Under the theme of "Promoting the Professional Autonomy of Teachers in Hong Kong", the seminar focused on two topics, namely "Review of the Education System" and "Sharing on Classroom Practices". The two sessions drew a total of 977 participants from 86 schools, including 23 secondary schools, 38 primary schools, 19 kindergartens / kindergartens-cum-child care centres, and 6 special schools. The post-seminar survey revealed that more than 89% of the participants agreed that the conference had increased their awareness of teachers' professional autonomy; and more than 76% of the respondents opined that similar activities should be organised in future.

Organisation of the Eighth Council on Professional Conduct in Education (2008-2010)

1. The CPC has a three-tier structure with an Executive Committee under the Council and Sub-committees under the Executive Committee which are responsible for carrying out various functions and activities.
2. The duties of the Executive Committee are as follows:
 - To implement the decisions of the Council and, during recess of the Council, act in accordance with the established policies of the Council in dealing with matters that have yet to be endorsed by it;
 - To facilitate the operation of the Council by preparing discussion papers;
 - To coordinate the work of the Sub-committees;
 - To deal with financial matters on behalf of the Council;
 - To prepare documents requiring the approval of relevant authorities, and organise for publication the public opinions collected by the Council (such opinions should be widely accepted as the opinions of the majority of the public); and
 - To form the Vetting Panel when there is an appeal against the judgement upon conclusion of an inquiry.
3. The four Sub-committees under the Eighth Council are:
 - a. Case Study Sub-committee (研案委員會)

The Case Study Sub-committee scrutinises the *Case Handling Procedures*, and assists other council members in case study. The complaint cases received by the Council are handled in accordance with the *Case Handling Procedures*. The Sub-committee also analyses and organises the cases received from the fourth to the seventh terms for members' reference.
 - b. Promotion Sub-committee (推廣委員會)

The Sub-committee promotes the work of the Council and enhances teachers' awareness of their professional conduct through promotion talks at schools and tertiary institution, professional seminars, overseas exchange activities and wide publicity of the *Code for the Education Profession of Hong Kong*. The Sub-committee is also responsible for publishing the *CPC Newsletters* and updating the CPC website.
 - c. General Teaching Council Preparatory Sub-committee (教學專業議會籌備委員會)

The Sub-committee promotes the establishment of the General Teaching Council (GTC), drafts the constitution of the GTC, studies the legislative procedures required for the establishment of the GTC and works on consensus building within the education sector.
 - d. Code of Professional Conduct Sub-committee (守則委員會)

The Sub-committee reviews and revises the *Code for the Education Profession of Hong Kong*.

Membership of the Eighth Council

There are a total of 24 members in the Eighth Council. Their term of office is from 1 May 2008 to 30 April 2010.

Category	Name	Sub-committee(s) serving*	Name of Organisation/School Making the Nomination
Organisation-nominated members			
Teacher Education Institutions	Dr YU Wai-bing (Chairperson, Executive Committee member)	2, 3	The Hong Kong Institute of Education
Schools Groups and Sponsoring Bodies	Dr LEUNG Ping-wa (Executive Committee member)	4	Hong Kong Private Schools Association
Organisations of School Heads	Mr LAU Chiu-yin, Peter	4	Hong Kong Association of Heads of Secondary Schools
Teachers' Unions	Ms CHAN Shun-lai, Cinda	2	Hong Kong Teachers' Association
Teachers' Unions	Mr PUN Tin-chi (Executive Committee member)	1, 3	Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union
Subject-related Organisations	Mr CHIU Sin-on	4	The Hong Kong Primary Teachers' Association of General Studies
Subject-related Organisations	Mr LIU Chun-kuen	4	The Hong Kong Primary Mathematics Teachers' Association
Subject-related Organisations	Ms TSUI Wai-chuen, Grace, MH	1, 4	The Secondary School English Teachers Association
Other Educational Organisations	Mr LAM Wing-shun, Larry	3	Federation of Education Workers, Hong Kong
Teacher-nominated Members			
Aided Secondary Schools	Ms CHOI Chun-mui	2, 3	AD&FDPOHL Leung Sing Tak College
	Mr HON Lin-shan (Vice-chairperson, Executive Committee member)	1, 3	Salesians of Don Bosco Ng Siu Mui Secondary School
	Mr LEUNG Tak-yin, Billy (Executive Committee member)	2, 3	QES Old Students' Association Secondary School
Aided Primary Schools	Mr CHEUNG Fu-wing	1, 3	GCEPSA Whampoa Primary School
	Ms DUNG Yi-ping	2, 3	Alliance Primary School, Whampoa
	Ms LEE Lai-ming (Executive Committee member)	1	CCC Kei Chun Primary School
Government Primary Schools	Mr CHIN Chun-yin	3	Yuen Long Government Primary School
Private Primary Schools	Mr TANG Wai-yin	1, 4	Pegasus Philip Wong Kin Hang Christian Primary School cum Junior Secondary School
Kindergartens	Ms CHAN Tsui-yuk	1	Yiu Tung Baptist Kindergarten
	Ms KWAN Shuk-ling, Elaine	1	Baptist Pui Li School
Special Schools	Mr CHENG Sau-leung, Don (Executive Committee member)	3	Society of Boys' Centres - Chak Yan Centre School
	Mr KING Chi-yu	3	Lutheran School For The Deaf
Permanent Secretary for Education nominated members	Ms DOE Julianne Pearl		Lay member
	Ms KWONG Ka-yin, Phyllis		Lay member
	Mrs HONG CHAN Tsui-wah		Principal Education Officer (Professional Development and Training), Education Bureau

* Note:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Case Study Sub-committee | 3. General Teaching Council Preparatory Sub-committee |
| 2. Promotion Sub-committee | 4. Code of Professional Conduct Sub-committee |

The Tasks Ahead of the Newly-Elected CPC

YU Wai-bing
CPC Chairperson

Newly-elected CPC members of the 8th term (2008–2010) began work as soon as they took office: after an initial discussion, they came to the agreement that the work of the CPC of the new term would consist of two major tasks:

1. *To motivate the teaching profession to formulate, through discussion, concrete proposals for establishing a General Teaching Council (GTC), with a view to fostering professionalism in the teaching profession as a whole*

In the early 1980s, an international expert panel proposed that a Hong Kong Teaching Service be established inclusive of educators of all kinds and ranks to enhance their professional status and esteem. Throughout the following 20-odd years, our many predecessors spared no effort to bring forward and discuss various proposals to achieve the same goal. It is time for us to take on the task of putting their vision into practice.

To be sure, the proposal for establishing a GTC is also found in the Chief Executive's Policy Address in 1997. In early 2008, members of the 7th term of the CPC met with the Education Bureau's representative to consider how they could follow up the proposal. At the meeting, the representative made it clear that it was a consensus of opinion between the Government and the teaching profession to establish a GTC, and that the Bureau welcomed the CPC as one of the platforms to advocate the establishment of a GTC as well as its dialogue with the sector regarding this matter. It was also reported that the Government had set aside a provision of 20 million dollars for the purpose of establishing the GTC.

GTCs are found in many places across the world. Generally speaking, the principal functions of such councils are: (1) to control the registration of professional members by ensuring that they have acquired the entry qualifications; (2) to enforce professional discipline and regulate professional conduct; and (3) to maintain and improve professional standards by, for example, shaping policies on pre-service education and in-service professional development of teachers.

For years, the teaching profession in Hong Kong has reached the consensus that the proposed GTC should be a statutory body through which the professional educators can exercise autonomy and self-regulation and are accountable to the community or the public, with a view to enhancing the overall quality of education in Hong Kong. Thus far, items such as the legislative arrangements, the composition, the terms of reference and operational details of the GTC still remain to be determined.

2. *To motivate both the public and the teaching profession to increase their understanding and awareness of the teaching professionalism*

The CPC plans to hold a series of promotional events in 2009 to increase public understanding and awareness of the teaching profession in Hong Kong. In the meantime, the CPC will undertake such regular activities (which it has undertaken for years) as organising talks on professional conduct and pertinent cases for in-service primary and secondary teachers as well as pre-service teacher trainees, with a view to increasing the teaching profession's awareness about professional conduct and deepening their understanding of their professional code. Moreover, the newly-elected CPC members are hoping to compile cases on professional misconduct in the past, including disputes involving educators and cases of alleged misconduct, so as to publish a casebook for practitioners' reference.

Only with the concurrence and support of the members of the education sector, who have elected us as CPC members, can we succeed in our efforts—and indeed in making the first step towards autonomy and self-regulation of the teaching profession. We should therefore be most grateful if you could offer us your opinions and comments to improve our work.

Establishing a General Teaching Council: Why We Can't Wait

HON Lin-shan
CPC Vice-chairperson

Our recent exchanges with the delegates of the Teachers' Council of Thailand have reminded us of the sad fact that no equivalent body has been established in Hong Kong as yet. For almost a quarter of a century, our frontline teachers have been hoping for the establishment of such a body, but in vain. Despite our frustration, are we prepared to work harder to fulfil this hope?

Issued in 1984, the Education Commission Report No. 1 acknowledged the importance of professionalism and development of teachers, and recommended forming a teachers' centre and formulating a Code of Practice for the teaching profession. Both recommendations were implemented with such a centre being formed in 1989 and such a code being issued in 1990.

The CPC was established in 1994 to implement a recommendation in the Education Commission Report No. 5. Issued in 1997, the Education Commission Report No. 7 fully recommended that a General Teaching Council (GTC) should be formed to raise teaching standards and to enhance teachers' professional image and development. In his Policy Address in 1997, Mr Tung Chee-hwa, the then Chief Executive, announced the Government's plan to establish a GTC in 1999; a working group was immediately formed for that purpose under the Education Commission. Mr Tung further announced in his Policy Address in 1998 that 20 million Hong Kong dollars would be set aside for the purposes of establishing a GTC.

Much to the disappointment of the CPC, the long-awaited GTC stopped short of being formed as had been scheduled. In his Policy Address in 2001, Mr Tung admitted that the introduction of education reforms had made it necessary to postpone the establishment of a GTC. This was obviously only an excuse for the postponement. Education reforms and the GTC are by no means mutually exclusive, but are rather complementary. For we need such a body to foster teaching professionalism, to promote quality education and to implement the education reforms, including the new academic structure of senior secondary and higher education.

But the chief impediment to the progress of forming a GTC, put bluntly, lies in self-seekers whose hunger for positions has led to failure to reach a consensus on how the composition and membership of the future GTC are to be determined.

Throughout the world, it is most usual for a GTC to be largely elected by direct vote. For only representatives so elected can both make the voices of the frontline practitioners heard and serve the education community by deliberating with the most professional and independent attitude. The efforts by some in the educator sector to postpone or resist the establishment of a GTC may have to do with their lack of confidence about prospects of securing their positions under direct election. And by so doing they have mirrored the narrow and self-seeking minds of those in Hong Kong who have grave reservations about electing the Chief Executive and the legislature by direct suffrage.

In view of these, we, as members of the 8th term of the CPC, are firmly convinced that we cannot wait any longer. Frontline teachers are on our side (in an opinion survey in 2002, a majority of them agreed that a GTC should be established as soon as possible). A provision of 20 million has been set aside by the former Chief Executive. We have a vigorous team of CPC members. Above all, we have formed under the CPC a GTC Preparatory Subcommittee. As its convener, I will do my utmost with my fellow members during my term of office to strive for the establishment of the GTC. We have made 2009 the "Year of the Teaching Profession" and, during the year, will organise a series of activities relating to the establishment of the GTC, an issue that has riveted the attention of all in the education community. I would like to invite you to give it your close attention, to participate actively and to offer us your opinions and comments, striving towards the establishment of the long-awaited council.

Looking Back on Sixteen Years of Promoting the Establishment of a General Teaching Council

Compiled by the Executive Committee of
the Council on Professional Conduct in Education

Year	Facts	Source of Information
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Education Commission (EC) proposed the establishment of a Council on Professional Conduct in Education (CPC) ➤ EC also proposed that, five years after CPC was set up, the Government should review the possibility of setting up a statutory Teaching Council 	EC Report No.5 (1992)
1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CPC was set up in April 1994 ➤ CPC has a membership of 28, serving on a two-year term. Three of the members are appointed by the Government, whereas the other 25 are elected among teachers and education organisations 	Code for the Education Profession of Hong Kong (Extracted Edition) (1995)
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A General Teaching Council Promotion Panel was formed under CPC 	CPC Newsletter Issue No. 3 (1997.1)
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ EC proposed to set up a General Teaching Council (GTC) ➤ Proposed functions of the GTC were: teacher registration, teacher training, continuous professional development and enforcement of discipline 	EC Report No.7 (1997)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It was announced in the Chief Executive's Policy Address that the GTC would be established within two years 	Chief Executive TUNG Chee-hwa's Policy Address (1997)
1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It was announced in the Chief Executive's Policy Address that an allocation of \$20 million would be provided for the establishment of the GTC 	Chief Executive TUNG Chee-hwa's Policy Address (1998)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Preliminary proposal on the establishment of the GTC was put forth by EC's Preparatory Committee on the Establishment of General Teaching Council ➤ A consultation exercise covering the four areas of the powers and functions, registration, the governing council and nomenclature of the GTC was conducted by the Preparatory Committee 	Establishment of a General Teaching Council Consultation Document (1998)
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) suggested that priority should be given to the education reform ➤ Consensus within the education sector on the detailed arrangements would be needed before the setting up of the GTC 	Policy Objectives of EMB (2000)
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CPC's Investigation, Research and Report Panel conducted a sector-wide survey ➤ The survey was conducted in November 2001, out of the 55898 questionnaires sent, 35733 valid questionnaires were received, representing 64% of serving teachers in Hong Kong ➤ More than 90% of the respondents considered that the GTC should be set up immediately 	Findings on Opinion Survey on Teaching Profession (2002)
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A consultation paper was drafted by CPC's General Teaching Council Promotion Sub-committee ➤ Sharing Sessions on "Establishing General Teaching Council" were held to collect views from the local education sector 	Consultation Document on Establishing the General Teaching Council (2003)
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CPC wrote to the Chairperson of the EC in December 2006 and urged her to follow up the policy decision of setting up the GTC 	CPC Newsletter No. 20 (2007.7)
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CPC wrote again to the Chairperson of the EC and urged her to follow up the policy decision of setting up a GTC 	CPC Newsletter No. 21 (2007.11)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CPC wrote to the Secretary for Education and the Permanent Secretary for Education and urged them to follow up the policy decision of setting up the GTC 	Minutes of the 11 th Council Meeting of the Seventh CPC (2007.11.8) (Internal document of the CPC)
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CPC members met representative of the Education Bureau (EDB) and discuss matters concerning the establishment of the GTC ➤ Representative of EDB pointed out that it was the consensus of the Government and the sector to establish the GTC ➤ EDB welcomed the CPC as one of the platforms to advocate the establishment of a GTC as well as its dialogue with the sector regarding this matter ➤ CPC will launch a series of promotional activities to enhance the public's awareness of and concern for the education profession 	CPC Newsletter No. 23 (2008.11)

Questions:

1. With everything in place, i.e. the policy (1997), the funding (1998), the completion of the consultation exercise on GTC's functions and establishment plan (1998), the sector-wide consent supported by general survey (2002) and the unceasing efforts of CPC (which is composed of elected members from the sector) in urging the Government to implement the relevant policy in the past years (1994-2008), why is that the GTC has yet to be established?
2. Can the education sector, CPC and EDB join hands to facilitate the establishment of the GTC?

Workshop Organised for the Newly-elected Members – the first activity launched by the Eighth Council on Professional Conduct in Education

LEUNG Tak-yin, Billy
CPC Member

The Eighth Council on Professional Conduct in Education (CPC) started its work in May 2008. To familiarise newly-elected members with the *modus operandi* of the Council as well as its case handling procedures, CPC held a Case Handling Workshop on 18 June 2008.

The workshop, attended by 19 members of the 8th Council, started with the Council Chairperson's introduction of the objectives and run-down of the activity. Then Mr TONG Chung-fan, senior member of the 7th Council, explained in detail the CPC's *Case Handling Procedures*. Afterwards, the newly-elected and re-elected members participated in a group practice session. Part I of the session involved discussion on case-filing and inquiry processes. Participants discussed a number of mock cases as a preparation for Part II, which consisted of role-playing to simulate actual case-handling.

During Part II of the group practice session, both newly-elected and re-elected members played different roles in mock case-filing and inquiry situations under the guidance of senior members. Mr FUNG Suk-kai, Convenor of the Case Study Sub-committee of the 7th Council, summed up the workshop by sharing his experiences in case-handling and in drafting case reports.

Dr YU Wai-bing, the Chairperson, concluded the workshop by giving special thanks to Mr TONG Chung-fan and Mr FUNG Suk-kai for their contributions to the workshop, which had greatly benefited the participants. Some newly-elected members said that the workshop had helped them familiarise with the case handling procedures, so that they can take up the work of the Council more readily.



Mr TONG Chung-fan, Member of the 7th Council,
explaining the *Case Handling Procedures*

Professional Sharing with the Delegation of the Teachers' Council of Thailand

LEUNG Tak-yin, Billy
CPC Member

On the morning of 27 June 2008, five members of the 8th Council on Professional Conduct in Education (CPC), viz. Chairperson Dr YU Wai-bing, Vice-chairperson Mr HON Lin-shan and Members Mr PUN Tin-chi, Ms Grace TSUI and Mr CHEUNG Fu-wing, met the 27-strong delegation of the Teachers' Council of Thailand (TCT) at the Hong Kong Regional Education Office for the sake of professional sharing.

Dr YU Wai-bing described the short meeting as a significant step in CPC's external liaison work. "Despite the language barrier," said Dr YU, "we all enjoyed the discussion. We find that the Government plays a rather significant role in TCT, which is quite different from the case of Scotland. Also, it can be seen from the TCT website that the nature of TCT is different from the General Teaching Councils (GTCs) in England and Ireland. We are not sure about the Thai teachers' views towards TCT, but we think it is worthwhile to learn more about this. As shown from the experience of the GTCs in Ontario, Canada, the lack of support from teachers would undermine the acceptance of the GTC by the teaching profession. Such experiences would serve as useful reference in formulating our own strategies towards the establishment of a GTC in Hong Kong."

Finally, Dr YU added that she looked forward to organising and participating in more experience sharing activities with overseas GTCs, with a view to helping the CPC prepare for the establishment of a local GTC.



Leader of the delegation of the Teachers' Council of Thailand presented a souvenir to the CPC

(From left to right: CPC Members Mr CHEUNG Fu-wing and Mr PUN Tin-chi, Vice-chairperson Mr HON Lin-shan, Chairperson Dr YU Wai-bing, leader of the delegation of the Teachers' Council of Thailand Miss Rojana WONGSKHALUANG and CPC member Ms TSUI Wai-chuen, Grace)



CPC members and the delegation of the Teachers' Council of Thailand

Press Release for the Press Conference on Recent Cases of Teachers' Misconduct Held by the Eighth Council on Professional Conduct in Education

Date: 13 October 2008 (Monday)

Time: 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Venue: Room 701, 7/F, Kowloon Government Offices, 405 Nathan Road, Kowloon

Hosts: Dr YU Wai-bing (Chairperson), Mr HON Lin-shan (Vice-Chairperson), Mr PUN Tin-chi (Member of the Executive Committee) and Mr Peter LAU Chiu-yin (Convenor of the Code of Professional Conduct Sub-Committee)

(I) Background of the Press Conference

Recently, a series of cases of teacher misconduct have aroused public concern for the standard of conduct in the profession. The Council on Professional Conduct in Education (CPC) is deeply concerned about this issue. It hopes that, by holding this press conference, it can:

1. express to the public its concern over educators' standard of conduct;
2. express to the public its position and opinion on the misconduct cases;
3. enhance educators' awareness of the importance of professional conduct through those cases; and
4. announce to the public the importance and urgency of establishing a General Teaching Council.

(II) The CPC's Position / Major Responses

1. No misconduct by an educator – not even a single case – can ever be tolerated. The CPC, the education community and society as a whole will treat any misconduct cases with the utmost seriousness.
2. The CPC believes that the vast majority of educators are professionally competent, have maintained a high level of moral conduct and are committed to the all-round development of students. They clearly know what behaviour is acceptable to the public and what is not.
3. The CPC opines that the misconduct of a few members of the profession should not be allowed to impair the public's perception of, and trust in, educators as a whole.
4. As a body dedicated to promoting professional conduct in the education community, the CPC has a duty to remind all teachers that they should pay more attention to their moral conduct so as to live up to the public's expectations for educators.
5. As some of the cases might have involved teacher-student romance, the CPC would like to state its view on this issue clearly. Although the current *Code for the Education Profession of Hong Kong* (the Code) does not explicitly prohibit teacher-student romance, and members of the public have divergent views on the matter, there are already provisions in the Code that clearly explain the principles of teacher-student relationship for teachers' reference. For instance, Chapter 2 of the Code provides that a member of the profession:

“Shall show respect for the law and the behavioural norms acceptable to society as a whole.”
(2.6.1)

“Shall not take advantage of his/her professional relationships with students for private gain.”
(2.2.22)

“Shall seek to establish confidence and trust grounded on mutual respect between himself/herself and his/her students.” (2.2.9)

“Shall strive to uphold the honour, dignity and ethics of the education profession and to foster unity and harmonious working relationships within the profession.” (2.1.3)

6. The CPC holds the view that, in the long run, the Code should be revised to reflect the changing needs of the society. The Code of Professional Conduct Sub-Committee under the CPC is reviewing the Code to see if revision is necessary. However, as revision can only be made after extensive consultation and thorough discussion, it is expected that the revision of the Code will not be completed in the near future.
7. Currently, due to its non-statutory nature and the constraints of its terms of reference, the CPC may only advise the Permanent Secretary for Education on the punishment to be meted out for cases of professional misconduct. It is not the responsibility of the CPC to execute the punishment.
8. The CPC is of the view that prevention is far more effective than punishment in the promotion of professional conduct in the education community. While some teacher education institutions have included topics on professionalism and professional ethics in their curricula, they may still not be able to meet the public’s expectation for a high standard of professional conduct in the teaching profession. Therefore the CPC supports any efforts to enhance educators’ awareness of, and concern for, professional conduct through pre-service and in-service teacher education.
9. As specific suggestions on teacher education and qualifications are ultra vires the terms of reference of the CPC, and issues of professional conduct, teacher education and qualifications are in fact intertwined and inseparable, the CPC advocates the formation of a General Teaching Council in Hong Kong as soon as possible, so that the education community may oversee all matters concerning the profession under the principles of self-regulation and autonomy.

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