



# Summary of Malaysia Independent Chinese Secondary Schools (MICSS) **Education Blueprint**

Enjoy Teaching, Love Learning,  
Empower Children to Attain Achievement



# Contents

Preface .....	3
A Word of Appreciation .....	7
Members of the ‘Malaysia Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Education Blueprint’ Project Team .....	11
Introduction: Independent Chinese Secondary Schools in the New Era .....	16
Paradigm Shift: A Different Education .....	18
Students of the New Era .....	20
The Visions and Goals for Educational Reform .....	23
Curriculum Development: Foundation of Learning .....	25
Students: The Key Players in Learning .....	36
Assessment: Improvement in Learning .....	42
Teachers: Role Models for Learning .....	44
From School to Community: Building a Fun Learning Environment .....	52
Information Technology: Incorporation into Teaching .....	61
Reform Principles and Strategies .....	65
Closing Remarks .....	69



# Continuity, Innovation, and Striving for Excellence

Prefaced by Temenggong Dato Vincent Lau Lee Ming, Chairman of Dong Zong



We are a nation of multiple ethnicities, cultures, languages, educational entities and religions. Attributed to such diversity, we subsequently have multiple academic systems in place for various communities which use different languages as their medium of instruction while practising common education directives in this country. The coexistence of these educational varieties has enriched the social fabric of our multiracial society. Besides functioning as a valuable asset for the nation, it further optimises itself with significant advantage in the global move to cultivate talents of all sorts.

The Chinese education system which adopts Chinese Mandarin in its Mother Tongue education is an important component of our existing diverse education framework. Currently, there are altogether 60+1 Independent Chinese Secondary Schools in this unique, non-profit and privately-run Chinese education system. Its experience and success in education administration is unprecedented in the secondary education history of the country and even around the world which virtually holds a very special status and carries significant meaning.

As non-profit education institutions run by the civil community, Independent Chinese Secondary Schools still need to raise funds for their operational expenses from members of the public, apart from collecting fees from students. Independent Chinese Secondary Schools implements a six-year education in two levels; namely, three years of junior middle level and three years of senior middle level. Accordingly, Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese and English are either required or elective subjects. The Dong Zong Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Working Committee formed by Dong Zong and Jiao Zong is responsible for compiling unified textbooks, organising the Unified Examination and training teachers, among other tasks. Take for instance, the Unified Examination has been taking place since 1975 for 43 consecutive years, and has been recognised and accepted by more than a

thousand renowned universities and colleges locally and abroad for purpose of entrance requirements. UEC Senior Three graduates have since been pursuing their academic goals in more than 80 internationally renowned and leading universities worldwide. It is our pride to inform that the 60+1 Independent Chinese Secondary Schools across Malaysia have cultivated hundreds of thousands of multi-lingual talents for the country, let alone providing quality manpower to enhance the competitiveness of the nation and contributing prominently to its progress and upward mobility.

For all stakeholders relevant to the Independent Chinese Secondary Schools education system, a common and shared belief is warranted: the mission for Independent Chinese Secondary Schools, in the capacity as a continuation of Chinese Primary Schools and as general secondary educational institutions enabling students to complete twelve years of Mother Tongue education, should not be confined to simply fulfilling the ‘general educational mission’ expected of any general secondary educational institution. Independent Chinese Secondary Schools, under the unique context of the Chinese education movement in our country and with their role as a ‘cultural stronghold’ born of trying struggle and hardships, must be persistent in achieving their ‘special educational mission’ in terms of mother tongue and culture. The four missions and six main principles stated in the ‘Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Proposal’ of 1973 stand as the most authoritative interpretations of this special and seminal mission.

Since 2004, there has been a spurt of advancement in Independent Chinese Secondary School education when the total number of students exceeded sixty thousand in 2009, seventy thousand in 2012, eighty thousand in 2015, and is moving next to some ninety thousand just yet. The continued increase in student numbers, especially the excessive demand over the supply of student seats in certain urban areas, has undoubtedly reflected the success and high spirits demonstrated by Independent Chinese Secondary School education. Meanwhile, with the change in subjective and objective environments, Independent Chinese Secondary Schools which are developing rapidly and successfully, have inevitably met with higher expectations and new challenges from various parties and stakeholders.

These new challenges from within and outside the system include: (1) parents making higher demands on their offspring’s education at school ever since social advancement increases the parents’ knowledge and awareness in this regard; (2) the constant increase of professionalism in educators, which also equates the demand on and effort put into software and hardware at schools are piling up on a daily basis; and (3) the mushrooming growth of international and private schools of late, where the number of international schools has outnumbered that of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools, with student numbers exceeding seventy thousand. On top of that, the fact that the Ministry of Education to open 500 Trust Schools by the end of 2025 run by the government and operated by the civil society will definitely produce a ripple impact on source of students and pool of teachers in Independent Chinese Secondary Schools.

In addition, still there is otherwise another even more crucial challenge. Many education experts have pointed out earlier that, due to our present era which is based on global information integration and knowledge economy, our societies have witnessed an unprecedented and inverted change, including the education sector. Professor Manabu Sato of Japan's Gakushuin University has commented once, 'A blackboard hung in the middle of the classroom, desks and chairs arranged in rows, every pupil a textbook on the desk during class, with the teacher himself talking incessantly... Such an educational approach has been around since 150 years ago, and it was intended to cater to agricultural and industrial labourers. However, in future societies, pure physical labourers will be the minority, and the employment structure will experience quantum leaps, to which education will have to reform itself and respond appropriately.' Former Vice-Chancellor of Hong Kong University Professor Cheng Kai Ming also pointed out that 'the current changes in society are akin to shifting from the agricultural to the industrial in terms of scale and degree. The original mould and fundamental form of the industrial society have now evolved into what some are calling the "knowledge society" or "information society", which I prefer to call the "post-industrial society".' How does a "post-industrial society" look like? 'First of all, institutions become smaller, flatter, and looser to begin with. Secondly, the structure of work procedures has changed, that is, from minute division of labour to one-stop for all. Furthermore, there comes the fast communication between people.' Social media has altered the way in which people communicate and get in touch, 'and most importantly, the matters dealt with by educators at the frontline now are incredibly different.'

Education must meet the needs of the times and assume the leadership role in the reform of society. In 2005, we announced the 'Malaysia Independent Chinese Secondary School Education Reform Programme' which has made corresponding contribution to the reforms of Independent Chinese Secondary School education over the last ten years or so. In the face of the challenges of the 21st century, and with the aim of enabling Independent Chinese Secondary School education to adjust itself to the times and continuous progress, Dong Zong established the 'Independent Chinese Secondary School Education Blueprint' project team in 2016, which put many experts, scholars and Chinese educators together for ideas. On the basis of the 'Malaysia Independent Chinese Secondary School Education Reform Programme', surveys were conducted on the current state of all the Independent Chinese Secondary Schools in the country where opinions of school board members, principals, teachers, students, parents, alumni and concerned members of the Chinese education cohort were collected, from which specific issues were identified and analysed. Research teams from Dong Zong were also sent abroad to conduct study visits at more advanced education levels. Through the efforts, we finally drafted a preliminary proposal for the 'Malaysia Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Education Blueprint (Consultation Draft)' which outlines the direction of development and visions for Independent Chinese Secondary Schools for the upcoming 10 years.

Apart from obtaining feedback from the public for this 'Malaysia Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Education Blueprint (Consultation Draft)', we also held a 'Conference for Independent Chinese Secondary School Board Members and Principals' in

2017 with the blueprint's consultation draft as its agenda wishing to collect feedback and opinions at one meet. Following the project team's collation, analysis and study of the feedback and opinions, the final version of the 'Malaysia Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Education Blueprint' was completed in early 2018. Gratitude is hereby extended to all stakeholders for their generous assistance and support over the last three years, without which such an arduous and profoundly meaningful task would not have been completed.

'Enjoy Teaching, Love Learning, Empower Children to Attain Achievement' is an overall vision advocated by the 'Malaysia Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Education Blueprint'. It is our genuine hope that the implementation of this Blueprint will reinvent Independent Chinese Secondary Schools through the creation of a 'fun learning environment' where students are passionate about learning and teachers enjoy helping students to learn better.

Since Independent Chinese Secondary Schools have persevered its core values and remained resilient for more than half a century, we are reassured by our past and outlook for the future believing that we are by all means able to face and overcome even bigger challenges, and eventually turn Independent Chinese Secondary Schools into fun learning environments where teachers enjoy teaching and students enjoy learning. It is our aim to provide every child who enters an Independent Chinese Secondary School with a robust growing-up experience, coupled with the ability for self-motivated learning and the potential for a successful future.



# Heartfelt Acknowledgement for Your Concerted Efforts

A Word of Appreciation from Dong Zong CEO cum Convenor of The 'Malaysia  
Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Education Blueprint' Project Team

Ms Hong Woan Ying



Since the 1990's, leaders and educators of local Chinese education have been looking into ways on approaches to carry out education reforms in the face of the challenges of the 21st century, in order to prepare the next generation for the future. Hence in 2005, the 'Independent Chinese Secondary School Education Reform Programme' was introduced eventually as the direction of reforms for Independent Chinese Secondary Schools nationwide.

Ten years have since gone by, and the world now is even more diverse and pluralistic. At the 2015 Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Education Conference, Dong Zong proposed that the educational model for Independent Chinese Secondary Schools to be reviewed and reformed. This proposal was met with support from the various comrades in Chinese education, who were congruent with the view that Dong Zong must take the leading initiative for this seminal undertaking. Under expectation of various sorts, Dong Zong shouldered and felt the weight of the responsibility, as the education reform for Independent Chinese Secondary Schools was not an easy task. Nor was it achievable through the effort of one or two individuals. It virtually demands the wisdom and power of a collective and composite team in order to push it forward.

At the close of 2015, the management of Dong Zong established a project team for the drafting of the 'Malaysia Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Education Blueprint', which I shall refer to from now onwards as the 'Blueprint'. I was also appointed the chief convener for this project team by the management of Dong Zong. Aiming to optimise the fullest range of resources, Dong Zong had also invited experts, academics and scholars, senior Chinese educators as well as Independent Chinese Secondary School principals to participate in the drafting process, let alone the relevant personnel in Dong Zong's administration.



After an effort of more than two years, the ‘Malaysia Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Education Blueprint’ is now finally completed. Indeed the Blueprint was formally launched on the 14 of July and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my fellow colleagues and compatriots in Chinese education who have offered their help in this endeavour.

Prior to drafting the Blueprint, we had conducted a comprehensive and in-depth educational trip to Hong Kong. During this period, Professor Cheng Kai Ming’s enthusiastic help and guidance in terms of co-ordinating, arranging and sorting out various matters for the visit, has enabled us smooth flow in input collection. Subsequently, following the completion of the preliminary draft for the Blueprint, Professor Cheng Kai Ming was also invited for a visit to Malaysia, where he delivered a special lecture on the draft, and benefited us with a number of insightful opinions and suggestions for amendments. For this, I would like to express my sincere and utmost gratitude.

Meanwhile, we also carried out a survey on all the Independent Chinese Secondary Schools in the country, where the sampling subjects of the survey included principals, teachers, parents and students. I would like to thank all of them for their support and response in the survey questionnaires, which helped to ensure smooth data collection. Credit should also go to our colleagues in the survey team for their hard work in the design and testing of the questionnaires preceding to the surveys, as well as sorting out and analysing the data at later stage, all the way up to the completion of the report. Simply put, I would like to thank them for all the effort they have put in.

I would also like to thank the members of the Academic Advisory Committee and the School Advisory Committee, who were forthcoming with their valuable inputs and suggestions during the various stages of the drafting session, discussion and consultation on the Blueprint, which merited the Blueprint a more comprehensive one.

In addition, my acknowledgement also goes to the 146 board members, principals and administrative personnel who attended the ‘2017 Conference for Independent Chinese Secondary School Board Members and Principals’. They were very attentive in the discussion during the session and provided precious suggestions for amendments. This ensured the Blueprint to be more abreast with the current state of the Independent Chinese Secondary Schools, and that the education reform for Independent Chinese Secondary Schools to be carried out more effectively.

During the entire consultation session, many compatriots, including stakeholders in Chinese education and members of the public contributed their opinions and suggestions by dint of e-mails, letters, written articles, reports and sharing, as well as other means. I herewith extend my gratitude to them as well.

Last but not least, thanks to all the colleagues in the project team and the various departments operating within, for without their hard work and contributions in holding various meetings and sharing sessions to discuss and collect opinions and suggestions on the relevant issues, and their execution of all the administrative tasks, we would not have completed the Blueprint.

Independent Chinese Secondary Schools belong to everyone. As the ‘Malaysia Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Education Blueprint’ is now on the table, let us work hard altogether to realise the visions and goals of the Blueprint, so that Chinese education may soar high on this land and brave forward to the next millennium.

As closing remarks, I wish everyone good health and all the best in your undertakings. Thank you.



# Members of the ‘Malaysia Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Education Blueprint’ Project Team

## Academic Advisory Committee Members

1. Professor Cheng Kai Ming (Director, Education Policy Unit, Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong)
2. Professor Chen Hsiao Lan (Education Department, National Taiwan Normal University)
3. Associate Professor Madya Ho Shi Huei (Institute of Educational Administration and Evaluation, University of Taipei)
4. Professor Fan Xian Zuo (School of Education, Central China Normal University)
5. Professor Chang I Hua (Department of Education, National Chengchi University)
6. Dr. Fan Hsin Hsien (Former Associate Researcher & Deputy Director, Curriculum & Instruction Research Center of National Academy of Educational Research, Taiwan )
7. Dr. Quek Weng Kim (Assistant Director, Curriculum Development Centre, Ministry of Education Malaysia)
8. Dr. Yoong Suan (Former Associate Professor, School of Educational Studies, University of Science Malaysia)
9. Dr. Chong Joon Kin (Principal, Chung Hua Middle School, Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan)
10. Dr. Wong Cheng Yoke (Former Principal, Chinese High School, Batu Pahat, Johor)
11. Mr. Goh Kean Seng (Principal, Chung Hwa Independent High School, Kelantan)

## School Advisory Committee Members

### 1. Northern Peninsular Region

- a) Mr. Ong Chang Boon (Principal, Pei Chun High School, Pontian, Johor)

### 2. Central Peninsular Region

- a) Mr. Cheng Ah Swee (Principal, Tsun Jin High School, Kuala Lumpur)
- b) Mdm. Ng Swee Geok (Former Principal, Hin Hua High School, Klang, Selangor)
- c) Mr. Sua Sin Zang (Principal, Chung Hua High School, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan)

### **3. Southern Peninsular Region**

- a) Mr. Liaw Wei Keong (Principal, Chong Hwa High School, Kluang, Johor)
- b) Mr. Pang Chin Choy (Principal, Chung Hwa High School, Muar, Johor)

### **4. Sarawak**

- a) Mr. Yap Chong Guan (Principal, Chung Hua Middle School No. 1, Kuching)
- b) Bro Anthony Tay Woon Dwu (Principal, Catholic High School, Sibu)

### **5. Sabah**

- a) Mr. Fung Kok Chau (Yu Yuan Secondary School, Sandakan)

## **Project Team**

- 1. Convenor: Hong Woan Ying
- 2. Deputy Convenor: Choong Woei Chuan
- 3. Expert: Dr. Wong Chip Choo
- 4. Members: Dr. Teoh Hee Chong, Dr. Lim Bee Yen, Chen Ching Fong, Shim Boon Haw, Lim Geok Kian, Phoon Wing Kit

## **Project Team Department Members**

### **1. Education Management Department**

- a) Head: Dr. Wong Chip Choo
- b) Members: Dr. Chong Joon Kin, Lim Kee Song, Shum Thin Khee, Phoon Wing Kit

### **2. Curriculum Department**

- a) Head: Dr. Teoh Hee Chong
- b) Members: Dr. Lim Bee Yen, Eng Beng Choo, Ho Yoke Wan, Kok Fui Far, Lee Bee Kean, Lee Keng Yan, Soo Yin Heng, Teo Hur Yaw, Tey Hui Yong, Lee Choong Wee, Cheong Hor Yean, Khei Yok Man, Chew Xiao Xian, Choy Siu Ling, Soo Mui Hung, Neng Jing Qiao, Ho Swee Fen, Hsu Hsiu Mei, Goh Yin Yiing, Lee Weei Chen

### **3. Examination Department**

a) Head: Dr. Lim Bee Yen

b) Members: Dr. Yoong Suan, Dr. Lee See Seng, Dr. Quek Weng Kim, Dr. Wong Shwu Huey, Loo Mee Wan, Wong Mei Choo, Chia Chew Yen, Woo Ket Ni

### **4. Teachers Department**

a) Head: Chen Ching Fong

b) Members: Dr. Lim Bee Yen, Koh Mei Yin, Lai Sin Siang, Pang Chin Choy, Chia Chey Siong, Lee Lei Chen, Chok Koon Lan, Lim Peng Peng, Yap Weng Kit

### **5. Students Department**

a) Head: Shim Boon Haw

b) Members: Dr. Chang Yu Lin, Dr. Tan Joo Siang, Dr. Saw Guan Kung, Dr. Keh Foo Bee, Ong Chang Boon, Soh Chin Choon, Leong Seng Yee, Lip Woon Chin, Poh Bee Hwa, Sau Bee Kean, Yap Heng Lung, Shu Pek Ching

### **6. Technology Application Department**

a) Head: Yong Chee Keong

b) Members: Professor Prof. Chang Yi Hua, Dr. Lim Chee Kau, Tiong Ting Ming, Wu Tsung Che, Ng Beng Pen, Lo Cheue Ching

### **7. Secretary Department**

a) Head: Choong Woei Chuan

b) Secretary Unit: Lim Geok Kian (Unit Leader), Yim Choo Yun, Lee Thean Fook, Sia Choon Bee, Kong Kah Kah, Yap Weng Kit, Hsu Hsiu Mei, Lim May May, Chong Pic Chee, Lo Cheue Ching, Wong Mei Choo

c) Investigation Unit: Shum Thin Khee, Phoon Wing Kit, Sia Choon Bee, Tan Yoke Sin

d) Publicity Unit: Lip Woon Chin (Unit Leader), Ser Ah Ean, Yap Hsiang Rong, Poh Bee Hwa, Leong Chooi Fong, Tan Pui Ting, Chau Wei Hwa

e) General Affairs Unit: Ng Chee Leong (Unit Leader), Chin Yoke Kim, Sng Meng Hui, Ganesh

## **Writing Team**

Dr. Wong Chip Choo, Dr. Teoh Hee Chong, Dr. Lim Bee Yen, Chen Ching Fong, Lee Ngok Tong, Shim Boon Haw, Chia Chey Siong

## **The acknowledgement also goes to the ad hoc team members of the “Malaysia Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Education Blueprint”:**

Bock Tai Hee, Tan Kee Keat, Siau Hoi Wee, Ng Kian Hong, Foo Yet San, Thang Chee Mee, Ngoh Chee Meng, Lim Shu Wei, Lim Kok Ann, Leong Yen Mei, Wu Ko Kang, Wong Sook Kim, On Kwee Hwa, Tan Yik Wah, Chen Wan Ying, Liew Yike Hwai, Kee Seok Hun, Kong Wee Cheng

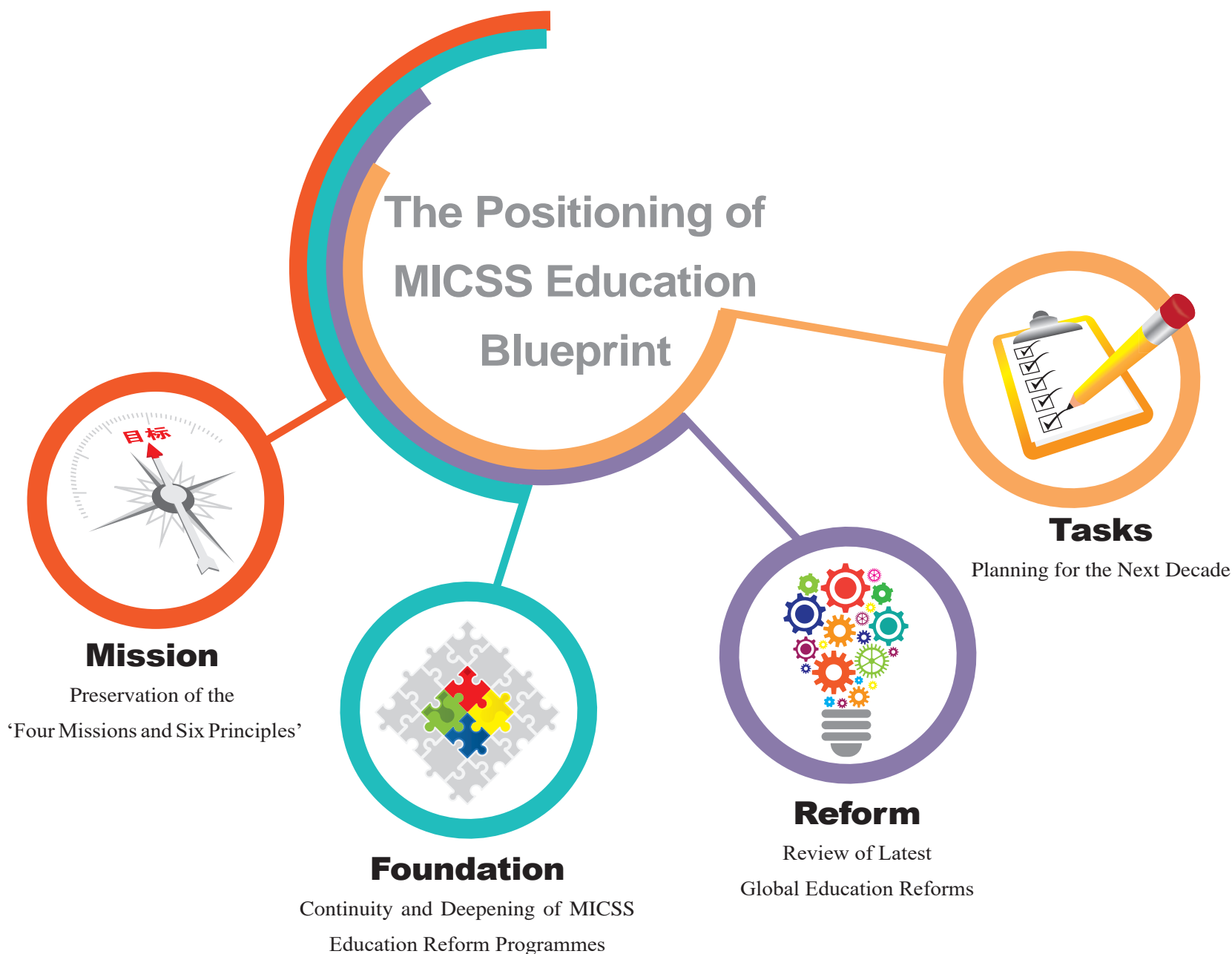




# 01

## Introduction: Independent Chinese Secondary Schools in the New Era

- 1.1. With households having fewer offspring and parents becoming increasingly more educated, the demand for their children's education has shifted from one of quantity to quality. Therefore, it is imperative for operators of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools to understand the current educational orientations locally and abroad to push for educational reform, in order that Independent Chinese Secondary Schools may continue to hold their upper hand.
- 1.2. The 'Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Proposals' in 1973 has laid down the mission and educational approach for Independent Chinese Secondary Schools. It was on this basis that the 'Independent Chinese Secondary School Education Reform Programme' in 2005 addressed to the question of what kind of students should Independent Chinese Secondary Schools seek to cultivate, which enables Independent Chinese Secondary School education to continuously move forward and deeper in terms of education professionalism. The drafting of the 'Independent Chinese Secondary School Education Blueprint' is based on extant mission and foundation, which references the most effective and fruitful reform outcomes in education around the globe, hoping to set out a plan for the development of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools over the next decade.



**Diagram 1: The Positioning of MICSS Education Blueprint**

# 02

## Paradigm Shift: A Different Education

- 2.1. The existing education system has shown discord with the way society is evolving. Therefore, in the face of societal changes and the like, there is a necessity to break out from the current restrictions and limitations, and implement fundamental reforms on the education system. As such, a paradigm shift will be forwarded, with the formation of a different kind of education system that opens up new possibilities for people's thinking and behaviours.
- 2.2. The central changes are on educational objectives – from focusing on society to focusing on the individual. Specifically, the changes take shape in three respects: (1) expanding classroom teaching into lifelong learning; (2) from standardising to diversifying talents; and (3) expanding focus from livelihood to life.
- 2.3. By and large, the new education model is based mainly on the individual, which facilitates every student in attaining holistic development through lifelong learning.

# Core Problems

How should we educate our children in the face of future uncertainties?



# Major Reform

Focus on Individual: Life Long Learning, holistic and characteristic Development



**Diagram 2: The Core and Centre of Education Reform**

# 03

## Students of the New Era

- 3.1. Literacy: A comprehensive inclusion of knowledge, competencies, as well as attitude and values. All these three composite elements are encompassed within the scope of ‘literacy’.
- 3.2. Core Literacy Framework: Having considered the local circumstances of the country, and for the convenience of conceptualisation and implementation of the school’s authority, teachers and parents, we have decided on six relatively straightforward categories of classification:
  - (1) Knowledge
  - (2) Thinking
  - (3) Attitude and Values
  - (4) Leadership and Teamwork
  - (5) Mother Tongue and Second Language Acquisition
  - (6) National Identification and Multiculturalism
- 3.3. Core Literacy and Learning
  - 3.3.1. Learning Approach: altogether three approaches – (1) classroom learning; (2) experiential learning; and (3) immersion.

3.3.2. The development of literacy: the student's development of the six types of literacy should be based on their characteristics and the specific teaching objectives, or to adopt a certain learning strategy that is appropriate, or all of the above.

#### 3.4. Self-Motivated Study

3.4.1. Cultivating the student's awareness and competence for self-motivated study is one of the most important educational tasks. The teacher plays a prominent role of imparting knowledge as well as initiator and facilitator for the student's self-motivated study.

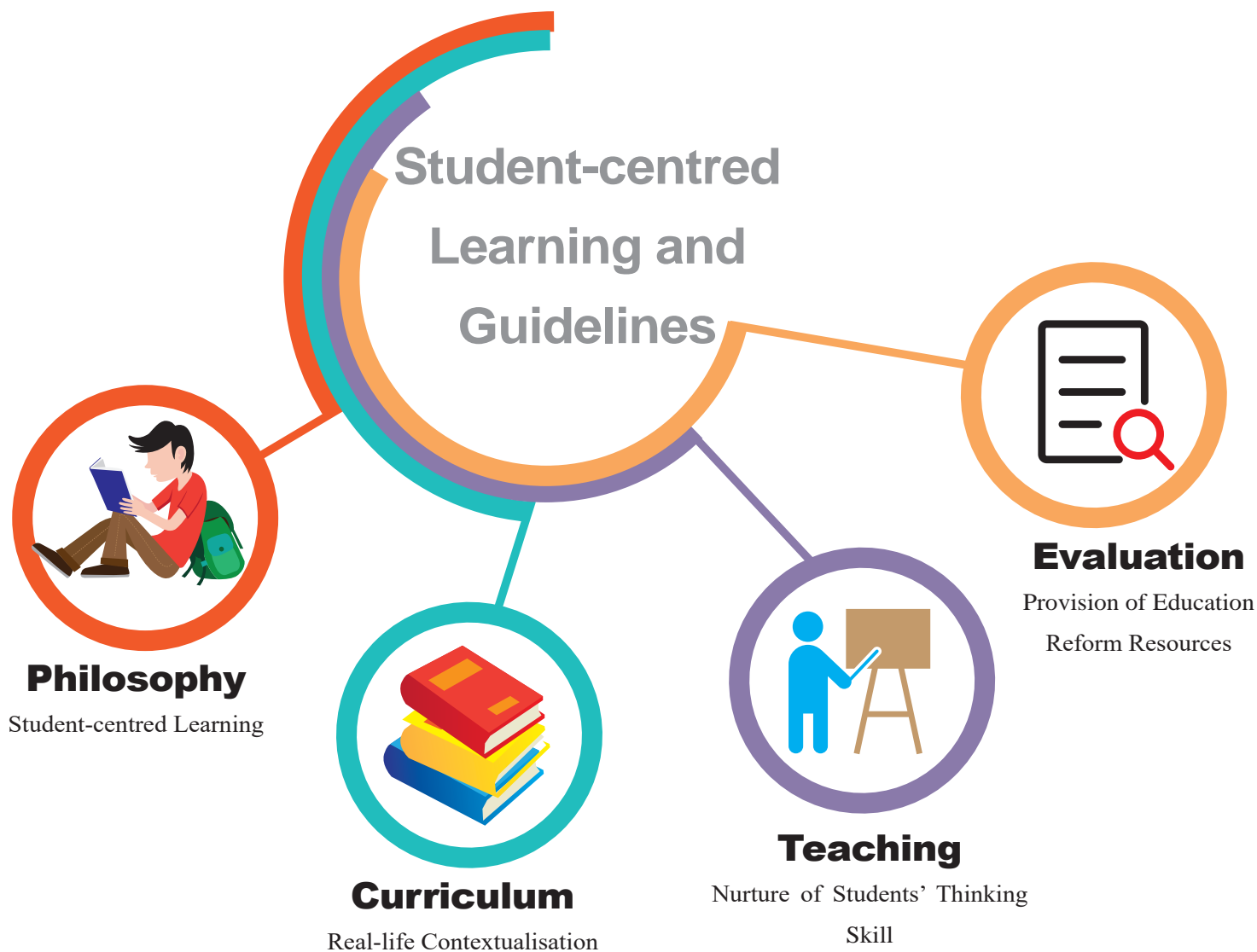
3.4.1.1. Curriculum: To gear up to 'real-life contextualisation' of the content, and improve the correlation among subjects as well as between the content of the subjects and everyday life and modern society

3.4.1.2. Teaching: To implement the idea of student-centred learning, and emphasise the cultivation of the student's learning abilities, thus to provide students with the opportunity to participate, investigate, be hands-on and creative

3.4.1.3. Evaluation: To return to the ultimate objective of 'providing teaching and education with information for improvement', and eliminate the problematic practice of exam-based teaching

3.4.2. Strategies and recommendations: (1) Emphasise and arouse the interest for learning; (2) Build up a good and harmonious relationship between teacher and student; (3) Train students to make use of effective learning strategies; (4) Promote an interactive learning model which involves working in teams across subjects; (5) Promote the habit of reading, and foster the ability in lifelong learning; and (6) Plan a programme for fostering parent-and-teacher collaboration, to promote self-motivated study among students.





**Diagram 3: Student-centred Learning and Guidelines**

# 04

## The Visions and Goals for Education Reform



**Diagram 4: The Visions and Goals for Education Reform**

- 4.1. Vision: Helping the Child Succeed through Love in Teaching and Learning.
- 4.2. Overall goal: To enable every student to experience holistic and personalised development, where he or she is able to achieve personal happiness and is willing to put efforts into and contribute to the harmony, prosperity, advancement, freedom and equality of his/her family, community, society, and nation.
- 4.3. Junior Middle Level Education Goals
- (1) To help each and every student experience holistic and personalised development in the moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic aspects;
  - (2) To ensure every student to possess a basic level in knowledge, competencies and positive attitude, and to encourage students to aim for excellence;
  - (3) To cultivate abilities and habits in proactive study, thinking and reading for a good foundation in self-initiated study; and
  - (4) To inculcate positive attitude and values among students.
- 4.4. Senior Middle Level Education Goals
- (1) To cultivate students' spirit of learning and independent thinking as well as the ability to think critically and create innovatively;
  - (2) To enable students to obtain a holistic learning experience within and outside academic institution, and to prepare them for career, learning and living in the future;
  - (3) To provide students with multiple options and help them achieve their own competencies and aptitudes, including to better plan for their future career, learning and living;
  - (4) To cultivate a sense of responsibility among students towards family, community, society and nation, along with a global mind-set; and
  - (5) To cultivate the ability among students to learn, live and work in a pluralistic society and cross-cultural environment.

# 05

## Curriculum Development: Foundation of Learning

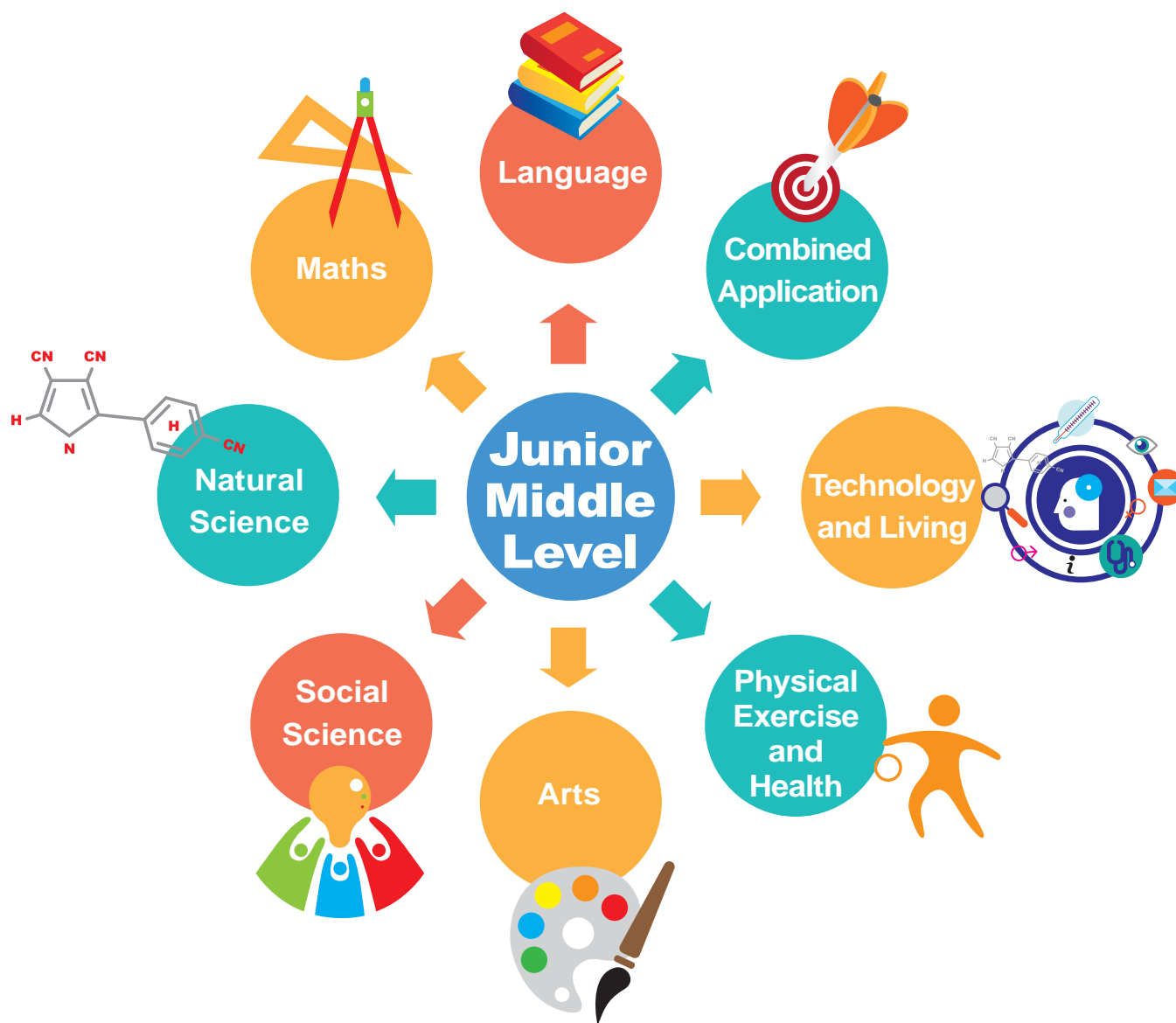
The major proposal for curriculum development is to reform the existing curricular structure, promote school-based curricula, improve curricular standards, and implement curricular leadership. Apart from that, as technical education is already an avenue for further studies and an option for learning, it is proposed that the ‘technical curriculum’ be included in the scope of Senior Middle streams within the adjustment of a curricular structure.

### 5.1. Reforming Curricular Structure

5.1.1. Junior Middle Curriculum: The planning of the future development of the Junior Middle Curriculum should be based on eight areas of learning as its principle for reform: language, mathematics, natural science, social science, arts, physical education and health, technology and living, as well as combined application.

(1) Language: Including Chinese, Malay and English. The class time ratio should be controlled at 30.61% (not more than 15 periods). This recommendation has taken into account the possibility that learning may not necessarily be completed during classes and may be done during extended virtual classes.

(2) Mathematics: Proposed class time ratio at 12.25% (6 periods);

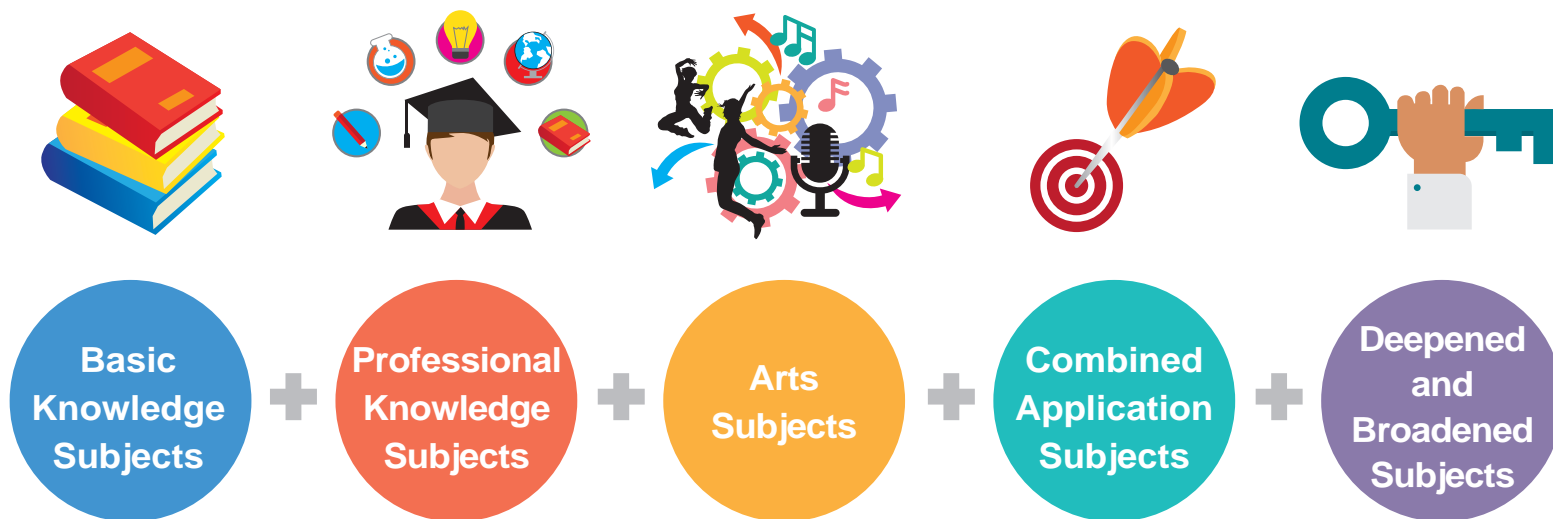


**Diagram 5: Recommended Junior Middle Level Curriculum**

- (3) Natural Science: Proposed class time ratio at 12.25% (6 periods);
- (4) Social Science: Proposed core focus of content to be on the individual, with emphasis on the student's understanding of self and the relationship between the evolution of the politico-socio-economic culture and people, yet also paying attention to the relationship between environmental change and people, with a class time ratio of 12.25% (6 periods);
- (5) Arts: Proposed content includes art, music, and the performing arts, with a class time ratio of 8.16% (4 periods);
- (6) Physical Education and Health: Proposed class time ratio of 4.08% (2 periods);
- (7) Technology and Living: Including the application of computer and information technology, life skills, and technology for living, with a class time ratio of 8.16% (4 periods);
- (8) Combined Application: Encompasses weekly assembly and class meeting, curriculum review, special project study and community service, as well as co-curricular activity, with emphasis on the students' practical skills for combined application, with a class time ratio of 12.25% (6 periods); and
- (9) The Junior Middle curriculum's class time should be controlled at 49 periods or less, so as to provide students with the time to further investigate, discuss, discover, apply and create using what has been learned after class.

#### 5.1.2. Senior Middle Curriculum: structuring multiple options for self

The proposed Senior Middle Curriculum recommends the credit system, which is a curricular structure where the focus of Senior Middle One is on exploration, Senior Middle Two on exploration and streaming, and Senior Middle Three on deepening professional knowledge. For schools with technical curricula, it is proposed that technical classes be offered as options for interested students to choose as electives at the Senior Middle One and Senior Middle Two levels. The development of the Senior Middle curriculum is based on five subject groups, i.e. basic knowledge subjects, professional knowledge subjects, arts subjects, combined application subjects, and deepened and broadened subjects.



**Diagram 6: Recommended Senior Middle Level Curriculum**

- (1) **Basic Knowledge Subjects:** Include five subjects, namely Chinese, Malay, English, Mathematics (ordinary maths/advanced maths), and General Studies. These five subjects are required, the class time ratio should not exceed 40%, and the average teaching time for each subject (exclusive of General Studies) is 5 periods. General Studies (proposed additionally) will encompass values relating to civic duties, morals, science, democracy, legal system and others as a required course of 2 periods, with a 4% weightage in the curriculum.
- (2) **Professional Knowledge Subjects:** Include science, arts, commerce and technical. In line with the idea of the postponement of streaming, students can continue to explore their aptitudes during Senior Middle One, whereas they will have to choose among science, arts, vocational or technical field in Senior Middle Two. Students will be allowed to opt for 4 subjects the most, with a weightage of 32% in the curriculum. Under the new curricular structure, the content for technical subjects will be gradually elevated to the Senior Middle UEC level to aid students in furthering their studies.
- (3) **Arts Subjects:** Include art, music, physical education and health, and computer and information technology. Students are only allowed to opt for 2 to 3 subjects among them (maximum 4 periods), with a weightage of 8% in the curriculum.
- (4) **Combined Application Subjects:** Include special project report, social application or community services, revised self-formulated curricula, weekly assemblies, class meetings, and co-curricular activities. The total number of periods is 8, with a weightage of 16% in the curriculum.



- (5) Deepened and Broadened Subjects: Include the deepening of knowledge for the various subjects. They are options targeting at Senior Middle Three students, with the aim of readying them for tertiary studies. Schools which are able may develop their own deepened and broadened subjects, in coordination however with Dong Zong, to ensure the appropriateness of the curriculum. The proposed number of periods for deepened and broadened subjects is 4, with a weightage of 8% in the curriculum.
- (6) The total number of periods for Senior Middle curricula should be strictly controlled below 50 periods, which is to allow sufficient time and space for students to engage in self-reflection, exploration and application.

## 5.2. Promoting School-based Curriculum:

Dong Zong should remould and engage in discourse on the positioning and role of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools in community education, the planning and construction of standard curricula for Independent Chinese Secondary Schools, and facilitate the development of curricula that are specific and special to each individual school.

### 5.2.1. Definition of the role and positioning of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools as centres for community education

#### 5.2.1.1. The relationship between Independent Chinese Secondary Schools and their local communities:

Some Independent Chinese Secondary Schools have engaged in the educational efforts of their local communities, which elevates Independent Chinese Secondary Schools and the Chinese community to a win-win level. The co-operation between both parties is no longer confined to the sharing of financial resources, but also an exchange of knowledge and experience. Such relationships have helped establish good foundation for Independent Chinese Secondary Schools to deepen their school-based curricula.

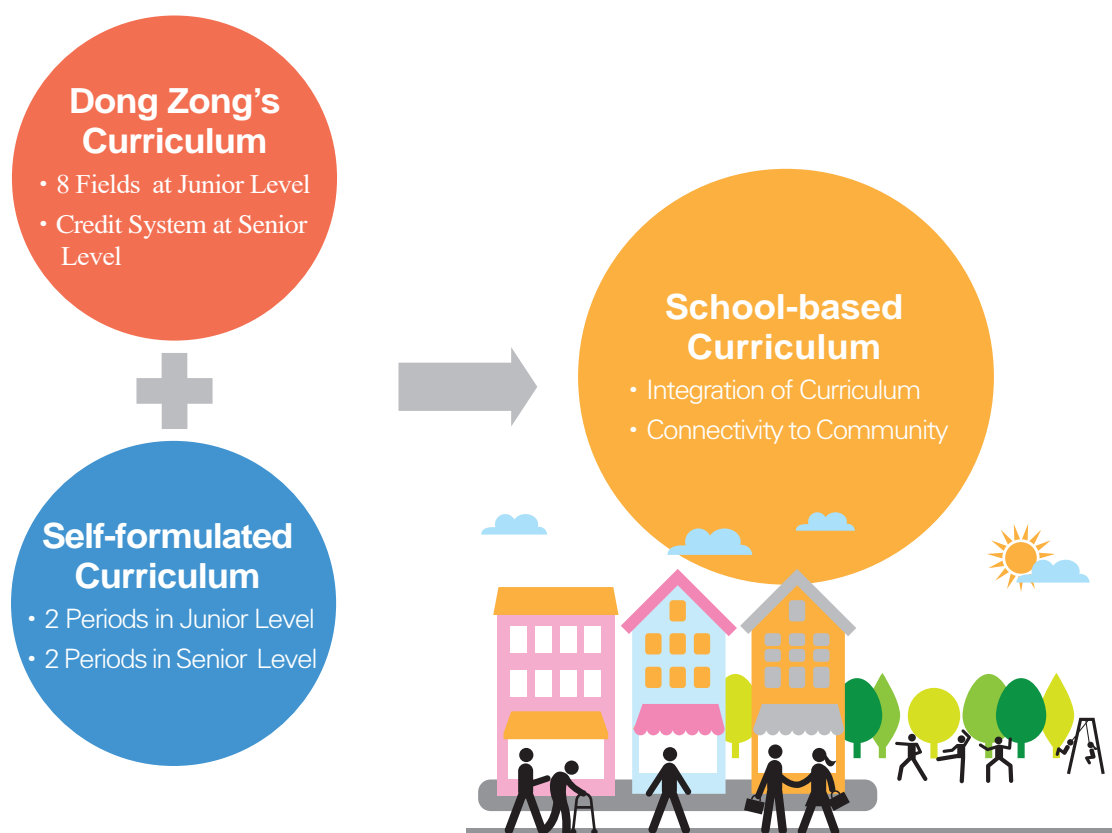
#### 5.2.1.2. Recommendations regarding Independent Chinese Secondary Schools as community education centres:

- (1) To open up school facilities for the use of community members, and mobilise students as guides, to enhance their communication skills;
- (2) To organise exhibitions for learning outcomes in conjunction with the special project research in senior and junior middle curriculum, and to invite members of the community to visit;
- (3) To organise events with community organisations in conjunction with the Junior Middle and Senior Middle community service curricula, including community associations, clan associations, and NGOs, on specific issues in the community;

- (4) To organise an alma mater give-back event, in conjunction with the Senior Middle community service curriculum or the curriculum set forth by the school; and
- (5) The school may brainstorm to bring forth more curricula that connect the school with the community. This not only fulfils the objective of the school-based curriculum, but will also affirm the positioning of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools as community education centres.

5.2.2. To develop self-formulated curriculum with school and community characteristics

5.2.2.1. Independent Chinese Secondary Schools have always enjoyed autonomy in their educational operation. Be it on practising their own unique educational approach or meeting the special learning ecology of their respective locality, they have each developed their own different school-based curriculum. In other words, ‘school-based curricula’ have been formulated for a long while. What has been missing, however, is a self-formulated school curriculum which combines its own educational visions with students’ characteristics.



**Diagram 7: The Relationship of School-based and Self-formulated Curriculum**

#### 5.2.2.2. Recommendations for the development of self-formulated curricular in Independent Chinese Secondary Schools

- (1) Publicity: As self-formulated curricular are to date not a common practice among Independent Chinese Secondary Schools, there is a pushing need to carry out adequate publicity and educational efforts in promoting the initiative.
- (2) To set up a curriculum research and development team: Dong Zong should facilitate Independent Chinese Secondary Schools in setting up ad hoc teams for curriculum research and development, while devising a development guide for self-formulated curricula, as a reference to schools that intend to develop self-formulated curricula.
- (3) Personnel training and organising conferences for self-formulated curricula: Dong Zong should provide training or guidance to personnel designated by schools, and equip them with the competency to design curricula, while organising regular small-scaled conferences for school self-formulated curricula.

#### 5.3. Optimisation of Curricular Standards

The objective of optimising curricular standards is to fine-tune the curricular designs and planning for each subject, where emphasis is placed on students as the key players in learning. In the long run, curricular standards should be the major referential documents for evaluating the learning outcomes of students. The long-practised ‘examination outline’ should be abolished gradually on the road when time is ripe for replacement to be implemented.



**Diagram 8: The Change of Curriculum Standardisation Concept**

### 5.3.1. Implement the curricular principle of Student-centred Learning

5.3.1.1. The improvement of curricular standards is realised through the curricular practice of Student-centred Learning. Therefore, the revision of curricular standards should prioritise ‘what basic knowledge students should possess’ or ‘which basic competency’, and not requiring each student to attain the ‘ultimate objectives’ set forth by the curriculum designer.

### 5.3.1.2. Recommendations for optimising curricular standards

- (1) Initiating the formulation of curricular standards: The Dong Zong Curriculum Department should devise the general outline for Independent Chinese Secondary Schools curricular, while realising the issue of ‘what kinds of students Independent Chinese Secondary Schools seek to cultivate’ in the design of the general objectives for Independent Chinese Secondary Schools curriculum, in line with the educational objectives of Independent Chinese Secondary School education.
- (2) Fine-tuning the existing curricular standards: To fine-tune the basic format of the 2012 curricular standards, in line with the release of the general curriculum outline based on the existing curricular standards. Specifically to add two items—learning standards and performance standards—into the original implementation recommendations (teaching recommendations and assessment recommendations).
- (3) Enhancing the practicality of curricular standards: The objective of the revision of curricular standards should be friendly to teacher’s reading, understanding and adaptation. Meanwhile, to enhance teacher’s ability to employ the curricular standards and correlate them to the evaluation of the student’s competencies.

### 5.3.2. Strengthening the teacher’s command and application of the curricular standards

5.3.2.1. The purpose of strengthening the teacher’s command and application of the curricular standards is to prepare for the future operational models of ‘providing curriculum’ as well as ‘teaching materials’, or of only ‘providing curriculum’ but ‘not teaching materials’. It is also to prepare for the future operational model where the ‘examination outline’ is to be replaced by ‘curricular standards’.

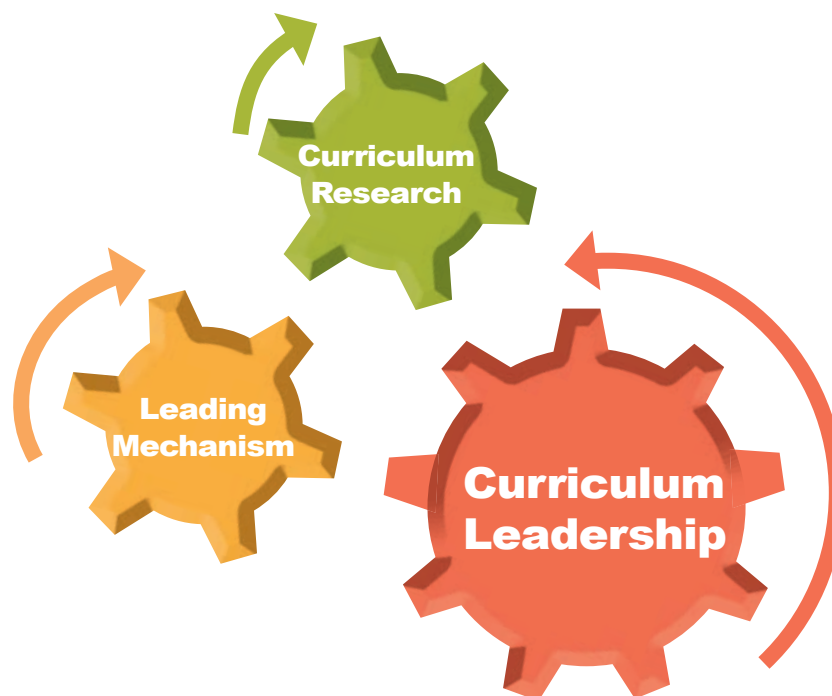
### 5.3.2.2. Recommendations for teacher’s use of curricular standards

- (1) To strengthen teacher training: To organise guidance and application training sessions for the curricular standards after they have been completed for the subject, so as to strengthen the teacher’s understanding of the subject’s curricular standards;

- (2) To fine-tune the mechanism for distribution: After the curricular standards are completed, other than sending them out to schools individually, they should also be compiled into books. At the same time, they should be uploaded onto the webpage for the Dong Zong Curriculum Department for easy download and application by teachers; and
- (3) To strengthen publicity efforts: All subsequent subject training efforts must tie in closely with the curricular standards, so that teachers will acknowledge the fact that the curricular standards are not merely document, but a yardstick which can be referred to in their daily teaching practices.

#### 5.4. Implementing Curricular Leadership

Curricular leadership refers to the assistance provided by the head of curriculum (generally the principal) to the frontline teachers in teaching approaches, curricular design, curriculum implementation and curricular assessments during the process of curriculum development, in order to achieve a better teaching and learning outcome for students. For this wave of reform, the Unified Curriculum Committee or Dong Zong plays an important role in curricular leadership. By the same token, operators of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools must also participate actively; it is for Independent Chinese Secondary Schools to reach new heights.



**Diagram 9: Curriculum Leadership through Mechanism and Research**

5.4.1. To fine-tune mechanism for curricular leadership:

5.4.1.1. On the level of Dong Zong, the Unified Curriculum Committee needs to play a more proactive and comprehensive role in leading the curricular reform of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools; On the school level, the principal and the academic team need to plan and monitor the curricular development of the school. It is only through mutual cooperation between Dong Zong and the schools that the curricular in Independent Chinese Secondary Schools would be able to develop pluralistic and flexible options in achieving the vision of educating students based on their individual aptitudes.

5.4.1.2. Recommendations for curricular leadership in Independent Chinese Secondary Schools:

- (1) The Unified Curriculum Committee of Dong Zong must ensure study discussions and coordination across boundaries, while bringing human resources from various subjects to complete projects cross-regionally.
- (2) To strengthen the lateral relations between the Curriculum Department, Teacher Education Department and Examination Department, in order to forward the curricular plans across departments.
- (3) The curriculum department of Dong Zong should provide guidelines to Independent Chinese Secondary Schools on setting up curricular leadership and development teams. The team shall be led by the school principal. The subject editors or researchers at Dong Zong may participate in the relevant plans under the consent of the schools, to help develop the schools' curriculum together and devise the outline of its school-based curriculum.

5.4.2. Initiating curricular research and development

5.4.2.1. Curricular leadership requires research as the basis of decision-making. In this vein, Dong Zong should garner curriculum materials, conduct interviews, and carry out observations in a more systematic manner. Likewise, recommendations on the development of the relevant curricular will be made following scientific analysis and findings which are to be used as reference for Dong Zong and the schools.

#### 5.4.2.2. Recommendations for curricular research and development for Independent Chinese Secondary Schools

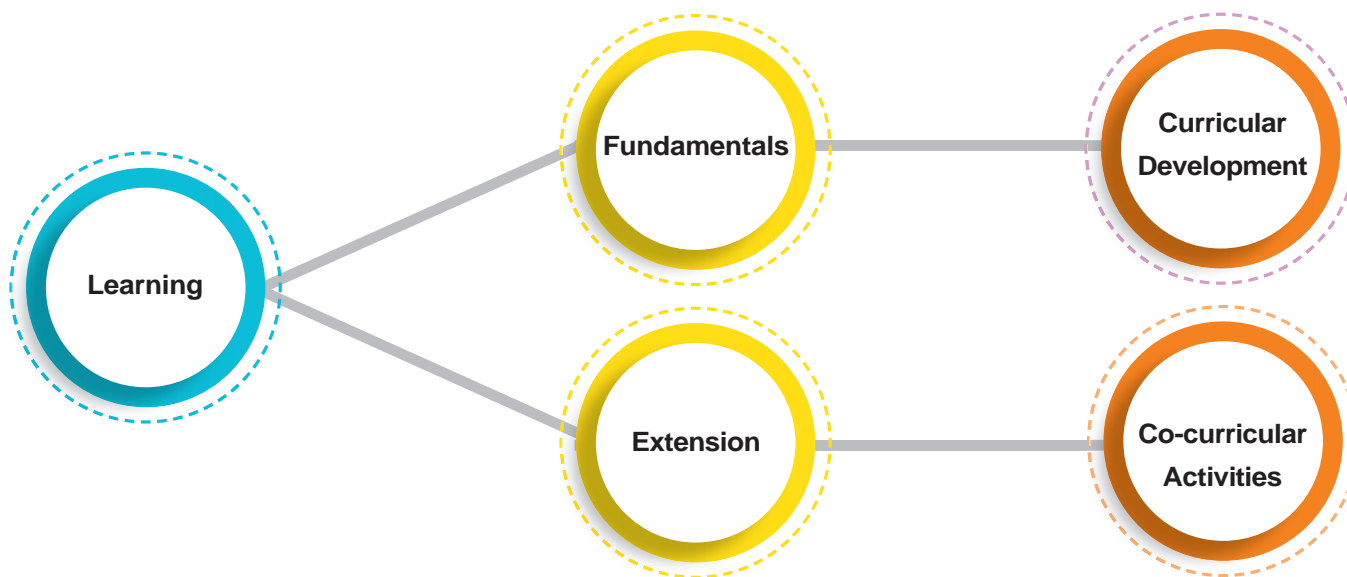
- (1) Schools concerned can start from having teachers conclude their own pedagogical experiences, and encourage them to engage in a more scientific and systematic study whenever they grow better at organising their teaching practices and reflections.
- (2) Teachers can begin with the investigation of one class. A Professional Learning Community (PLC) can be set up among the teachers, where the process, observation and discussion of the learning team is recorded and shared with other teachers. In addition, schools with the necessary resources may work with academic bodies outside the school to carry out in-school research collaboratively. This would not only improve the quality of the research, but also provide teachers with a model of reference and learning which would save time and energy spent fumbling on their own.
- (3) To form a mechanism for democratic discourse in the school milieu, and the culture of free speech.



# 06

## Students: The Key Players in Learning

- 6.1. In order to achieve the objective of helping students to attain holistic development, Independent Chinese Secondary Schools should adopt ‘holistic learning’ as an approach for student development. Apart from emphasising subject knowledge, important and holistic learning experiences other than subject knowledge should also be provided, including moral and civic education, clubs and societies, life and career counselling and sporting activities.
- 6.2. Specifically, in order to achieve the goal of holistic development in students, holistic learning in this sense also encompasses experiential learning and environmental immersion besides classroom learning. Experiential learning can be implemented as co-curricular activities, where direct experiences can compensate for the corresponding lack in classroom learning. Environmental immersion is an explicit booster for education, brought together through school, family and community, which altogether creates a positive school culture that offers students with unwitting learning experience.
- 6.3. Co-curricular Activities: The Extension of Learning
  - 6.3.1. The term ‘co-curricular activities’ signifies the notion that students’ learning activities outside classes must be developed in line with formal curriculum, which denotes that they carry the same values as formal education.



**Diagram 10: Co-curricular Activities: The Extension of Learning**

6.3.2. The ‘co-curricular activities’ in the past only translated club and society activities in school syllabuses. With the awareness of diversification in learning, student learning through activities is no longer confined to club and society activities, but also includes other events within and outside of schools such as school anniversary fund-raising, fun-fair and school bazaar, community service, exploratory education, charity events and sports meet. Co-curricular activities no longer equates merely club and society activities, but also other types of events, where students are provided with practical opportunity to participate in experiential learning activities.

6.3.3. The Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Education Reform Outline 2005 has included ‘emphasis on the development of non-academic curricula or non-examination subjects’ among its five curricular reform recommendations. Following this chain of thought, apart from subjects to be learned, curricular development will also incorporate other forms of learning activities<sup>①</sup> which aim to fulfil the objective of holistic learning. Therefore, the co-curricular activities in the future should not be held only within the co-curricular department, but should also be the extension of holistic learning through the facilitation of other administrative departments in combination with curricular development.

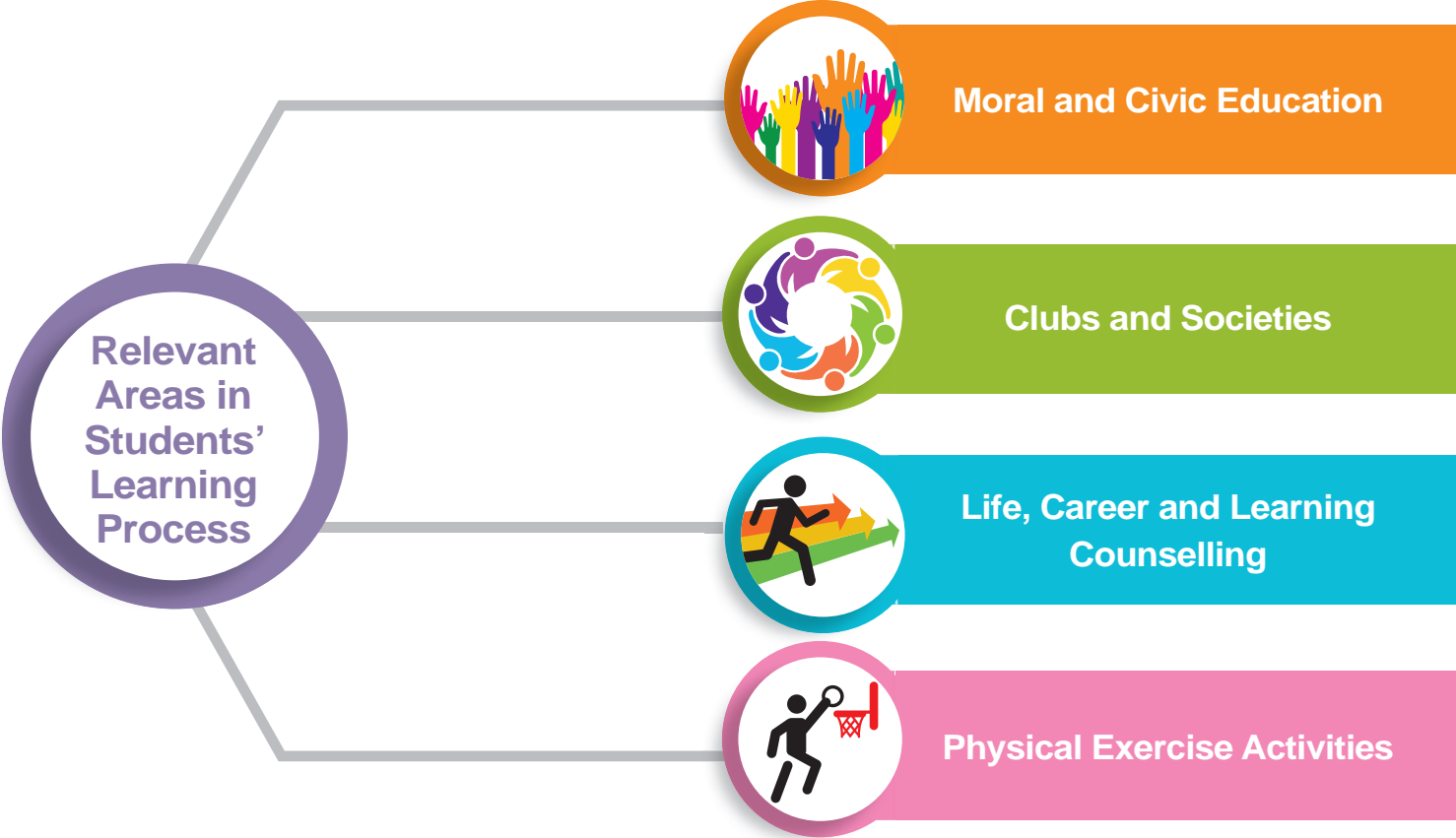
6.3.4. Recommendations:

- (1) To initiate preliminary discussions by gathering relevant administrative units such as the academic, disciplinary, counselling, co-curricular and physical education departments, where assessments are conducted on students of each level in the entire school, and appropriate co-curricular activities are designed for the students’ participation based on the core literacy values sought to be cultivated. Such activities may be categorised into two types: (1) Across the entire school; and (2) Junior Middle and Senior Middle Levels<sup>②</sup> /individual level.
- (2) To implement the said activities from Junior Middle One onwards. Activities within the school can be prioritised at the preliminary stage. Assessments can then be included as the plan gets on track, with integration into the required curriculum for the entire school, while Senior Middle students can be brought out of the school to engage in community activities.

<sup>①</sup> Please refer to Chapter 5 for combined application subjects in curricular development for Junior Middle and Senior Middle Levels.

<sup>②</sup> Larger schools can combine two levels into one.

6.4. Relevant Areas in the Learning Process



**Diagram 11: Relevant Areas in Students' Learning Process**

6.4.1. Moral and civic education

6.4.1.1. The school should adopt the approach of cultivating positive values and attitudes among students, and apply real and daily issues to guide and immerse the students in a real-life environment. This virtually takes students through a holistic learning process, and strengthens their interaction and contact with one another.

6.4.1.2. Recommendations: (1) To create an optimal school culture and environment; (2) To utilise community resources, and turn the community into a place of learning; (3) To organise experiential learning activities; (4) To enhance student participation at school; (5) To set up an instruction unit to strengthen the promotion of the project; (6) To strengthen the function of the hostel and enhance the educational function of the life tutor or warden; (7) To implement sound management of classes and student societies; (8) To train and cultivate personnel for conducting moral and civic education; and (9) To emphasise on-the-job training for teachers.

#### 6.4.2. Clubs and societies

6.4.2.1. As the most important component of co-curricular activities, the development of student societies relies largely on the leadership and guidance of teacher advisors or administrative staff. Student participation is dependent on the appeal of the society's activities, therefore it is imperative for schools to consider how best to motivate students and thus to set up new societies and maximise the benefits through the distribution of the school's limited resources to the society.

6.4.2.2. The development strategy for the future is to realise the spirit of social participation among the students, so that they are not motivated to join attributed to marks and grades, and to modify the assessment to include construct like 'students' learning and growth' as the main criterion.

6.4.2.3. Recommendations: (1) To increase self-motivated study among students: (2) To improve the professionalisation of the teaching staff for co-curricular activities; (3) Abandon fractionalised assessment; and (4) To promote civic education through social activities.

#### 6.4.3. Counselling for life, career and learning

6.4.3.1. With the development of information technology and the rapid influx of knowledge, school counselling education should seek to improve students' knowledge, adaptability, creative power, independent thinking and ability for life-long learning, in order to ready them to opt for the most suitable academic pursuit and make career choices.

- 6.4.3.2. During the 6-year period of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools education, if systematic guidance and counselling can be provided to adolescents on life and career planning based on their physical and spiritual development as well as age, it is believed they would be able to make better life and career plans and realise themselves accordingly.
- 6.4.3.3. Recommendations: (1) To provide resources for practical counselling work; (2) To provide diverse counselling work; (3) To carry out counselling work relating to tertiary prevention; (4) To implement the project for seed teachers in counselling; (5) To train and cultivate professional counselling teachers; (6) To emphasise on the self-care of counselling staff; (7) To provide counselling for learning; and (8) To promote awareness of life and career planning.
- 6.4.3.4. The purpose of physical education is to help students develop a life-long habit for exercise through physical training, enhancing physical fitness, gaining sporting knowledge and skills, and experiencing fun in sports. It is also to implement mental education, including fostering sportsmanship, self-discipline and camaraderie through teamwork among students.
- 6.4.3.5. Apart from the need for professionalisation, the promotion of physical education in Independent Chinese Secondary Schools should also attend to national developments for sports and physical education outside competitive sports.
- 6.4.3.6. Recommendations: (1) To improve sporting facilities and equipment; (2) To train professional physical education teachers and coaches; (3) To emphasise on-the-job training for existing physical education teachers; (4) To promote sportsmanship; and (5) To develop non-curricular and non-competitive sporting activities.

# 07

## Assessment: Improvement in Learning

- 7.1. The current theories regarding assessment in the world subsume the following three objectives: (1) To assess the student's competencies and not simply knowledge; (2) To emphasise the student's learning process and not end-product; and (3) To ensure the standards and quality of the student's learning outcome. This is to meet the requirements of cultivating civic literacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and to include the two major educational elements of 'quality' and 'fairness'.
- 7.2. The problems faced by the UEC reform include (1) the shortage of experts and scholars in assessment studies; (2) the need to improve on the knowledge in the specialised field of assessment; (3) the lack of understanding of the development of assessment studies around the world; (4) the need to improve on the 'academic abilities' of students; (5) a gap between the assessment feedback and student's abilities; and (6) the non-standardised entrance requirements for universities around the world.
- 7.3. Recommendations for Reform
  - 7.3.1. Strengthening the build-up of assessment competencies:
    - (1) To bring in external scholars and academics in the field of assessment; and
    - (2) To train members of the examination board and Chinese Independent High School teachers on their professional assessment competencies.
  - 7.3.2. To implement school-based assessment
    - (1) To include oral assessments for the three languages.
    - (2) To evaluate through the completion of science experiments.

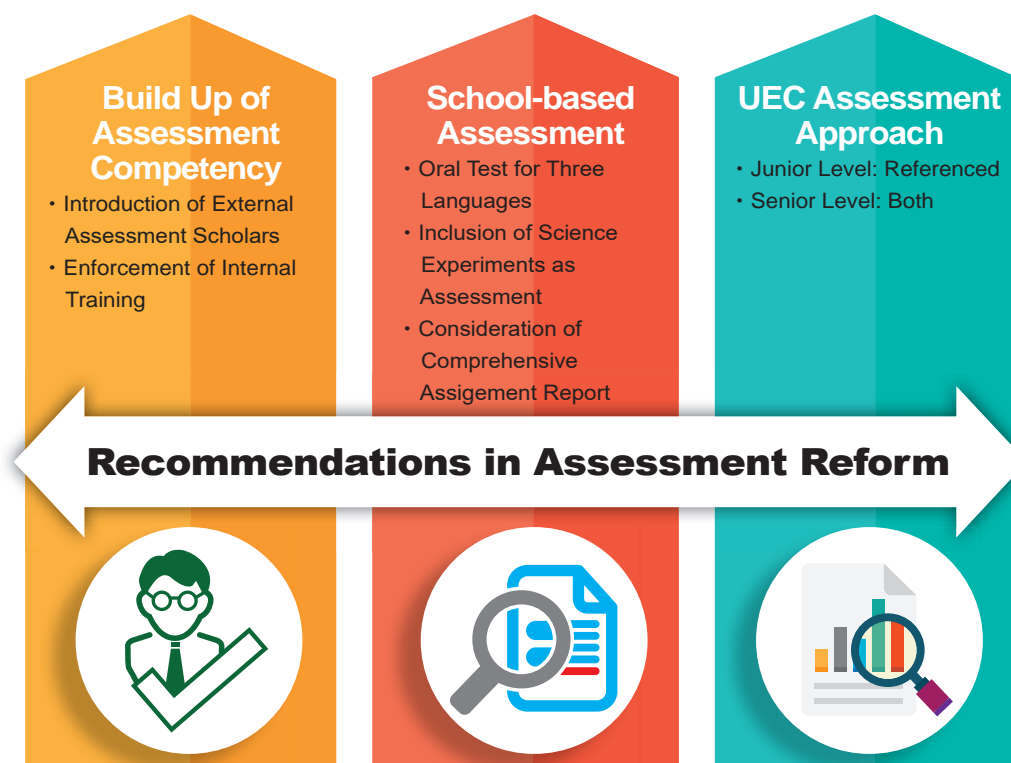
- (3) Others: If possible, to consider promoting comprehensive assignments report and certain subjects with high practicality, which constitute the task-based assessment.
- (4) It is estimated that the above school-based assessment will stand not more than 30% of the assessment for the Junior Middle level and 20% for the Senior Middle level.

7.3.3. Reform of assessment methods for the UEC:

7.3.3.1. There are two assessment approaches: (1) Norm-referenced Test; and (2) Criterion-referenced Test.

7.3.3.2. For Junior Middle level, an assessment approach should be developed based on the Norm-referenced Test.

7.3.3.3. The Senior Middle level should adopt an approach which includes both the Norm-referenced and Criterion-referenced Tests, in consideration of the pressure students have to withstand in furthering their studies.



**Diagram 12: Recommendations in Assessment Reform**



# 08

## Teachers: Role Models for Learning

In order to promote holistic development in students, teachers must uphold and implement student-centred learning. Furthermore, diversified educational approaches, cross-subject knowledge and the adjustment of assessment reform are all competencies and mind-sets that modern educators should possess.



**Diagram 13: The Four Constructs of Teacher Education**

## 8.1. Pre-occupational Training

8.1.1. Challenges in teacher training: The Independent Chinese Secondary Schools in Malaysia have been facing the issue of teacher shortage. Besides, a survey in 2017 also revealed that 50.47% of the teachers did not possess professional teaching qualifications. Greater efforts still need to be made in the training of teachers leading to professional education qualifications.

8.1.2. Corresponding measures: In order to help alleviate the issue of teacher shortage in Independent Chinese Secondary Schools while helping the schools to train teachers with professional education qualifications, Dong Zong has since been actively implementing the ‘Special Project for Teacher Training in Independent Chinese Secondary Schools’ from 2015 onwards.

## 8.1.3. Future development and recommendations

### 8.1.3.1. Short-term plan (1-5 years)

- (1) To continue promoting the awareness and strengthening the ‘Special Project for Teacher Training in Independent Chinese Secondary Schools’;
- (2) To continue fine-tuning the existing curriculum for professional education qualifications, and reform its relevant content; and
- (3) Dong Zong, member states and boards of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools should provide scholarships or living allowances amounting to a certain amount, to fund Senior Middle Three school leavers and students currently pursuing their studies in Taiwan or China who have joined the ‘Special Project for Teacher Training in Independent Chinese Secondary Schools’.

### 8.1.3.2. Long-term plan (6 to 10 years)

To develop a specific institution for training of teachers in Independent Chinese Secondary Schools, and to form a well-established local training system for Independent Chinese Secondary Schools, which helps elevate the general effort for training quality and effective teachers.



**Diagram 14: Recommendations for the Development of Pre-occupational Training**

## 8.2. On-the-job Training

8.2.1. With the changes in the general educational environment, it is imperative that Independent Chinese Secondary Schools attend specifically to on-the-job training in order to make up for any inadequate pre-occupational trainings for teachers. Hence, to establish a sound mechanism for on-the-job training is crucial for the pedagogical growth of teachers in Independent Chinese Secondary Schools.

8.2.2. Channels for training include: (1) On-the-job training courses organised by Dong Zong; (2) Professional Education Certificate course; and (3) Professional development of school-based teachers;

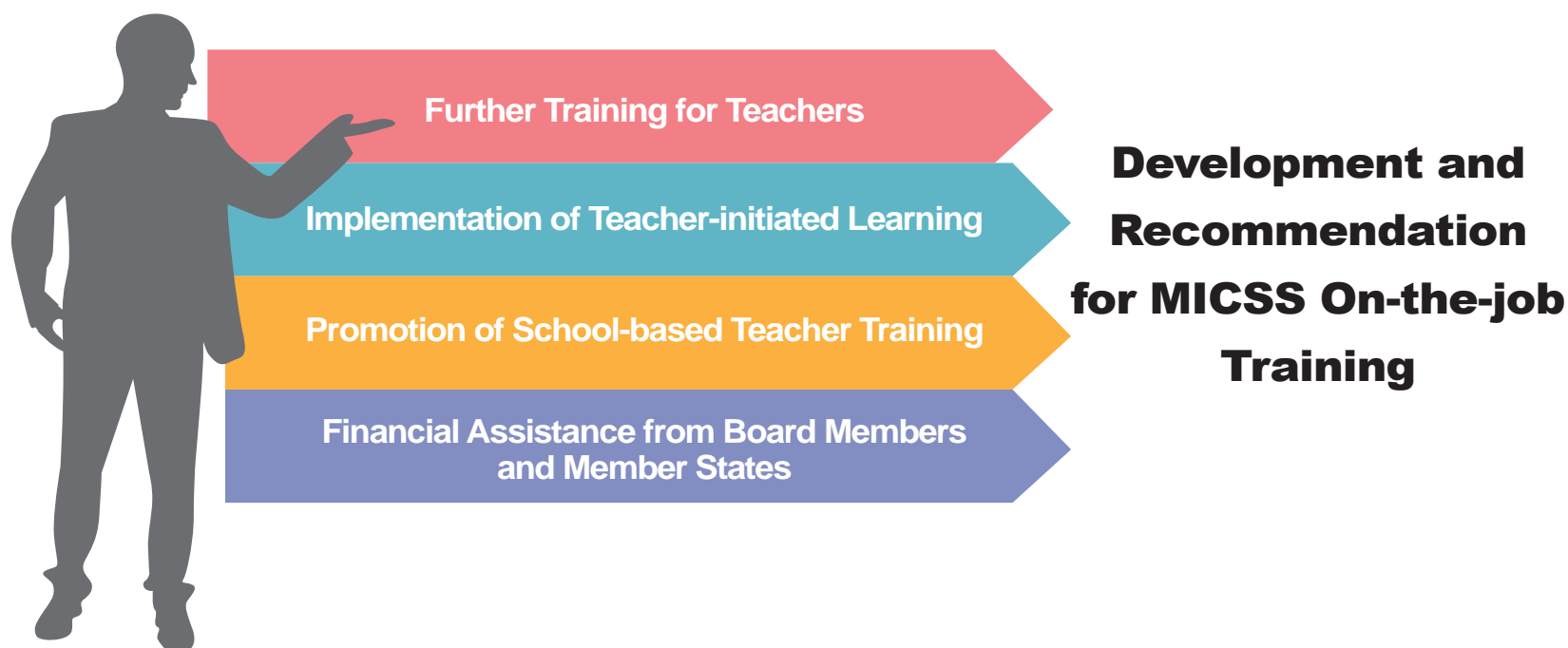
### 8.2.3. Future development and proposals

8.2.3.1. In-depth training for teachers: (1) To strengthen the assessment mechanism for teacher training requirements; (2) To gain thorough understanding of the teaching needs of teachers and to strengthen the content and format of the training curriculum based on the different stages of career development; (3) Local lecturers are better able than foreign lecturers to understand the current state of Malaysia and Independent Chinese Secondary School education, therefore it is imperative that a cohort of professional local lecturers be put together; and (4) To form a professional group of teachers with both academic qualifications and practical teaching experience, who as a team of seed teachers may visit Independent Chinese Secondary Schools that need help and assist them in identifying teaching-related issues and training new teachers.

8.2.3.2. To promote self-initiated learning among teachers: (1) Effective progress can only be made by focusing on the real issues of rewards, schedules, and methods of further education; (2) To promote opportunities of exchange between schools on teaching experiences, and broaden the experiences in school-based training or research, and help schools to establish professional learning groups for teachers; (3) To enhance the operational model for the further education of teachers, form an e-Learning system for further education and an all-enveloping learning environment, and develop a model that incorporates teaching and co-operative learning; and (4) To improve the platform for sharing educational resources, enrich the resources for digital teaching, develop a mechanism for consolidating and sharing digital teaching materials, and encourage the culture of knowledge sharing and group learning among Independent Chinese Secondary School teachers and between schools.

8.2.3.3. Promoting school-based teacher training: (1) To establish a specific organisational structure in the school which is responsible for co-ordination and leadership aiming for the professional growth of teachers; (2) To adapt the principle of diversity as a base to meet the needs of teachers in different circumstances; (3) To form an incentive and reward mechanism; and (4) To organise exchange activities between schools within the region on teaching, and optimise the benefits of co-operation among the teachers.

8.2.3.4. Financial assistance from board members and member states: (1) To establish training funds for Chinese Independent High School teachers; (2) To fund teachers in pursuing professional education courses; (3) To fund teachers and administrative staff in pursuing education and management-related Master's or Doctorate degrees; and (4) To generate state funds for educational research, and encourage teachers to engage in teaching research activities.



**Diagram 15: Development and Recommendation for MICSS On-the-job Training**

### 8.3. Work Conditions and Status

#### 8.3.1. Work conditions



**Diagram 16: Factors Operating in Work Conditions**

8.3.1.1. Salary and welfare: Other than basic salary, the schools are also concerned with improving the welfare benefits of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools teachers; they are, namely, living subsidies, bonuses, subsidies for undertaking teaching training or obtaining teaching qualifications, long service awards, insurance and health subsidies, study trips and exchanges outside schools, and scholarships for further education of teachers.

8.3.1.2. Working hours: Based on the Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Survey Report 2016, the weekly average working hours for Independent Chinese Secondary School teachers is 57.62 hours. In comparison, the data in TALIS 2013 for Malaysia indicate that the weekly working hours for teachers are 45.1 hours, which is a far cry from the other figure. The school should find ways to alleviate the workload of teachers, such as by reducing the number of class periods, so as to provide teachers with some work-life balancing leeway. In addition, administrative staff should take fewer class periods based on their respective workload.

8.3.1.3. Class size: The workload of a teacher inevitably increases in congruent with the larger number of students in a class. Therefore, school managements should be attentive in resolving the issue.

8.3.1.4. Assistance for teachers:

8.3.1.4.1. Board members, school management and leadership: (1) To enhance the leadership skills of the administrative staff of the school; (2) To let non-teaching support staff handle paper and administrative work; (3) To effectively utilise information technology to handle administrative affairs, and the electronic system to manage and use resources; (4) To provide responsive support to help teachers enjoy work-life balance; (5) To promote training in teacher's professional development, and to update knowledge and enhance effectiveness regularly; and (6) To pay attention to and improve the quality of the work environment.

8.3.1.4.2. Teachers: (1) To have good time management and structured teaching skills; (2) To learn how to manage oneself and maintain a good relationship with others; and (3) To improve skills for healthy living, such as positive attitude towards life, the cultivation of a healthy self, and good values, etc.

8.3.2. The professional image and status of teachers

8.3.2.1. As an institution whose task is to safeguard the interests of Chinese education and promote the development of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools, Dong Zong shoulders the responsibility of promoting professionalism among teachers, and shaping and enhancing the professional image, status quo and responsibilities of every teacher. This includes the seed programme, awards for to-be-retired teachers, and long service awards for teachers and principals.

8.3.2.2. Besides co-operating with and sending teachers to participate in the programmes and activities organised by Dong Zong, the schools should take initiative to take concrete, informed and beneficial measures. These include raising the basic salary of teachers, formulating regulations which housekeep the basic interests of teachers, showing concern for the physical and mental health of teachers, celebrating Teachers' Day, issuing bonuses for teachers, and fostering teachers' passion and dedication to their profession and schools, in order to elevate the professional status of Independent Chinese Secondary School teachers to achieve greater social recognition.

#### 8.4. Professional Growth

- 8.4.1. Whether the educational quality of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools may advance abreast with the times is dependent on the level of growth of the professionalisation of teachers. Therefore, the role of Chinese Independent High school teachers should be defined as ‘professionals’, who perform in compliance with professional practices. The fundamental emphasis of the professionalisation of teachers is the process of growth and development, thus such professionalisation should be sought after on the basis of the extant foundations.
- 8.4.2. Strategies and recommendations: (1) To establish a mechanism to assist the professional development of teachers, thus accelerating the process of professionalisation; (2) To create a platform for sharing, and promote research for teaching practices; (3) To promote self-initiated learning and competitiveness among teachers; (4) To enhance school-based training activities; (5) To provide teachers with a platform to share their teaching practices and outcomes; (6) To fund teachers in their professional advancement; and (7) To promote teachers’ ethics, and a greater sense of occupational involvement among teachers.



# 09

## From School to Community: Building a Fun Learning Environment

### Fun Learning Environment



**Diagram 17: Building a Fun Learning Environment**

#### 9.1. Improvement of Management

There are many variables operating in the implementation of educational measures. With each school having its own individual circumstances, any one-method-for-all approach will not subsequently meet the requirements for education reform. Therefore, school managements need to tailor, plan and carry out education reform measures based on the unique circumstances of their respective school. Put simply, the educational literacy and management mind-sets of school leadership and management thus become key factors.

#### 9.1.1. Increasing the educational literacy of board members

Any reform at a school requires the input of resources. If the consent from the board members is not given, it would be difficult to obtain more resources and some implementations would not be successful. Therefore, there is an imminent need for the board members to further educate themselves to improve their educational literacy and be well-informed.



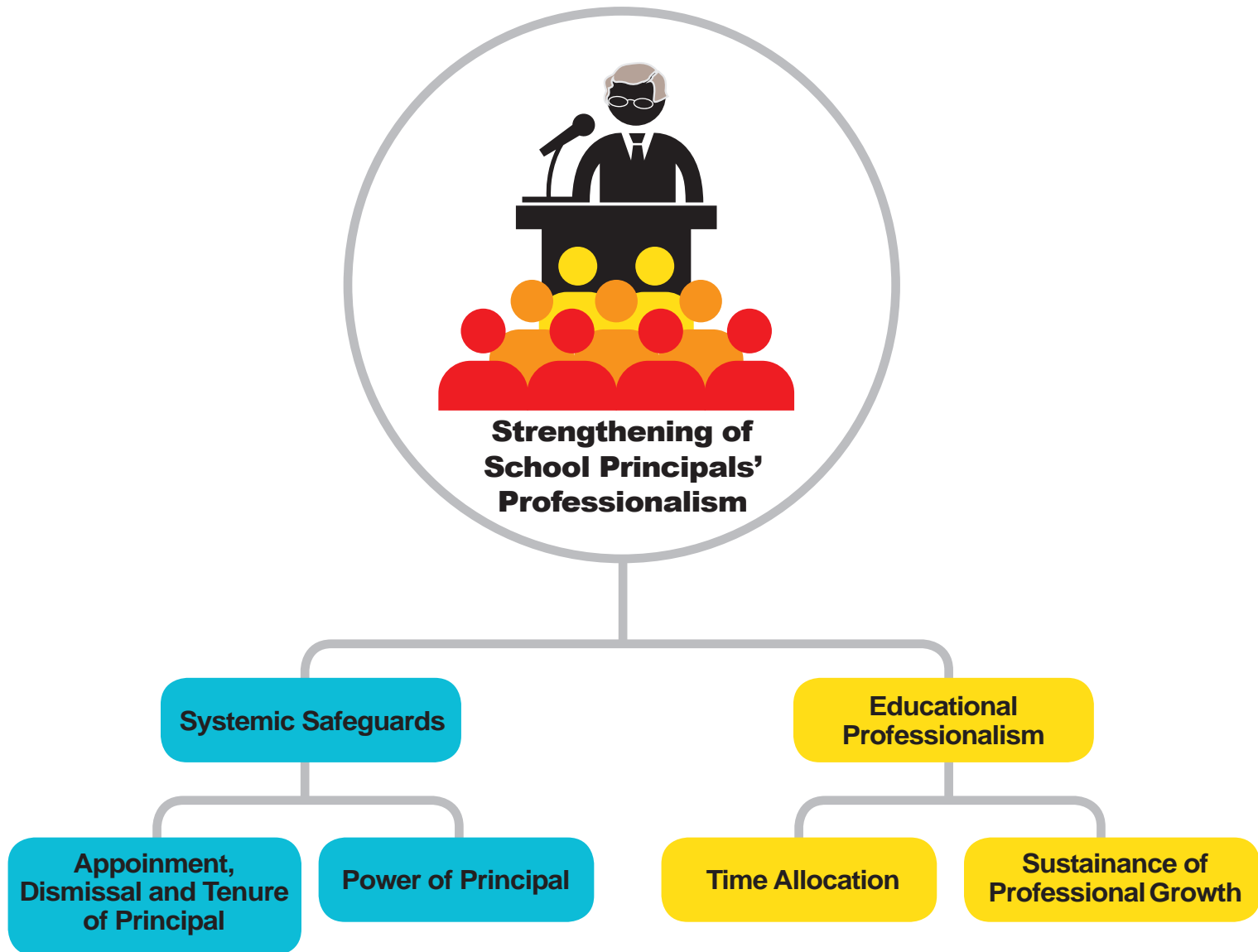
**Diagram 18: Promotion of Board Member Literacy: Theory and Practice**

9.1.1.1. The scope of further education and the content of the curriculum may be divided into two categories: (1) values and beliefs, including mission for the school, educational principles and management beliefs; and (2) practice and decision-making, including limits of decision-making powers, scale and size of school, school finances and infrastructures.

9.1.1.2. Dong Zong should forward a Board Members Guidebook or Guidelines, as a standard reference for Independent Chinese Secondary Schools board members nationwide.

9.1.2. Strengthening the professional development of principals

Students' learning needs are corresponding to inconsistent changes all the while, thus school principals should adapt, lead and advance wisely with the times.



**Diagram 19: Strengthening of School Principals' Professionalism**

9.1.2.1. Systemic safeguards: The school principal's appointment, dismissal and tenure should be regulated by clear stipulations in the school constitution and written agreement. The principal's powers should also be regulated, where Dong Zong should refer to the realities of each Independent Chinese Secondary School and formulate a set of rules informing the principal's powers, as reference for each school.

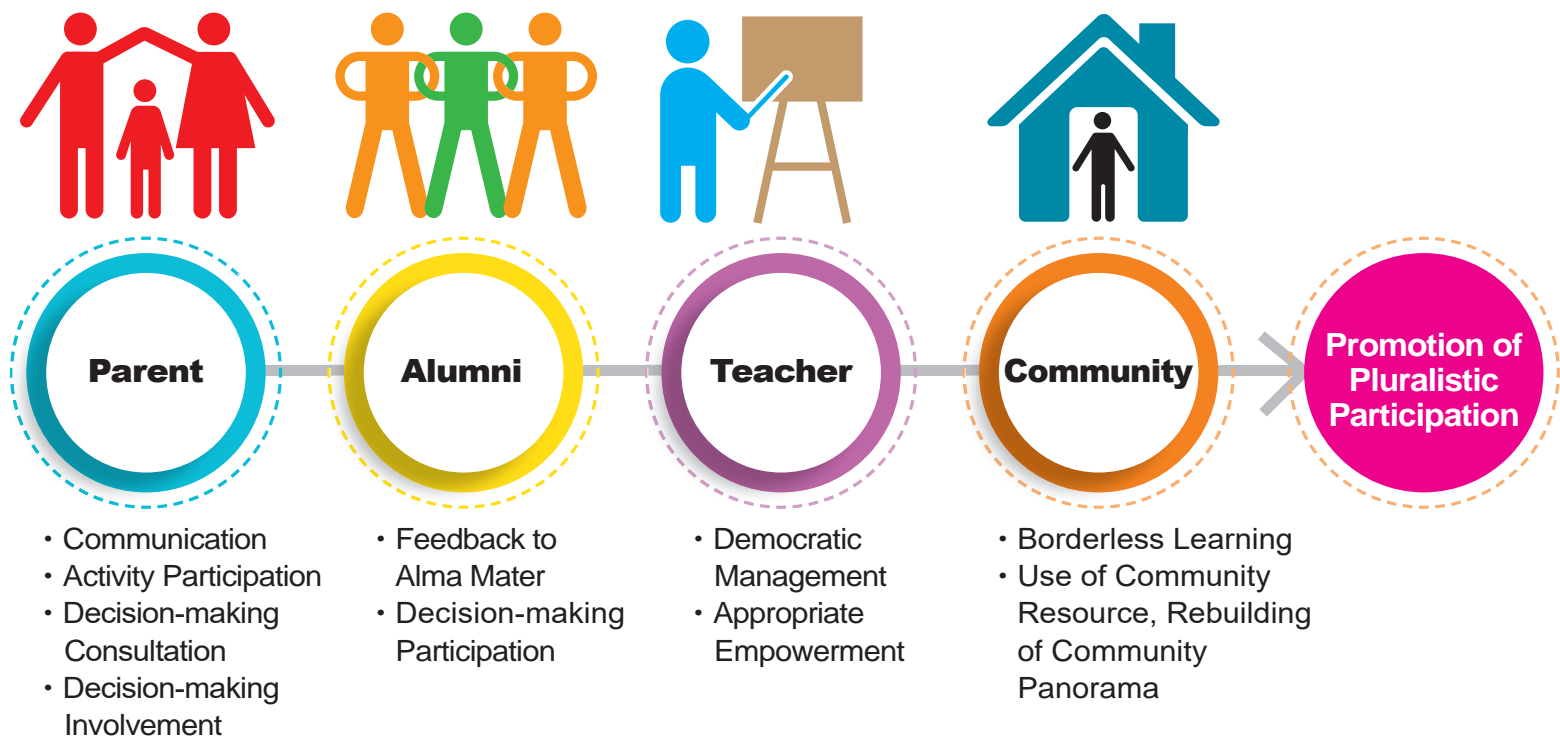
9.1.2.2. Continuous professional growth: Dong Zong should provide Independent Chinese Secondary School principals with a continuing professional development programme that meets the needs of current times. School principals should establish a professional learning online network for mutual support, such as the 'Principals Group', or anything the like. Incumbent and retired Independent Chinese Secondary School principals who are experienced and competent should be valued, where they may be offered important roles in the continuing professional growth programme for incumbent principals.

## 9.2. Exploring Resources

Resources are prerequisites for reforms, and the support and assistance from various members of the society would be wanting if more resources were called upon to sustain the education reforms. Therefore, in terms of channelling and utilising resources from society, the participation of parents and alumni, co-operation between schools and the support system are all decisive avenues and means.

### 9.2.1. Promoting pluralistic participation

Major stakeholders (teachers, alumni, parents) are allowed to participate in school affairs subject to availability, where the school may receive the expertise and assistance from the stakeholders in order to generate better educational welfare for the students altogether.



**Diagram 20: Promotion of Pluralistic Participation**

9.2.1.1. Parents: The parents' participation in school affairs may be understood through four levels: (1) Communication; (2) Assistance and participation in school activities; (3) Consultation on decision-making; and (4) Participation in decision-making. Each school should take the initiative to lead parents to participate in school affairs according to the school's respective circumstances.

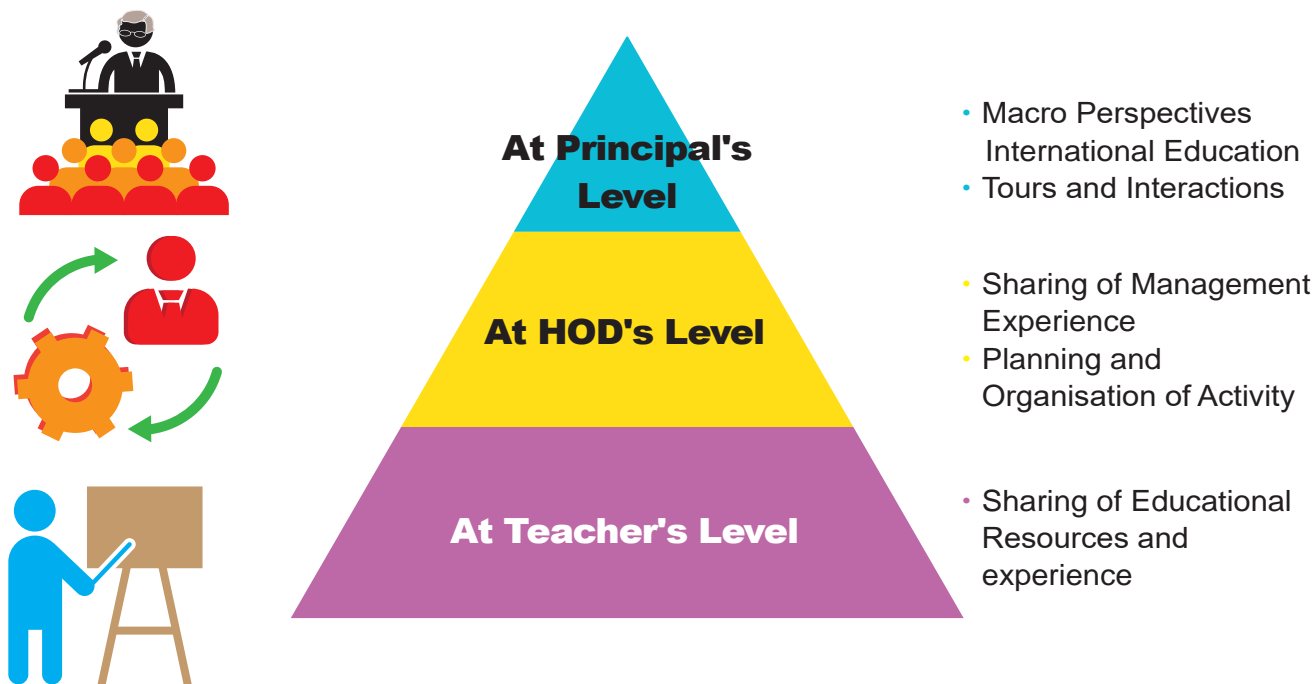
9.2.1.2. Alumni: Alumni are the biggest resource of a school. Therefore, the board should reserve a few seats in the committee for alumni representatives, so that they may be given proper avenues in decision-making for the benefit and advancement of the school.

9.2.1.3. Teachers: Teachers are at the front lines, by including them is to allow them to have a better understanding of the learning needs of their students. Therefore, the principal and school management should empower the decision-making on important school matters to the staff if need be.

9.2.1.4. Other community members and organisations: The school should fully utilise community resources to improve the development of the school and transform the school culture. Therefore, members of the board should consist of important local Chinese association representatives and prominent community leaders, and should be properly structured.

9.2.2. Promoting collaboration between schools

The purpose of encouraging co-operation between schools is to break away from the mentality of a single school utilising only its own resources. In practice, larger Independent Chinese Secondary Schools should take the first proactive step in such initiative.



**Diagram 21: Intra-school Collaboration**

9.2.2.1. At the principal's level: When promoting exchange between schools, the principal should also be attentive to the macro-issues regarding Independent Chinese Secondary Schools. Initially, there should be regular meal gatherings for networking among principals to foster closer relationships and establish a foundation for deeper co-operation. The annual teacher and student activities for the region (training, sharing and competitive exchange) should also have a rotation system in place.

9.2.2.2. At the head of department's level: Knowledge exchange includes sharing and imparting experiences in education management, sharing and discussions on classroom or subject teaching, and even the planning of various competitions and learning by observation activities. Regular gatherings should also be held if possible.

9.2.2.3. At the teacher's level: The teachers for each subject should receive encouragement and support through the formation of professional learning groups for teachers between schools with the employment of online technology. Social activities such as meal gatherings and outings for teachers between schools should also be encouraged.

9.2.3. To perfect the support system

The promotion and implementation of education reform is a massive task, hence Independent Chinese Secondary Schools should seek after an even more impeccable support system on the basis of existing solid foundations, to ensure the steady development of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools.



**Diagram 22: Perfection of Support System**

9.2.3.1. Dong Zong and the Dong Jiao Zong MICSS Working Committee: The Working Committee should ensure correct understanding in schools and the public towards education reform, from which a strong support system can eventually be formed. In addition, changes in environment, and organisational structures as well as the eventual need for education professionalisation urge the Working Committee of Dong Zong to review its position, structure and functions constantly. In this vein, Dong Zong should engage in capability building, enhance its organisational functions, promote its operational mechanisms, bolster its human resources and take the leading role in the education reform of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools.



9.2.3.2. Member States : Each member state should maintain a close working relationship with Dong Zong and the MICSS Working Committee, and implement the policies of the Working Committee in all schools. Likewise, each member state should also maximise its own functions, organisational functions and operational mechanisms, acting as enablers and facilitators in the education reform of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools in each state. They should also set up funds to give rise to the education reforms of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools.

9.2.3.3. All members of society: Independent Chinese Secondary Schools need to think seriously about the development and generation of more diverse resources. Furthermore, the schools may seek institutional funding from the central government and raise funds online, and set up an education reform fund for Independent Chinese Secondary Schools. In terms of education professionalisation, the academic standards for education in Independent Chinese Secondary Schools may be improved through the consolidation of academic resources of educational organisations and tertiary institutions locally and abroad.

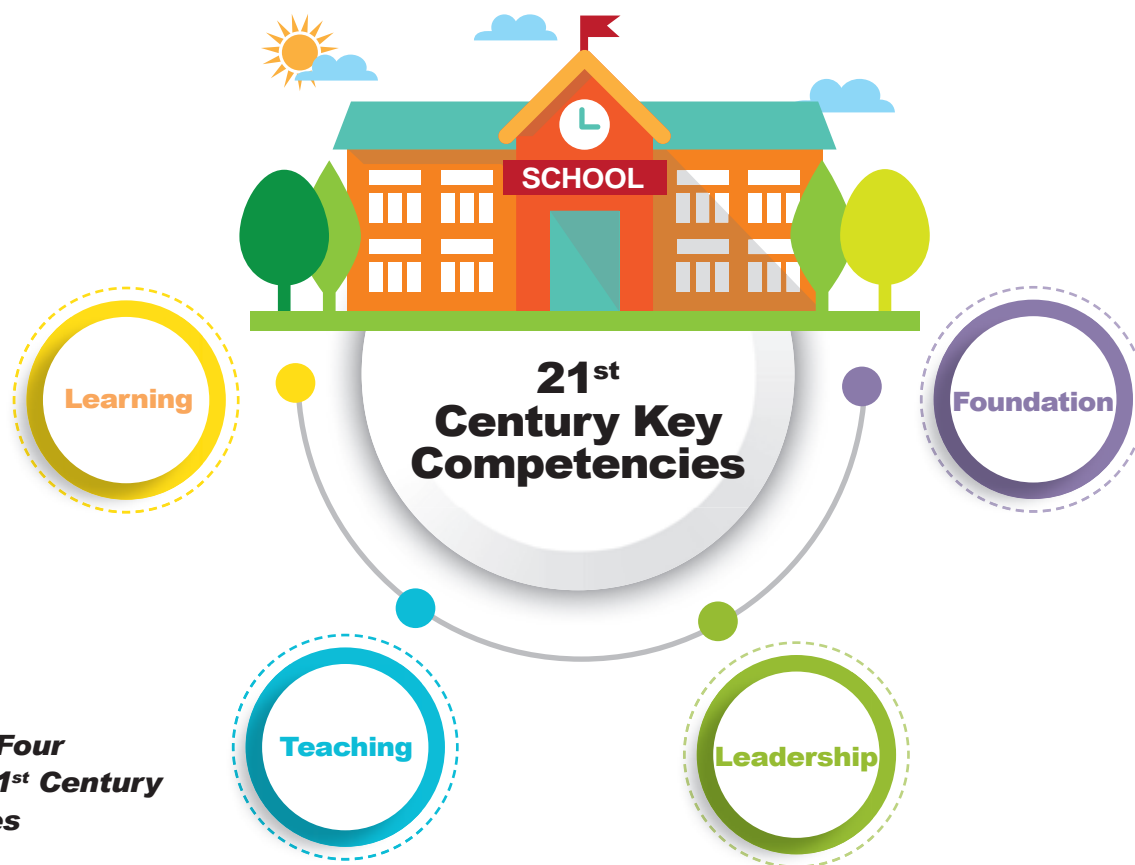
9.2.3.4. Supporting smaller-scale Independent Chinese Secondary Schools: The smaller classes at smaller-scale Independent Chinese Secondary Schools<sup>③</sup> are more conducive as they bring about a more humanised and personalised teaching. Notwithstanding the luxury, these school operators in essence are confronted with challenges and constraints in terms of survival, especially schools with fewer than 150 students in population. Several factors attributed to the difficulties faced by smaller-scale Independent Chinese Secondary Schools: (1) Geographical location; (2) Parents' choice; and (3) Social attitudes. In general, weaker learners abound in Independent Chinese Secondary Schools and it is a normalcy. The recommendations with regard to this are: (1) To form a teaching support team; and (2) To foster collaboration between schools in the region.

③ *The smaller-scale Independent Chinese Secondary Schools referred to here are those with fewer than 300 students.*

# 10

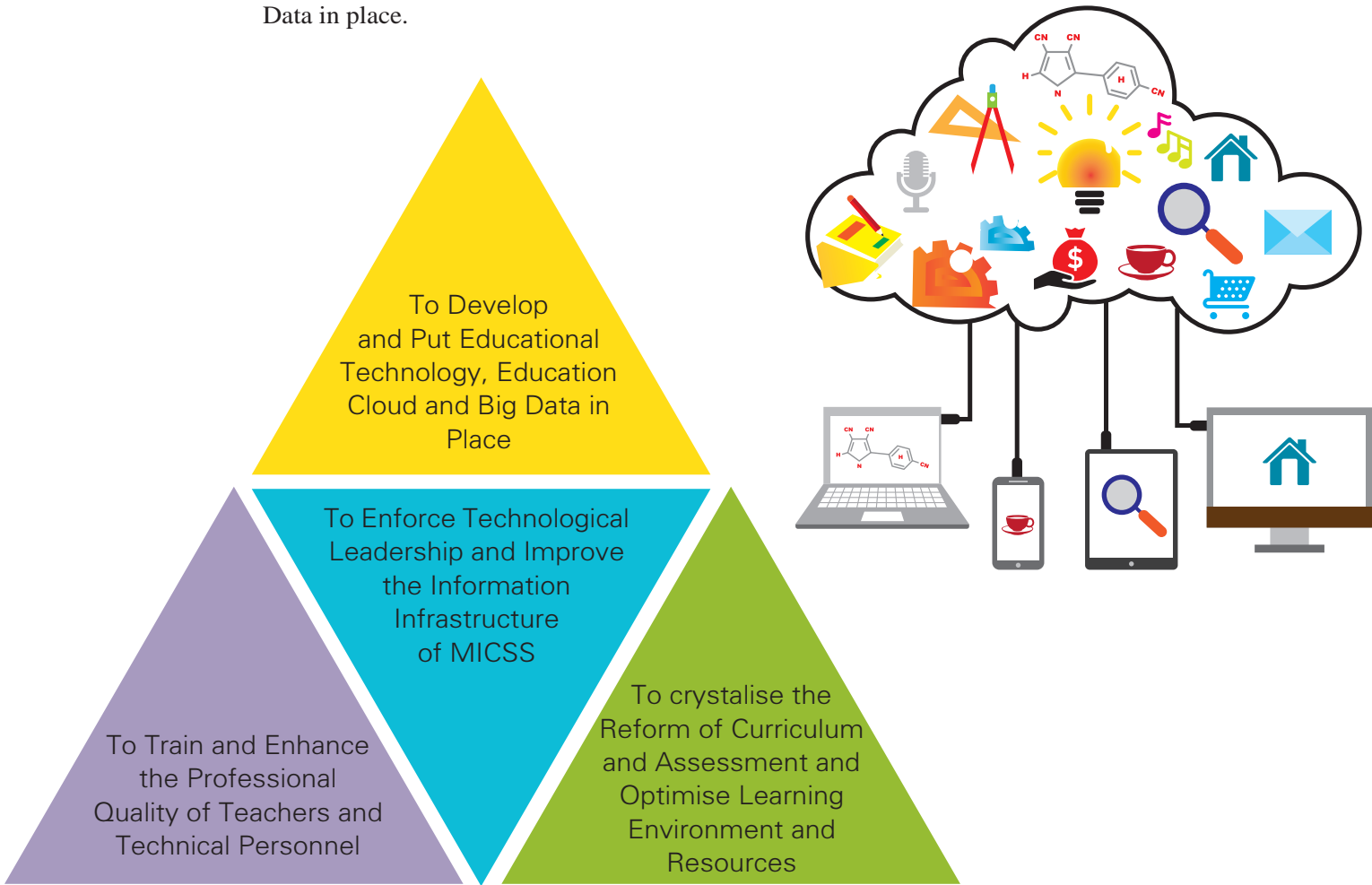
## Information Technology: Incorporation into Teaching

The education policies and blueprints of various countries have all been formulated based on the considerations of students' learning, teachers' teaching, school policies and infrastructures, which inform their planning and implementation. It is hoped that, through the correlation and operation of the four orientations, including the support of information technology, we can develop the core literacies of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



**Diagram 23: The Four  
Orientations of 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
Key Competencies**

- 10.1. The issues faced by Independent Chinese Secondary Schools are as follows: (1) The immediacy to enhance understanding in educational technology development and technological leadership; (2) Disparities in infrastructures and digital set-up; (3) Shortage of teachers and professional technical personnel; and (4) Students' weak foundations on knowledge, skills and literacies in information technology application.
- 10.2. Recommendations for Reform
- 10.2.1. Goals: (1) To strengthen technological leadership, and improve the information infrastructure of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools; (2) To train and enhance the professional literacies of teachers and technical personnel; (3) To implement curricular and assessment reforms, and improve the learning environment and resources; and (4) To put the use and development of educational technology, the Education Cloud, and Big Data in place.



**Diagram 24: The Four Objectives of MICSS Information Technology Reform**

10.2.2. Strategies: (1) To establish technological leadership and information infrastructure, viz., strengthening the school's knowledge and competencies in technological leadership, formulating policies for information technology development, setting up funds for information technology development, and implementing plans for the development of information infrastructure; (2) Deployment of personnel and promoting professionalism: hiring more staff with core competencies for teaching and technology, to train information technology teachers with professional competencies, and to enhance teachers' abilities to apply information technology; (3) Curricular, assessment and learning resources, that is, to incorporate the training of STEAM and 4C competencies in school-based curricula; and (4) Based on educational technology, the Education Cloud, and Big Data to formulate mechanisms to effectively build in the application of educational technology, blend technology into the teaching models, form Education Cloud platforms, and develop Big Data analysis and use.

## Technological Application Strategies

---

1

### Technological Leadership and Information Infrastructure

- Enforcement of Technological Leadership Efficacy
- Planning of IT Development Policy
- Setting Up of IT Development Foundation
- Implementation of Information Infrastructure Plan



### Deployment of Personnel and Professionalism

- Recruitment of Technology Informed Teachers
- Nurture of Professional Information Teachers
- Nurture of Professional Technicians
- Promotion of Teachers' Information Teaching Competence

2

# 3

## Curriculum and Learning Resources

- School Formulated Curriculum, STEAM and 4C Competence
- Provision of Optimised Learning Environment and Resources



## Education Technology, Education Cloud and Big Data

- Education Technology Application
- Development of Technology Incorporation in Teaching
- Formation of Education Cloud Platform
- Analysis of Big Data and Application Resources

# 4

**Diagram 25: The Constructs of IT Application Strategies**

# 11

## Reform Principles and Strategies

### 11.1. Principles of Reform

- (1) Student-centred Learning
- (2) Education Without Discrimination
- (3) Holistic Learning
- (4) All Rounding Mobilisation

### 11.2. Strategies for Implementation

#### 11.2.1. Prioritisation

- (1) Enhance the professional standards of principals and teachers;
- (2) Improve the working conditions of teachers;
- (3) Reform curricular structures; and
- (4) Reform the UEC

#### 11.2.2. Comprehensive Considerations

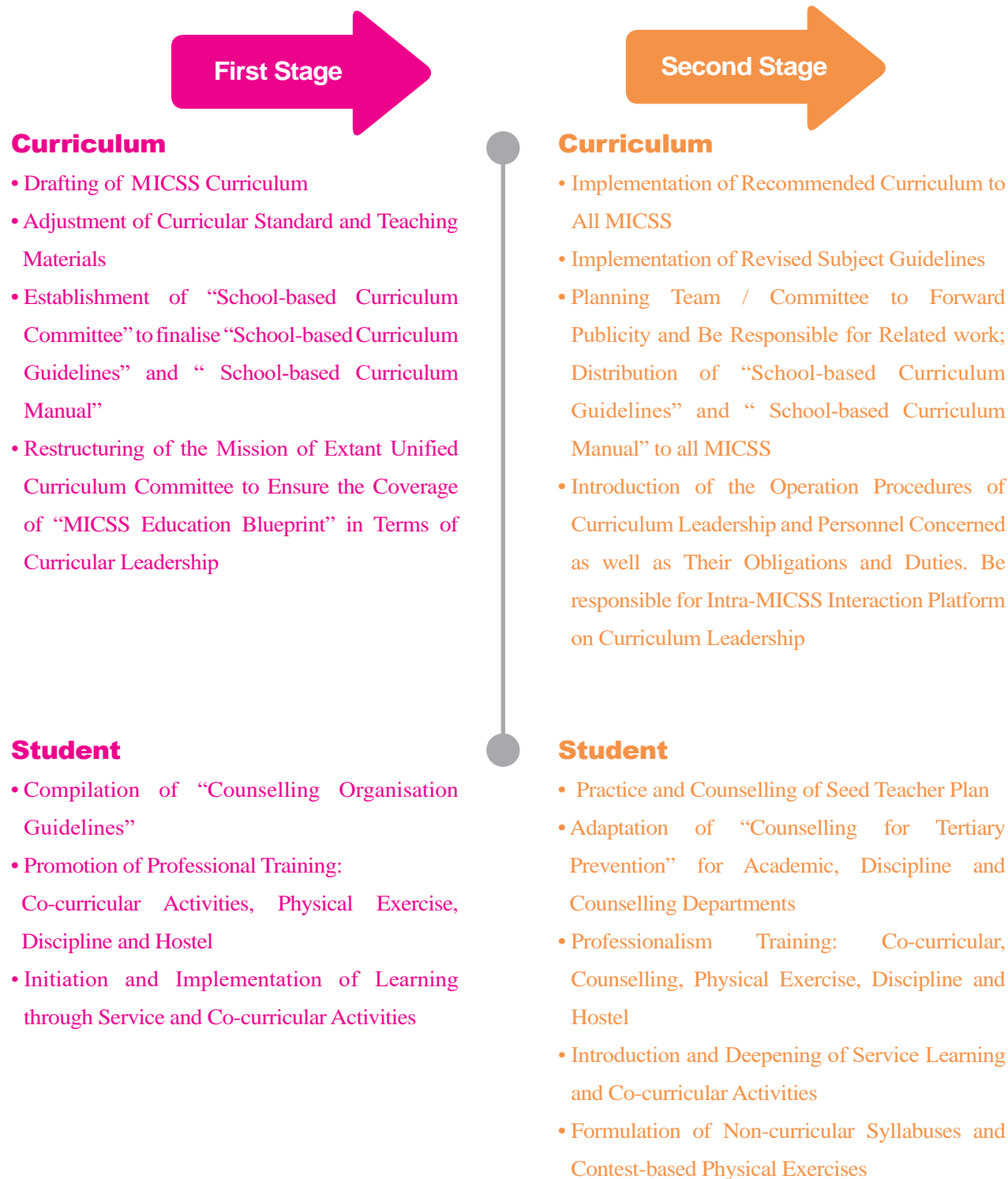
#### 11.2.3. Gradual Progression

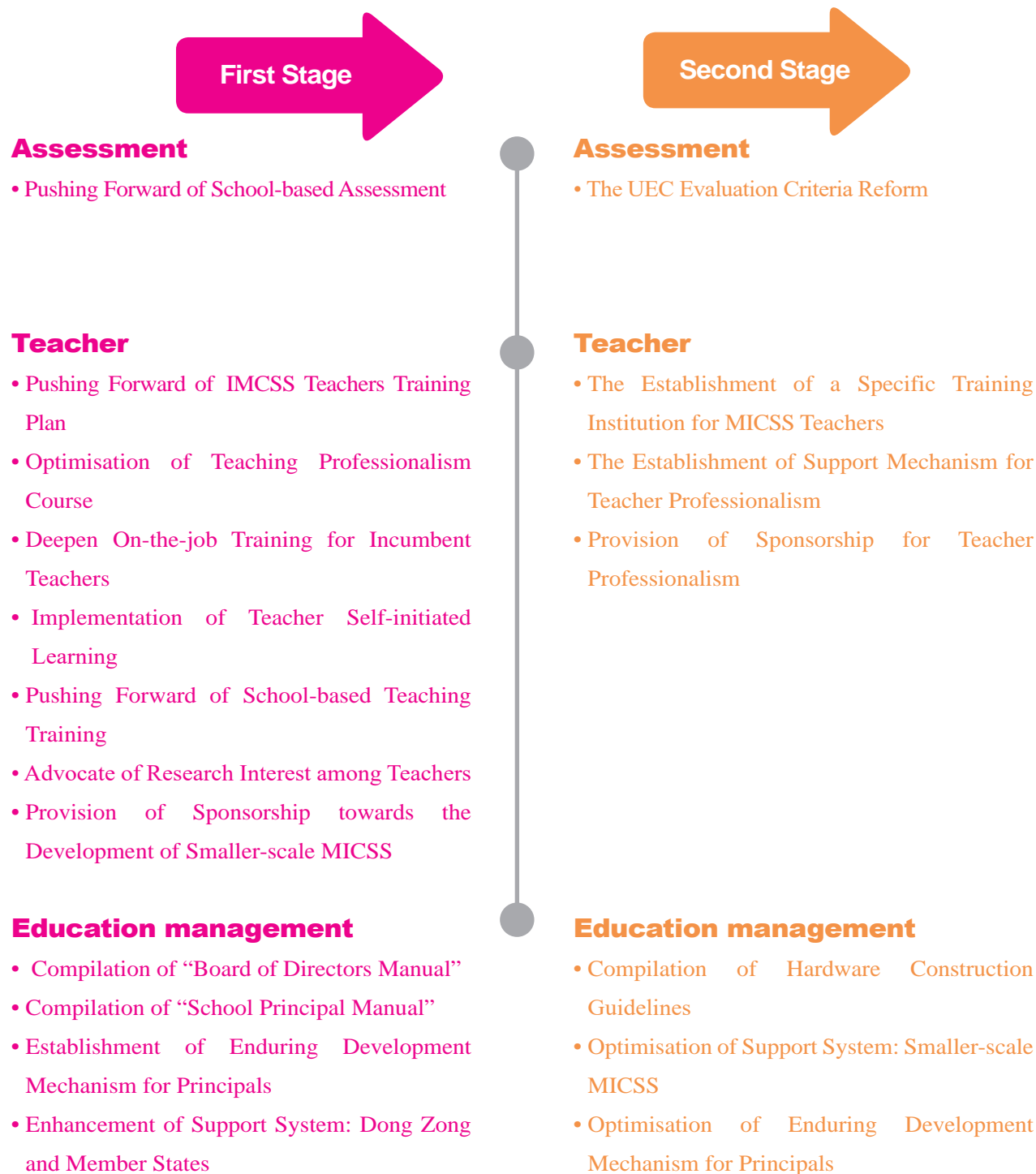
#### 11.2.4. Focused Trials

#### 11.2.5. To establish mechanisms for sustainable education reforms

#### 11.2.6. To increase the input of resources

11.3. Progress Timetable









### First Stage

#### Technology Application

- Formulation of Information Infrastructure Reference
- Formulation of Reference for the Integration of Technology in Teaching
- Formulation of Reference for Teachers' Information Competence
- Establishment of Cloud Education Platform

### Second Stage

#### Technology Application

- Provision of Assistance on Educational Technology Application
- Provision of Assistance on the Integration of Technology in Teaching
- Practice of Cloud Education Platform

# Closing Remarks

Since Dong Zong officially initiated its ‘Malaysia Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Education Blueprint’ project on 15 May 2016 and set up an ad hoc project team for the task, more than two years has been taken to bring it to completion.

During that period, the team had made research visits to places such as Hong Kong and Shanghai to collect materials and information for the drafting of the said Blueprint. In addition, the ‘National Survey Project on Independent Chinese Secondary Schools’ has likewise been conducted as a departure point for the drafting of the Blueprint in order to acquire an accurate and thorough understanding of the current state of the schools.

The ‘Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Education Blueprint’ consultation draft was forwarded to stakeholders on 6 August 2017 aiming to garner feedback from various parties, on which discussions and exchanges took place later during the ‘National Exchange Session for Board Members and Principals of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools’ held from 25 to 27 November in the same year. Subsequently, the project team made revisions to the consultation draft based on the received feedbacks and proposals, and the finalised draft was released eventually on 7 July 2018.

Apart from all members of the project team, the successful completion of the ‘Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Education Blueprint’ is also the efforts of the support and guidance of the members of the Academic Advisory Committee, School Advisory Committee, and the board members, principals and teachers of Independent Chinese Secondary Schools nationwide. Further, the fund-raising gala for the Education Development Fund of the Malaysia’s Independent Chinese Secondary Schools Education Blueprint was indeed well received, where the 5 million mark was exceeded with a total of RM5.23 million raised. This actually helped establish a solid financial base for the implementation of educational reform for Independent Chinese Secondary Schools in this country.

We herewith, as a final note, extend our heartfelt gratitude and acknowledgement to all parties who have rendered assistance physically and financially to this seminal endeavour.





**马来西亚华校董事联合会总会（董总）**  
**United Chinese School Committees' Association of Malaysia (Dong Zong)**

Blok A, Lot 5, Seksyen 10, Jalan Bukit, 43000 Kajang, Selangor D.E., Malaysia.

Tel: 603-8736 2337 Fax: 603-8736 2779

Homepage: [www.dongzong.my](http://www.dongzong.my) Email: [support@dongzong.my](mailto:support@dongzong.my)

June 2018