

Speech by Acting SED at Ying Wa College's speech day (English only)

Following is the speech by the Acting Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, at Ying Wa College's speech day today (December 14):

Mr Cheng (Principal of Ying Wa College, Mr Allan Cheng), Reverend Chan (School Pastor, Reverend Chan Tak-ye), Professor Chan (School Supervisor, Professor Chan Ying-shing), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It is my great pleasure to join you on this memorable occasion.

I would like first to extend my warmest congratulations to all graduates. Today marks the completion of your secondary school education, as well as the beginning of a new chapter in your lives. Apart from the guidance of your principal and teachers, your parents' support and love over the years are also indispensable to your accomplishments. On this special day, you should all say a big thank you to them.

This year sees the 200th anniversary of Ying Wa College. The school's achievements over the last two centuries are exemplary. Founded in 1818, Ying Wa College is one of the leading schools in Hong Kong renowned for its history and tradition. Throughout these years, the College has nurtured generations of outstanding graduates who have played a significant part in the continuous development of Hong Kong.

In keeping with the school motto of "Steadfast Faith, Beneficent Deeds", Ying Wa College has strived to provide a conducive learning environment for students to develop their diverse potential and positive attitude towards life. The school's devotion to fostering an atmosphere that encourages the all-round development of students is widely acclaimed by both parents and students. Besides, with the improvement to school facilities and addition of a new annex to the campus, including a swimming pool and a running track, students are now offered even more opportunities for multifarious learning experiences through a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Over the past two centuries, Ying Wa College has attached great importance to the provision of diversified learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom. As a school under the Direct Subsidy Scheme, the College has made effective and flexible use of its financial resources to provide students with different learning opportunities and create a multi-cultural learning environment. Some shining examples include events organised for celebrating the school's 200th anniversary such as the Bicentennial Christian Leadership Training Trip in Toronto, the Bicentennial Concert, as well as the Conference on Sino-Western Cultural Exchange and the Development of Christianity in China. These activities have not only enhanced students' sense of belonging to the school, but also broadened their horizons.

The delivery of holistic education offered by Ying Wa College and its team of professional educators has successfully equipped students with the essential skills that future leaders should possess and developed in them the qualities of being "Simple and Unadorned, Outstanding but Humble". For all graduates, regardless if you choose to further your studies or start your career, you will definitely meet new challenges in future. Irrespective of the path you take, there will always be ample opportunities for you to learn. The knowledge, values and skills that you have acquired in school lay a solid foundation for your new ventures, playing a pivotal role in the community and contributing to the sustainable development of Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government believes that young people are the pillars of society and the valuable assets of Hong Kong. Government expenditure on education is the most meaningful investment for our future. To create a caring, inspiring and satisfying learning environment for students, we have introduced a series of new measures covering different aspects to further improve the quality of education. From the 2019/20 school year, we will provide public sector schools and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme with additional resources to strengthen their administrative support, and Ying Wa College is among the schools that can benefit from this initiative. Another significant measure is the provision of a new recurrent Life-wide Learning Grant starting from the 2019/20 school year. The aim is to support schools in significantly enhancing life-wide learning activities so that students can learn in authentic contexts and expand their knowledge.

Life planning education is also an important element in secondary school education. As announced in the 2018 Policy Address, the HKSAR Government will continue to support secondary schools in implementing life planning education and related guidance services. In parallel, we will strengthen the professional development of teachers and mobilise more business organisations to provide career exploration activities for students through district development networks so as to help secondary school students better understand different careers and prepare them for further studies and future employment.

With the recent development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, more promising opportunities will generate for Hong Kong's young people including our graduates today. To this end, the HKSAR Government provides an average of more than 70 000 annual places for Hong Kong young people to participate in exchange and internship programmes in Mainland China and overseas to be organised, funded or co-ordinated by the Government to enhance our young people's understanding of national development and opportunities on the Mainland and broaden their international outlook.

For graduates today, you must learn to adapt to the ever-changing world and be ready to face new challenges by acquiring new knowledge and skills. It is also important to gain more exposure before making a career choice. Your journey of lifelong learning has just begun. Be sure to seize every opportunity and be prepared for challenges ahead.

On this note, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the principal and teachers of Ying Wa College for their dedicated efforts in offering quality education. I also wish the College continuous success in the decades ahead. To our graduates today, I wish you every success in your future endeavours, and to everyone here a happy and healthy new year. Thank you.