

香港資優教育學院  
The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education

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Press Release

Serving the Gifted Community in Hong Kong:  
The HKAGE's First Year of Operation

On 18 February 2009 The HKAGE will be one year old and in recognition of this it is releasing some facts about the nature, level and quality of its services so that the public has a better idea about what has been done and achieved in the first year.

The basic structure of the Academy consists of four frontline divisions and one support division:

- **Parent Support**
- **Student Programmes and Services**
- **Teacher Professional Development**
- **Research**
- **Corporate Services**

It is only since September 2008 that the Academy has been fully operational in its service delivery. From February – August 2008 much time was spent of identifying and developing the infrastructure needed to support and sustain the organizations service delivery model.

Dr Stephen Tommis, the HKAGE Executive Director, says *“now that the HKAGE is beginning to start its delivery phase of development we will be concentrating on making sure that we offer what our stakeholders most need at a level of service that is of the highest quality. All of our key stakeholder groups have been consulted about their needs and we make every effort to ensure that our service providers fully evaluate the quality of what they do. We will constantly seek to improve our services”.*

**Website (statistics for 9 months from 11 May 2008 to 15 Feb 2009)**

Please note that our website is in the early stages of development but already there has been a significant number of hits. It is our intention to develop the site so that it becomes fully interactive for each of the key zones.

- there have been more than 258,000 page views over this period and an average of nearly 6 pages read for each visit – indicating that most visitors to our website come to find information and they stay to view several pages each time.
- The most viewed pages are: Student Zone: 41%, Parent Zone: 17%, Teacher Zone: 13%
- There is a fairly equal division between the two main languages: Chinese pages: 46%; English pages: 54% - but with a slight emphasis on English
- Most hits (96%) come from Hong Kong and there are increasing numbers of visitors from Greater China, UK North America and Australasia
- For every new visitor there are 1.3 returning visitors, indicating that our website is sufficiently useful for people to want to revisit

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**PARENT SUPPORT DIVISION**

- Local (Hong Kong) Seminars and Talks by HKAGE Staff. To date nearly the Academy has reached out to nearly 2000 parents in their own community, mostly through visits to schools. Examples include: Emmanuel Primary School, The Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong, Lock Tao Secondary School, Ma Ko Pan Memorial College
- The Consultation Centre opened in late September 2008 to provide information and advice to parents through a free phone Helpline and email. The service is available for parents of any age child. For parents of children with more complex issues face-to-face consultations are offered. The Consultation Centre is staffed with trained Education Advisor and Educational Psychologist. To date more than 150 parents and gifted children have been served

<b>Helpline :</b>	(852) 3698 3947
<b>Email address:</b>	<a href="mailto:consultation@hkage.org.hk">consultation@hkage.org.hk</a>
<b>Operating hours:</b>	Monday to Friday 11.00a.m. – 12.30p.m., and 2.30p.m. – 4.30p.m. (closed on public holidays)

- In our role to provide awareness on giftedness as well as to equip parents with the relevant knowledge and skills in parenting the gifted, the HKAGE has also planned a series of learning events for parents. These include talks, seminars and workshops for parents. In-house specialists as well as invited speakers from various institutions will be invited to conduct these learning events. So far, about 600 parents have attended these learning events. The subsequent events have received overwhelming response from parents. Examples include: Parents seminar on the ABCs of Giftedness (282 attendees)
- A growing number of Fact and Information Sheets on the website – currently 28 in number
- Hong Kong Parents' Needs Analysis 2008 Report.  
As part of the Academy's overall policy of engaging with client stakeholders, information was collected from some of Hong Kong's parents of gifted children to help the Academy develop support in those areas most needed. The main objectives were
  - to identify those issues of most interest to parents
  - to determine the types of services thought to be most useful by parents

In addition to surveying parents through questionnaires, focus group discussions were held across the Territory to gather information. An Executive Summary of this Report is appended.

- All courses are placed on The HKAGE website for general information as well as the HKEdCity website

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**STUDENT PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES DIVISION**

This division is tasked with planning and organizing face-to-face programmes for local students aged between 10 and 18 with a focus on secondary school pupils as well as developing a facility for online learning on the Academy's website.

- On taking over the organization of programmes from EDB there has been a smooth transition with no disruption to the service
- The Orientation Day and the first programme were launched 2 to 3 months earlier than in previous years
- Programmes offered by the Academy are well received by student member. It is anticipated that there will be about 3000 student participants in the Academy student programmes this academic year made up as follows:
  - About 700 students have taken part in the programmes organized to date
  - About 1400 students are expected to participate in the rest of the programmes this academic year
  - About 900 students are expected to take part in a range of talks and seminars
- More students have been successfully admitted to the Academy in this school year than last year (42% higher than in 2007/08)
- more comprehensive programmes, workshops and seminars are going to be launched shortly and these will include a programme to support the social and emotional development of gifted students

**TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION**

The HKAGE has successfully conducted 4 thematic courses for teachers here. These thematic courses are amongst the range of Teacher Professional Development activities planned to empower and encourage educators in making provisions for gifted learners. The various activities fit into an overall development framework for educators in gifted education.

- A structured and varied programme of courses is being/has been planned to aid teachers' understanding of gifted issues. For example, in December 2008 and January 2009 a total of 458 teachers attended thematic courses in gifted education. Examples include:
  - *"Gifted Underachievers and Strategies to Help Them"*
  - *"Overview of Strategies and Practices on Curriculum Differentiation"*
  - *"Curriculum Differentiation Strategies and Practices"*
- A number of networking meetings have been held with outside organizations such as HK University, HK Baptist University, Chinese University, HK Institute of Education, HK Polytechnic University
- Questionnaire surveys on quality of provision are designed and are conducted for each of the courses/programmes run by the Division and fed into subsequent planning.

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**RESEARCH DIVISION**

- Research to date has mainly taken the form of monitoring quality assurance and attendance figures for all divisions in their programme and service delivery. It is the belief of the HKAGE that **quality** of delivery is more important than **quantity**, though it recognizes also the scale at which it needs to operate if it is to reach all stakeholders.

**NETWORKING IN THE WIDER GIFED COMMUNITY**

In a globalised world it is important that any organisation extends its horizons and reaches out to the wider community. Listed below are some of the opportunities that have been taken where the HKAGE has been represented:

From	To	Conference/Visit	Oragnised by	City/Country	Presentation
21/05/2008	24/05/2008	4th APEC Forum for the Gifted in Korea	APEC Mentoring Center for the Gifted in Science	<b>Korea</b>	Yes
14/07/2008	18/07/2008	10th Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness	APCG Conference	<b>Singapore</b>	Yes
22/10/2008	25/10/2008	S.T.Yau High School Mathematics Awards in Beijing	First S.T Yau High School Math Awards	<b>Beijing</b>	-
23/11/2008	23/11/2008	Visit to Nanshan Foreign Language School, Shenzhen	N.A.	<b>Shenzhen</b>	-
26/11/2008	28/11/2008	Nurturing Potential - Achieving Excellence	Philippine Association for the Gifted	<b>Manila</b>	Yes

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## Annex

### The HKAGE NEEDS ANALYSIS OF PARENTS WITH GIFTED CHILDREN – Executive Summary

#### Findings

We surveyed 500 parents through questionnaires. Parents were asked to provide suggestions on future seminar topics that would interest them. Some were also asked to rate the perceived helpfulness of three types of parent services.

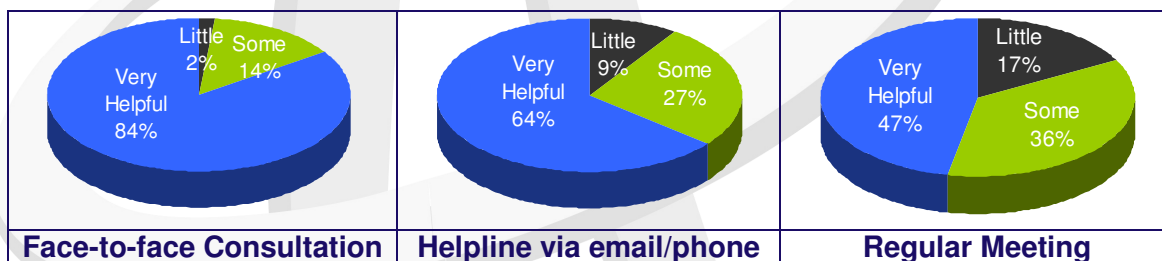
#### Seminar topics preferred by parents

The topics most commonly suggested by parents are:

- **Developing a Gifted Children's Potential** e.g. How to inculcate critical thinking and nurture creativity
- **Social and Emotional Needs of Gifted Children** e.g. Understanding gifted children's affective characteristics, social and emotional development
- **Gifted children with issues/difficulties** e.g. Supporting gifted children with learning disability/dual exceptionalty
- **Home-School Collaboration** e.g. How to communicate with school to enhance the study environment for the gifted child

#### Types of services considered useful to parents

In a group of 64 parents, they were asked to rate the perceived helpfulness of three types of services.



Face-to-face consultation has been perceived as the most helpful type of service, with 84% participants rating it "Very helpful", followed by Helpline via email/phone (64%) and Parent regular meeting (47%). Parents generally perceived all these services to be of at least some help, since none of them rated any of these services as "Not helpful at all".

#### Focus Group Discussion

From the focus group discussions, parents identified the challenges they faced and shared what they hoped the HKAGE could offer them; they also provided some suggestions. The discussed topics included

- Parents' perceived role in gifted education,
- Home-school collaboration",
- "Hot Topic" seminars for parents

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They were forthcoming in providing information and suggestions. Parents warmly welcomed the HKAGE's role in providing support to parents of gifted children.

**Conclusion**

The HKAGE will continue to seek inputs from the stakeholders. This is because the HKAGE strongly believes in the significant role the parents play in nurturing the gifted children. The inputs from the parents will help shape the services delivered to them. From the voices of the parents, we established a consultation centre providing a Helpline as well as designed a series of learning events in the HKAGE Parent Education programme including seminars and workshops on understanding giftedness, needs of gifted children and parenting skills.

**END OF PRESS RELEASE**

**Dr Stephen Tommis**  
**17 February 2009**