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## Abolition of primary one exam 'reasonable'

The abolition of the primary one entrance examination is "not unreasonable," while the introduction of the new points system is highly commendable, a career counsellor said yesterday.

The director of the Challenging Career Counselling and Consultancy, Mr Lyon Lee, said the points system makes clear the criteria for student selection.

This opinion, however, is contrary to a current view attacking the points system as "encouraging elitism," but favours the replacement of

the entrance examination by a district-based allocation system.

Mr Lee told a lunch meeting of the Chung Chi Executive Club that "schools can no longer use various excuses to reject students.

"In the worst situation, the most a principal can do to exercise bias is to give or take away a maximum of 10 discretionary points from a student.

"This is more impartial than the examination system, because who can guarantee that a school assesses a stu-

dent fairly?"

He said one merit of the new admission system is that from now on, parents will not have to go through a school-hunt for a primary one place for their children.

Under the new system, each student can apply to only one school. If rejected, he can then apply through the Education Department, stating his choice of schools.

Mr Lee said ever since the early 1960s, the Education Department has encouraged mediocre standards through measures which disregard the quality of students.

Such measures include the abolition of the Secondary School Entrance Examination and the requirement that form five students need five passes to get a secondary school certificate.

"Students automatically go on to secondary school regardless of their academic achievement. Good students are not given distinction, and bad students are not punished.

"The result is a general decline of standards," Mr Lee said.

He said the new admission system might even create more so-called "prestigious" schools.

He defines these schools as those which have existed for a long time and have a good reputation.

"Because this system gives priority to students with 'connections' with such schools, students and their relations will cling to these schools, causing them to expand or branch off.

If this happens, he explained, the offspring schools will most probably strive to have as good a reputation as the mother school, and as a result more "prestigious" schools will be created.

"The idea of education is to have as many good schools as possible, not to draw distinguished students from such schools and put them in mediocre ones," said Mr Lee.