

MIXING OF STUDENTS POSES PROBLEMS

Call for a review of school system

by
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A GOVERNMENT teaching staff union yesterday called for a review of the allocation scheme for Form I students as well as the setting up of remedial classes for less capable junior forms pupils.

The union said the compulsory nine-year free education system has put many would-not-be students into schools and has created a new category of students.

Ella To, the chairman of the Union of Graduate Officers in Government Secondary Schools, said teachers are now facing the challenge of developing new systems to cope with an extremely varied spectrum of junior forms students.

Speaking at a seminar, Mrs To said the mixing of students is further complicated in students' academic standards by the allocation system.

"As a result, we have experienced a slackening of discipline in schools and more students are coming up with behavioural problems," Mrs To said.

Under the allocation system, students are despatched to a certain school, not by their academic qualifications but by whether they live in the same district where the school is located. Form I students should not be subjected to this system to avoid disparity among them.

Mrs To said the Government should raise the ratio of teachers according to the number of students to enable teachers to pay more individual attention to their charges.

Au Pak-kuen, the union vice-chairman, echoed Mrs To's views, but said more

positive measures such as maintaining school discipline through well-planned moral education should be taken to redeem the situation.

Mr Au said moral education should be imparted more through recreational and educational activities instead through classroom indoctrination.

"We should try to make school environments a more attractive place to students," he said, pointing out that schools have a strong rival in entertainment spots such as billiard halls, discotheques and movie houses.

Meanwhile, sources said

the Government might establish a special committee on moral education under the Curriculum Development Committee.

Reverend Paul Tong, principal of Sheung Kung Hui Tang Shiu Kin Secondary School, who was also one of the speakers yesterday, said the best way to improve school discipline is to let students guide fellow students.

Rev Tong said students entrusted with the power to supervise their juniors could result in a stronger sense of responsibility and belonging on the part of other students.

Another speaker, Professor To Cho-ye, of the Chinese University, appealed to teachers to pay extend love and patience to

problem students. Professor To said a problem student might be the product of many factors and teachers should never use "high-power tactics" to handle them.

Though more research has to be conducted to the causes for juvenile delinquency, Professor To said, the problem might originate from parental neglect. According to a survey, he said, more than 65 per cent of Hongkong families have working fathers and mothers.

He also cited one other possible reason for juvenile delinquency is the free education system.

Needless to say, he added, consumerism and the money-oriented philosophy of Hongkong further poison youngsters' minds.