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29 bodies want language policy amended

THE 29 educational bodies asking the Examination Authority to reconsider the policy on the advanced level examination and the higher level examination will get a written answer at the end of this month.

This was revealed after yesterday's two-hour talk between the six representatives of the bodies and the two authority staff, the Secretary of the Hongkong Examinations Authority Derek Hogan and Deputy Secretary W.C. Chan.

The educational bodies believed the policy of the two examinations was to "step down" the status of Chinese language because a pass in Chinese language in the examinations would not be compulsory.

These organisations formed a united front to press for a revision of Hongkong's language education policy and the immediate abolition of the discriminatory policy towards Chinese language.

They have sent a letter to the authority

and it would be discussed at the meeting of the School Examination Advisory Board tomorrow.

"The board will make recommendations to the authority, which will then make the final decision, most probably at its meeting on Thursday," Mr Chan said.

He said yesterday's meeting was an informal discussions to exchange opinions.

"No solid solution was reached yesterday because we are not in the position to do so. Everything depends on the discussion among members of the authority," he said.

Chairman of the Professional Teachers Union, Szeto Wah, said he felt the authority was quite sincere and they would wait for the formal answer before taking any further action.

"There will be a general meeting on Saturday, during which we will brief all organisations concerned.

"We will also discuss the formation of a permanent organisation to take care of the standard and status of Chinese language in Hongkong," Mr Szeto Wah said.

He said the organisation was tentatively named as Concerned for Chinese Education Joint Committee, with the following aims:

- Ask that Chinese be used as teaching medium in secondary schools;
- Improve the teaching method in Chinese;
- Ask the Government to respect Chinese as an official language, not in words, but in deeds; and
- Encourage the use of Chinese in every aspect of society.

The six representatives of the education bodies at yesterday's meeting were the coordinator of the 29 organisations, Mr Szeto Wah; Urban Councillor and Chairman of the Society for Promotion of Chinese Education, Dr Denny Huang, representative of the HK Federation of Students, Lo

Ka-sing; President of the Chinese University Student Union, Wong Chi-sun; Mr Cheung Pik-to from the Hongkong University Student Union and Sister Helene O'Sullivan of the Maryknoll Sisters' Social Action Group.

Meanwhile, the Chinese University Student Union will hold a forum in Chungchi College this afternoon. Eight speakers have been invited.

They include the Principal of Ng Yuk Secondary School, Wu Yiu-fai; Mr Szeto Wah; Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Chinese University, John Gannon; Chairman of the Board of Studies of the Chinese Language and Literature Department, Chinese University, C.H. Sheung.

At the meeting, the CUSU will announce the number of teachers and students supporting its movement. Up to yesterday, there were more than 3,000 people signing their names.