

Hong Kong education chief urges teachers to reassess union membership in open letter

Friday 6 August 2021, by [CHAU Candice](#) (Date first published: 6 August 2021).

Kevin Yeung claimed the largest teachers' union pushed students and teachers into "breaking the law, getting arrested, and being jailed."

Teachers in Hong Kong should "ponder" whether the largest teachers' union in the city "can truly represent" them, Hong Kong's Secretary for Education Kevin Yeung wrote in an open letter to the city's educators on Thursday 5.

"We ask you all to consider carefully the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union's (HKPTU) actions and words in recent years, and ponder over whether they truly represent yourselves," the letter read.

The letter was issued to teachers after the Education Bureau cut ties with the union within hours of articles in the Chinese state-run People's Daily and news wire Xinhua slamming it as a "poisonous tumour" that must be "eradicated."

The union subsequently withdrew from the pro-democracy Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions as well as a global network of educators' unions, and had vowed to "focus on the rights and interests of the education sector."

HKPTU had also set up a working group for Chinese history and culture to foster "affection for home and country" among students.

'Fuel to the flames'

Yeung claimed in the letter that "the education profession had often been 'hijacked' in recent years," with an organisation "using the name of the education profession for political actions."

"Instead of saying no to the chaos that violates teachers' professionalism and ignores students' welfare, [the organisation] added fuel to the flames, and had directly or indirectly pushed some students and teachers to the point of no return of breaking the law, getting arrested, and being jailed."

The secretary wrote that he believed that the HKPTU was not the only one that could offer services, information, and assistance teachers needed.

"The Education Bureau will continue to work with stakeholders, listen to the opinion of frontline teachers, uphold professionalism, and walk hand-in-hand with you all to conduct education work, tackle the problem at root for Hong Kong education, and nurture together the younger generation."

Last month, the head of the city's **second largest teachers' union, the pro-Beijing Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers**, was handed a seat at the revamped election committee tasked with choosing the majority of the city's legislators and chief executive in the upcoming small-circle elections.

The right to form and join labour unions is protected by the Basic Law, the Hong Kong Bill of Rights and the national security law.

P.S.

<https://hongkongfp.com/2021/08/06/hong-kong-education-chief-urges-teachers-to-reassess-union-membership-in-open-letter/>