A re-engineering framework for total home-school partnership

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Parental involvement in school education has been strongly emphasized in effective schooling in current educational reforms in different parts of the world. The conception and practice of home-school co-operation may vary across contexts and cultures. In general, the traditional approach to home-school co-operation often emphasizes a division of labour between home and school. The school is mainly responsible for the children's cognitive development, while the family is mainly responsible for satisfying the children's material and emotional needs (Epstein, 1992), and these two functions may often be unrelated in practice, particularly in developing countries. The traditional relationship between home and school may be superficial and fragmentary and cannot promise real co-operation and effective education to students, whether in school or at home.

Although many educators and policy makers are coming to realize the importance of home-school partnership (e.g. Davies, 1991; Education Commission, 1992; Redding, 1991), many problems remain unresolved. For example, how the home-school relationship should be conceptualized and understood and how home-school co-operation should be developed more effectively are still subject to investigation. Responding to the gaps in theory building for understanding home-school partnership and facilitating its implementation, this paper aims to develop a theoretical framework that can provide a total conception of home-school partnership and can be used to re-engineer the existing superficial and fragmentary practice of home-school co-operation in both Hong Kong and international contexts. It is hoped that this framework could contribute to ongoing policy discussion, school practice, and further research on home-school partnership.

Demand for a new home-school partnership

In the recent decade, the education environment of Hong Kong and the Asia Pacific regions have undergone drastic changes. Parents have higher and more diverse expectations about school education and demand better school performance for their children. Because school education is basically financed by the taxpayers, there is also an increasing demand for accountability to the public and value for money (Education and Manpower Branch, 1991). This has forced schools to open more venues for parents to participate, to listen to their needs and suggestions, and to work co-operatively together to improve the school. Advances in information technology enable the mass media to penetrate deeply into family life and school education. This has significantly weakened the role of education provided to children in schools and families.

In this rapidly changing education environment, family education for children is facing many problems. For example, parents lack time and proper parental training to teach their children. They often do not understand their children well. Their parenting methods do not match the needs of the children. Previously, the family was a rather stable unit particularly in traditional Asian societies but now many family units are gradually disintegrating and have different types of family problems (e.g. single parent family, parent absence from the family, etc.). The children of these families lack parental care and have limited chance for a wholesome family education for children. Poor family education often results in students’ problems in schools.

School education is also facing a number of problems in the current changing education environment. Some important examples of problems may include declining academic standards of students, serious student behavioural problems, inadequate training of the teachers, rigid curriculum, poor communication between teachers and parents, and inappropriate technology for managing, teaching and learning. Many teachers try to deal with these increasingly complicated education problems by relying
on traditional approaches of teaching and a passive relationship with parents.

Facing the existing challenges to schools and families, there is a strong demand for new home-school partnerships to provide effective education for children (Berger, 1987; Cheng, 1991; Davis, 1991; Wallace and Walberg, 1991). Yet unfortunately, many school practitioners and parents do not understand the nature and potential benefits of full home-school partnership and still have very traditional and biased beliefs about the home-school relationship. They cannot maximize all the benefits from this partnership to both family education and school education for children. The existing practice of home-school relationship is often fragmented and limited with poor outcomes, particularly in Hong Kong (Education Commission, 1992; Education Department, 1994; Pang, 1994).

Traditionally, people often assume that the responsibility of educating and caring for children in the daytime entirely rests with the school, and parents resume this responsibility in the evening. For example, in Hong Kong it is often assumed that school education is the prerogative of the school, the parents have in general no right to interfere. It is only when the students cause problems in school that the parents will be called in. In many cases, the relationship between school and family is haphazard, and is often dominated by the school. Parents only take a passive position.

Obviously, this type of ad hoc and fragmented concept of relationship cannot fit well with the present changing education environment and does not help students’ wholesome development in school and family.

The emerging new conception

Responding to the limitations of traditional home-school relationship, some educators and scholars urge the development of a more comprehensive home-school partnership. It is believed that even though school and family serve different functions, it is necessary to have close and systematic home-school cooperation if they want to fulfill these functions effectively (Cheng, 1991; Epstein, 1992; Epstein and Dauber, 1991; Redding, 1991; Wallace and Walberg, 1991). Some new ideas and concepts of home-school partnership have emerged in recent years. Table I summarizes some main characteristics of the traditional and the emerging new conceptions of home-school relationship.

The traditional conception of the home-school relationship assumes that school education is a privilege bestowed on the students and their parents and that school is the only place that children can receive formal education. For example, in Hong Kong education of children in the family is often perceived as a means to supplement school education. Furthermore, the traditional conception assumes that the parents have no professional knowledge to teach...
their children. Hence, school should play the dominant role in education, and parents should play the subordinate role and should submit passively to school's requirements and arrangements. Based on this conception, the foundation for co-operation is weak and the relationship is not a partnership between school and home in educating children. Parents could only be involved in a limited way in school education, and mainly in matters relating to daily school operation. Communication between home and school is often ad hoc and one way, coming from teachers to parents, and arises because problems come up and require solutions.

On the other hand, the emerging new conception assumes that school education is a service, that school education and home education for children are equally important in children's development, and that only through co-operation can school and family fulfil their functions to educate and develop children effectively. Many parents may lack professional knowledge in education, but because they have better understanding of their children's personality and developmental needs, they can have a stronger influence on their children. There is a sound basis for their taking a more active role and forming a partnership with the school to educate children. From the new perspective, home-school partnerships can be a continuous process of co-operation, involving both teachers and parents with clear aims and systematic efforts to educate children not only in school but also in the family. The partnership is comprehensive, two-way, equal, empowering and largely for developmental purposes. But unfortunately, home-school practice is mostly dominated by the traditional concepts, particularly in Asian areas like Hong Kong. The basis for co-operation is weak, and is not helpful to children's education. Many academics and practitioners begin to realize its limitation and advocate new concepts of home-school partnership (Berger, 1987; Cheng, 1991; Davies, 1991; Pang, 1994; Wallace and Walberg, 1991).

A framework of total home-school partnership

Based on the conception of Cheng (1996) and Cheng and Tam (1994), this paper aims at reconceptualizing home-school partnerships into a total framework that can be used to re-engineer the existing practice. In this framework, there are two meanings to the total home-school partnership. First, partnership means that families are involved in different aspects of school education and support the school through various means (Cheng, 1991). On the other hand, it also means that the school empowers the parents to strengthen different aspects of educating children in the family and helps them to participate in school education. The relationship between home and school is mutually supported and cooperative at three levels (the individual, group, and whole school levels) and in three domains (i.e., the affective, behavioural, and cognitive domains). Since the co-operation between home and school is very comprehensive, covering multi-levels and multi-domains of school education and family education for children, this cooperative relationship is therefore called a “total home-school partnership”. The framework of total home-school partnership is illustrated in Figure 1 and can be explained as follows:

Students’ school education

In general, the purpose of school education is to facilitate students in different aspects of their development. For example, the Chinese education tradition emphasizes the students’ balanced development in the moral, intellectual, physical, social, and aesthetic domains. Conceptually, a holistic school education may consist of activities and processes for students’ developments in three basic domains: behavioural, affective, and cognitive; and at three levels: individual, group, and school (Cheng, 1996; Cheng and Tam, 1994).

At the individual level, school education aims at building individual character, developing intellectual power, etc. At the group level, students are helped to learn to
develop the values, attitudes and norms of co-operation with group peers; and at the school level, school-wide activities are planned and school ethos is developed to help students as a whole to develop in affective, cognitive, and behavioural domains. Table II gives some examples of activities and characteristics of school education at different levels. Many research findings have pointed out that education process and climate at higher levels such as school culture and classroom climate will have a strong impact on the lower levels (Cheng, 1993, 1994a; Fraser and Walberg, 1991; Waxman and Eliot, 1992). Of course, the influence in the reverse direction may also occur. Hence, one can conclude that education processes at the different levels will influence and reinforce each other, and it is essential that researchers and school practitioners should not focus only on education at the individual level but should also emphasize processes at the group level and the school level. The education provided in multi-domains and multi-levels should be more holistic for children’s all-round development (Cheng, 1996).

Apart from the above consideration of different levels of school education, the work of the principal, administrators and teachers which influences students can also be considered at the individual, group, and school levels (see Figure 1). Taking the teachers for example; their performance at the individual level may include: teaching skills, classroom management, relations with students, co-operation, participation, involvement, relations with peers, critical reflection, ethical judgement of teaching, administrative work, beliefs in education and management, integration of theory and practice, participation in the development of school culture, etc. (Cheng and Tam, 1994). The education effect should not be confined to the performance of individual teachers on individual students. In fact, there should be a group effect as well as whole school effect of teachers and administrators on individual students, classes or groups of students as well as the entire student body in the school. Also, the behaviours, feelings, and beliefs of teachers and administrators should constitute part of the holistic education process for students in school. In sum, the affective, cognitive, and behavioural performance of teachers and administrators at the individual, group and school levels has a strong impact on students, and this is perhaps why so many educators are promoting the whole school approach to student guidance, curriculum planning and other school work (Education Commission, 1990; Watkins and Wagner, 1987).

Family education for children

The activities for educating children in family can also be considered at multi-levels (see Figure 1). At the individual level, there are individual family units; at the group level, there are family groups; and at the school level, there are families of the entire student body. Family education at the individual level may include activities such as parents supervising their children’s homework assignments, spending time with them, listening to what they think and feel, developing a close relationship, analysing problems with them, discussing family matters with them, and sharing values and beliefs with them. Nowadays, particularly in urban areas, because many parents have to spend long hours at work, or for other reasons, parents are unable to spend much time on helping children to learn at home. Moreover, many parents, fathers in particular, still believe that their main responsibility is to make money to feed the family and to pay for their children’s education, and they tend to neglect active involvement in educating their children in the family.

Family education at the group level may refer to those activities organized by parents

Table II
The domains and levels of holistic school education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains of education</th>
<th>Individual (examples)</th>
<th>Group/ class (examples)</th>
<th>School (examples)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural</td>
<td>Learning techniques, using equipment, physical exercise, showing self-discipline, etc.</td>
<td>Showing classroom order, extra-class activities, inter-class competition, etc.</td>
<td>School gathering, athletic meeting, school ceremony, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>Developing confidence, showing sympathy, motivation to learning, satisfaction with school life, etc.</td>
<td>Classroom social climate, affiliation, group norms, team cooperation, etc.</td>
<td>School ethos, school belongingness, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Reflective thinking, understanding, owning a set of moral values, beliefs, etc.</td>
<td>Sharing a set of beliefs about classroom, cultivating group values, etc.</td>
<td>Sharing educational ideals, cultural beliefs, school values, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finally, when the schools start to put home-school partnerships into action, difficulties may be expected. The community can then take up a supportive role, to encourage and motivate teachers and parents to keep on trying. Under extraordinary circumstances, the community may also intervene and help overcome the problems.

To conclude, the above provides a comprehensive framework including multi-levels and multi-domains to conceptualize school education, family education and their between-relationship. It is clear that with the support of the community and the education authority, school education and family education should both be managed in an integrative and holistic approach including multi-levels and multi-domains for educating children. They should not be independent of each other, but should be collaborative efforts aiming at maximizing all the educational effects for children in both school and family.

The strengths of total home-school partnership

According to the above conception of total home-school partnership, education of children in school and family includes activities at multi-levels, aiming at children's all-round development in different domains. Also, these activities should be managed and co-ordinated in a coherent way. Hence, on the one hand, home-school partnerships represent parents' active support and involvement in the school education process, including close communication with the school, assisting the school in its special events, participating in school decision making, or even becoming a member of the school board. On the other hand, partnership may also mean the school helping the parents organize themselves, establishing parent organizations and support units, assisting them in promoting family education and social events (see Figure 1). Therefore, the role of parents in school education is to participate and support, and the role of the school is to assist the parent organization and to promote family education for children. When the two parties form such a partnership, the students will receive the greatest benefit, and parents and teachers will also gain valuable experience and learning opportunity.

In the traditional approach to home-school relationships, it is often when problems appear during the students' education process in school that the teachers need to contact the parents in order to rectify the situation. Therefore, the cooperation relationship is one way, limited and fragmented, mainly depending on teachers contacting
individual families. The concern is mainly centred on treating individual symptoms, changing individual student behaviour or disciplining individual misbehaviour, and neglects the type of powerful partnership in which teachers and parents can co-operate at different levels in different domains for developmental purposes.

The traditional approach to home-school co-operation can be further illustrated as shown in Figure 2. When comparing Figure 1 with Figure 2, one can easily see that there is a great deal of difference between the fragmented relationship and the total partnership. The traditional concept is mainly ad hoc and procedural, lacks long-term plan and clear aims, and does not have a comprehensive system of implementation. Based on this approach, the activities would tend to be fragmented, and mainly belong to one-way communication relating to operational matters. These may include announcement for parents, signing of report cards, telephone communication, ad hoc parent-teacher interview, etc. Also, the planning and implementation of the activities are mostly initiated by the school, with little or no participation from parents, little interest in knowing what the parents really need, and tends to neglect the group and school levels, and sometimes the cognitive and affective domains. The traditional approach requires teachers only to follow the policies and instructions of the school, and to answer simple factual questions relating to operational matters, as long as the teachers understand what the school expects. It is often assumed that there is no need for extensive training for teachers. Therefore the effectiveness of this type of home-school co-operation is often problematic.

But the total home-school partnership aims at supporting a holistic education for students, through facilitating a full spectrum of collaboration efforts from the parents and teachers at the individual, group and school levels. It requires them at these three levels to educate children by working in the affective, behavioural and cognitive domains. To facilitate successful implementation of total home-school partnership, clear aims and objectives, appropriate guidelines and procedures, systematic planning, implementation and evaluation are expected. Since family and school are partners, they share responsibilities in school functions and children's education, therefore, the kind of co-operation can be seen as mutually beneficial, suiting the needs of both school and family. Furthermore, because the design of home-school activities involves multi-levels, there is a greater demand for quality work. Teachers will need to develop confidence and patience, to learn how to work co-operatively with parents, and to gain an in-depth understanding of the problems faced by families and schools.

Many studies have indicated that good home-school partnership can be an important source of motivation which will increase teachers' satisfaction and teaching efficacy (Epstein, 1985; Epstein and Dauber, 1991; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1987). Other research also suggested that students' family background and their family education are important determinants of their academic performance in school (Bernstein, 1978; Cheng, 1994b, 1995; Coleman et al., 1966; Sewell and Shak, 1968). Therefore, the above total home-school partnership can provide a framework to empower both families and the school to become a centre of effective education for children.

Total home-school partnership in different perspectives

In addition to the above discussion, we may interpret the meanings and functions of total home-school partnership from the legal, management and educational perspectives (Cheng, 1991). This will be helpful in the implementation of family education, school education and home-school co-operation.

The legal perspective

From a legal perspective, the participation of parents is unavoidable. Its function is to protect their children's right to receive quality education, and to exert their right and take up responsibility as parents. They have the right to know how the school educates their children, to be informed of...
school policies, and to take steps to protect the rights of their children. Also, as stakeholders, they should be given the right to monitor the school operation and classroom teaching to ensure that the school has fulfilled its accountability requirement. They should also have the right to establish formal parent organizations, and to participate in school decisions (Cheng, 1991; Education and Manpower, 1991; Thomas, 1978). Parental involvement in school education and management is recognized as a citizenship right in many Western countries, and is often protected by legislation. In Hong Kong and some Asian Pacific areas, although there is no legislation to guarantee parents’ involvement in school education and management, sentiment is growing that parents should be given this right (Tik, 1996).

A total partnership between family and school from the legal perspective also implies that the school should assist parents in accessing and exercising their legal rights, and remind the parents of their duties. The school has the responsibility to provide appropriate information to parents, so that they will understand their children’s right to receive quality education, and their own responsibility in providing family education. Also, through communication, the school will know the family lives of the students and their behaviour outside school in order to ensure that students are properly protected and cared for. Finally, the school should also assist parents to establish an effective parent organization, and to ensure that the organization does the right thing in promoting and facilitating wholesome development of students (Valente, 1994) (see Table III).

The management perspective
From a management perspective, parents’ participation in school education can provide additional resource and manpower. Parents can also share part of management responsibility of the school, strengthen communication between families and the school, support the school, monitor the school progress, and even assist the school in combating any negative influences of the local community. Through participation, parents may supply valuable information about students, themselves and the local community to the school. Parents and teachers may understand more each other’s expectations. They could have joint efforts to offer better school education to students (Berger, 1987; Cheng, 1991; Epstein and Dauber, 1991). School’s assisting the families may have similar meanings. The school can provide assistance to develop family education, such as supplying resources and manpower, planning and implementing parenting training programmes, and sharing the various responsibilities which arise out of home-school partnership. The school can communicate with the families, provide valuable information, encourage parents to be better educators in the family, and have joint efforts with the families to fight against the negative influence from society (see Table III).

Traditionally, very few schools permit parents to participate in school management, particularly in the Asian areas. But the recent development of school-based management worldwide has created chances for more parental participation in school management. In many cases, parents may serve as school board members. By doing so, teachers and parents are expected to improve their communication and co-operation, and provide effective education to the children in both school and family.

The education perspective
Other than the legal and management perspectives, the education perspective is also important. Total home-school partnership can enable the two parties to share relevant information so that students can receive better care, and that education the students receive at home and in school will not contradict each other. In the process of participation, the parents will have many opportunities to learn new techniques in educating their children; they can also provide feedback to the school, so that the school may improve its teaching and administration; they can support the school’s internal reform, and encourage it to face external challenges. In her research, Epstein (1986) observed that many parents of elementary students in the USA are now asking the schools to provide training opportunities on child caring and family education. Scott-Jones (1987) pointed out that most of the low income minority families in the USA lack the knowledge and resources in family education. Both of these findings support the assertion that parental participation in school education is important. Also, through the support of the school, parents can learn child training techniques, which can enable children to receive a wholesome education at home. Through the exchanges among parents and the support services provided by the professionals, parents can build up their self-confidence. They can have opportunities to understand the issues in family education, to learn to solve its problems, to share their own experience to the other families, and to contact other organizations to provide relevant training. At the same time, when the school supports the families in implementing total home-school partnership, school practitioners may have opportunities to learn
new approaches and new concepts of home-school partnership. Table III summarizes these major educational functions. In sum, total home-school partnership provides numerous educational opportunities not only to students but also to parents, teachers and administrators.

The functions and meanings of total home-school partnership from the above legal, management, or education perspectives are summarized in Table III.

### Implementing total home-school partnership

From the above analysis from the three perspectives, we can see some conditions necessary for implementation of total home-school partnership. The most important condition is that the school, parents, education authority, and the community should take up their appropriate roles. Table IV summarizes these important roles from the legal, management, and education perspectives.

From the legal perspective, the role of the school is mainly to implement the home-school policies, and to explain the meaning of the policies to concerned parties or constituencies. The role of the parent is mainly to provide the necessary conditions for family education to take place at home, and to strive for more opportunity to participate in their children's education. The role of the education authority is to provide resources, to establish home-school partnership policies, and to promote these policies.
Table IV
Conditions for implementing total home-school partnership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspectives</th>
<th>Role of the school</th>
<th>Conditions for a successful home-school partnership</th>
<th>Role of the community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>Implementor – to implement educational policies and home-school partnership guidelines</td>
<td>Provider – to provide the necessity for children's living and learning</td>
<td>Message transmitter – to advocate family activities and family education within the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpreter – to explain to parents and teachers the basic rights of students and the responsibilities of parents and the school</td>
<td>Protector – to protect their children's rights to receive quality school education and parents' rights to participate</td>
<td>Resource provider – to secure additional resource for partnership activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Monitor – to assure that both school and parents have carried out home-school partnership duties, to ensure the students have proper family education and home care</td>
<td>Responsible parent – to seek opportunities to know the situations of their children at school, to study the changes in policies and the environment</td>
<td>Government monitoring – to monitor the government in its family protection law, child family protection law, child protection law, and education legislations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitor – to protect the rights of students to receive education, to safeguard the rights of parents to be involved in their children's education</td>
<td>Participant – to assert personal obligations to participation in parent organization and to involve in school management</td>
<td>Media monitoring – to monitor and prevent the media from broadcasting indecent programmes; to prevent the shops from selling indecent material to young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Resource manager – to acquire, battle for and manage resources in order to implement home-school partnership activities</td>
<td>Communicator – to listen to the views of teachers about their children's education; to furnish personal opinions to the school</td>
<td>Communication role – to supply information about the community to schools; to provide feedback about the student behaviour in the community to schools; to coordinate visits to the schools by the community leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communicator – to communicate events and views of the school to parents and teachers in searching, planning, implementing and evaluating the programmes and policies of home-school partnership</td>
<td>Manager – to participate in school management and decisions, to manage and develop a healthy parent organization</td>
<td>Caring role – to pay attention to the families with special needs in the community; to help these families with special needs in the community; to help these families to deal with their children's difficulties; to care for the young people's needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivator – to enhance morale, create a collaborative climate, and to give praise to outstanding families</td>
<td>Problem solver – to take actions and to discuss how to solve the learning and emotional problems of their children with teachers</td>
<td>Promotion role – to organize family activities within the community; to urge the community to pay more attention to family problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promoter – to uphold and advance educational ideals, to promote to parents the meanings of holistic education</td>
<td>Carer – to care about the educational needs and the performance of their children at school, to show concern about the fulfilment of the mission of the school</td>
<td>Motivation role – to give recognition to the schools which put special efforts into home-school partnership; to recognize the families who have done extra work in supporting home-school partnership</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Exemplar – school administrators and teachers set good examples for parents, to help them understand the meaning of partnership</td>
<td>Motivator – to reward and praise their children's accomplishment, to comment to the school on its home-school partnership efforts, to create a conducive atmosphere for participation in parent organizations</td>
<td>Promotion role – to establish and promote a healthy concept of the family in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Educator – to promote holistic educational ideals, to share new educational thoughts with parents</td>
<td>Initiator – to generate a collective effort among parents in the realization of home-school policies</td>
<td>Education role – to coordinate the local organizations in providing training courses for parents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Learner – individuals, groups, and the entire school need to learn how to develop better home-school partnership and to achieve educational effectiveness</td>
<td>Educator – to share their training and childcare experience with other parents</td>
<td>Mass media – to initiate the mass media to produce programmes that will encourage home-school partnership and will promote a positive image of the family</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learner – to learn and receive training in home-school partnership strategies, to accept challenges in trying out new partnership approaches</td>
<td>Leamer – to develop a family management style for low, patience, self-confidence and a co-operative spirit needed in a partnership relationship</td>
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</table>
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1. An effective school can achieve its established goals. Since families are the major clients of the school, they should participate in choosing goals for the school, so that these goals can reflect their actual needs to be fulfilled and their participation can contribute to the achievement of school goals and improvement of school effectiveness.

2. An effective school is capable of acquiring the resources it needs. Parents are important resources for the school. Total home-school partnership not only provides additional resources for the school but also enables the school to acquire more resources from the community for better education to their students.

3. Some characteristics of an effective school are its smooth internal process and a sense of cohesiveness to draw its members together. Total home-school partnership provides opportunities for teachers and parents at all levels to share information, to learn how to work co-operatively with each other, and to improve school process. Also, it enables parents to improve family education process and contribute their efforts to improve the school process.

4. An effective school can satisfy the needs and expectations of its strategic constituencies (such as board members, education authority, parents, etc.). Since parents are important school constituencies, total home-school partnership provides the opportunities for the parents to express their demands and expectations of...
5 An effective school finds acceptance in the community and exists legitimately. Through total home-school partnership, the school can receive support from the families, build up a positive public image and ensure its legitimate existence in the community.

6 In a narrow sense, a school which has no obvious problems and dysfunctions possesses the quality to be an effective school. If the school has total home-school partnership, it can implement, monitor and evaluate its programmes more effectively. Therefore, even if there are any problems, they can discover problems earlier and eliminate them earlier to prevent any school crisis.

7 An effective school can learn how to confront the changing environment and overcome its internal obstacles. The education environment in Hong Kong is changing rapidly, and the schools are continually bombarded with different types of problems and difficulties. A total partnership relation enables the school to obtain full feedback and support from parents, to promptly respond to the community needs, to improve internal functioning, and to develop continuously. In this way, the school can adapt to the changing environment.

Outlined above are the possible contributions of the proposed framework to achieving school effectiveness. With this in mind, it is logical to suggest that adopting the present framework as a basis for re-engineering the traditional home-school partnership will produce fruitful results in terms of school effectiveness. Moreover, the proposed conception of total home-school partnership can provide a new and comprehensive framework to conceptualize research topics on different aspects of the dynamic nature, development process, management, implementation, and effectiveness of home-school relationship. It is believed that the result of such research endeavours will be helpful in the development of home-school partnership practices in both local and international contexts.

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