**Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Class:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( )**

**Tuesday English News Report**

***The wealth gap widens in Hong Kong education (Alex Lo)*** *As fees for international schools continue to rise, there are not many other options for parents who believe competitive local schools are not for their children*

Broadcast Date: 5th April

I recently took my kids out of an international school after almost a **decade**. The reason is simple: I can’t afford their school **fees** anymore.

The school raises **tuition** fees practically every year. The latest **hike** amounts to 4.5 per cent, taking tuition to HK$206,500 a year per student. And I have two children. That kind of money is simply unaffordable for someone on a reporter’s salary, or anyone who is solidly in the middle class.

I suppose I could try the English Schools Foundation, which has very long queues. In any case, the government is **phasing out** subsidies so its school charges are comparable to those at international schools for new parents.

Do I regret taking my children out of the school? Well, I made a little bit of money selling their **debenture**, which I bought early on.

It’s a good school with a sound education programme based on the International Baccalaureate. But is it value for money? Well, who knows?

If local public schools had offered what my wife and I wanted for our kids, we would never have **bothered** with international schools. Everyone seems to have bad things to say about public schools.

The fact remains that most local schools are very **tough** and competitive academically. They are clearly not for everyone.

I believe, though, that the majority of local parents actually want them to be tough and competitive, so that their children may become the same. I have no **quarrel** with such tiger parents if that’s what they want. It’s just that this style of schooling is not for my family. Most of those who complain about our public system are those who have rejected this type of education.

But the problem for them – or people like my wife and I – is that there aren’t too many alternatives other than paying HK$206,500 a year, not to mention those million-dollar debentures. Despite the great variety of schools – local, aided, private, international etc. – they are economically divided into those that are relatively cheap and those you can’t afford.

By leaving international schools essentially **unregulated**, the government has helped widen the wealth gap at the root of education while leaving liberal-minded families out in the cold.



1. What do you think?
2. Vocabulary

*Fill in the blanks in the sentences below using words from the box.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| wealth gap | decade | fees | tuition |
| hike | phasing out | debenture | bothered |
| tough | quarrel | unregulated |  |

1. The triathlon was extremely\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. First, we had to swim 4 kilometres, then cycle a 100 kilometres and finally run 10 kilometres.
2. He loves music from the 50s. That’s his favourite \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for music.
3. He had a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with his sister about which TV channel to watch.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in Hong Kong is huge. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.
5. We pay \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to a professional or a public body for advice and services.
6. A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a sum of money that is loaned to an institution (a school for example) and reclaimed after a period of time.
7. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is another word for teaching.
8. A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ usually means a long walk in the countryside, often involving steep climbs up mountains. Here it means a sharp increase in cost or price.
9. It was terrible. The old lady had fallen down and couldn’t get up but nobody \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to help her.
10. Not controlled by laws or rules. The government wants to get rid of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ hawkers.
11. Hong Kong is slowly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ coal-fired power plants in favour of ones powered by natural gas.

**The English Room is Open EVERY DAY for Lunch!**

**(Open from12:30-1:30).**

**☺ FREE Coffee /Milo / soft drinks with Mr. Lane!**

**Where: The English Corner (Room B001B by the basketball court)**

**Play games and speak ENGLISH in a friendly ENVIRONMENT. Challenge Mr. Lane to a game of chess, too!**