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Chinese community still wary of amended NEB

PRESS DIGEST

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JIAO ZONG (United Chinese School Teachers Association) said that despite changes made to the preliminary report of the National Education Blueprint (NEB), the community feared that Chinese primary schools will be marginalised under the new education roadmap, the Chinese press reported yesterday.

The group said the NEB's aim of ensuring that national schools become the school of choice itself is enough to upset Chinese educationists. They are worried Chinese schools would not enjoy their fair share of education resources.

In a statement on Sunday, Jiao Zong said it is ironic that while the blueprint gives an assurance that vernacular schools will keep their position and characteristics and parents still have the right to choose the type of school for

their children, the government is proposing to turn national schools into the school of choice.

"Jiao Zong is against the policy to turn national schools into the school of choice, as vernacular schools will be left out of the mainstream and be unable to get fair treatment." It urged the government to strengthen vernacular schools in tandem with national schools to ensure fair share of the national education resources for all.

Jiao Zong called on the community to be on its guard regarding the move to encourage government-aided schools, which include national-type vernacular schools, to voluntarily convert to government schools.

The stakeholders must understand the consequences – as school committees may lose full control of converted schools, it added.

The statement said that NEB should also emphasise the importance of the pupil's own language.