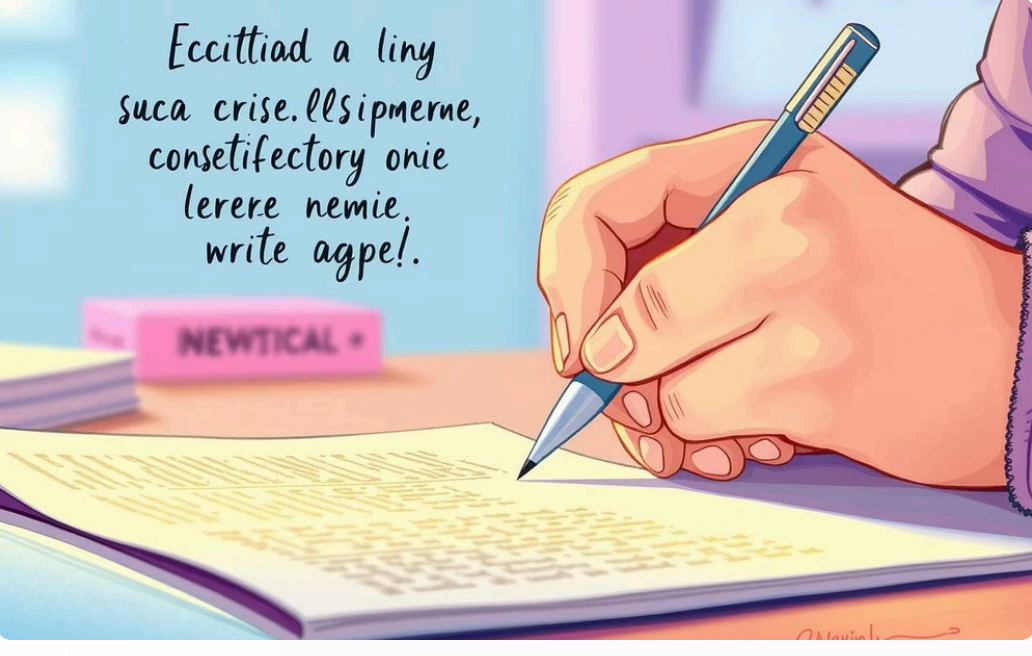


# Highlights of the course (2) Express viewpoints through SCMP letters and Legco reports



## Publish letters to the editor in the South China Morning Post

Share your informed opinions and analysis on pressing issues with a wide readership.



## Submit reports to and meet with Legislative Council members

Engage directly with elected officials, presenting research findings and advocating for policy changes.

## Letter published on 120th anniversary of SCMP

[Letter | Letters bridge the space between the public and the ivory tower](#)

As a frequent contributor to this column, I wish to congratulate the South China Morning Post on its 120th anniversary and thank the editors for their support for my research and advocacy work in the past 10 years.

I started writing to the Letters section in 2013 and have published over 100 letters. Since 2020, I have also been working with my colleague, Dr Benedict Rowlett, at Baptist University, helping over 300 students to publish nearly 140 letters.

My first published letter to the editor was on [Creative Commons](#), an alternative approach to copyright management. In my [first featured letter](#) in 2016, I made the case for Hong Kong to phase out Octopus cards and imagined a smart city embracing diverse mobile payment methods. With the advent of generative artificial intelligence, my students and I also published [the first letter in SCMP's history](#) that was edited by ChatGPT. An overarching theme of most of our letters is to question the status quo and envision a better world made possible by new technologies.

The letters column offers us opportunities to critically review the decisions made by the Hong Kong government. Through researching public policy matters, including citing the Code on Access to Information, we have published letters on a wide range of issues such as the [emergency alert system](#), [national security law](#) and [solar weather](#). Occasionally, government staff, for example, the [Department of Justice](#) and [Hong Kong Observatory](#), would write in response.

Our conversation with the government extended beyond the newspaper. We met Legislative Council members including [Chan Kin-por](#), [Alice Mak Mei-ken](#), [Regina Ip Lau Suk-ye](#) and [Tse Wai-chuen](#), and brought their attention to the challenges facing groups whose voices are less often heard. The letters section lets us share our conversations with lawmakers and create additional pressure for government action.

It is also a bridge between the public and the ivory tower. I have co-authored letters with research students to share insights from Baptist University research teams on [Chinese medicine](#) and [carbon emission monitoring](#). Recently, Dr Rowlett and I have received support from the General Research Fund to study how citizenship has been exercised by SCMP letter writers. This research could never have been realised without the unwavering commitment of SCMP editors to nurturing a dynamic community of readers and cultivating an invaluable platform for public discourse.

*Simon H. Wang, lecturer in English, Baptist University*

## Engaging the Legco



## Amid Covid-19 travel restrictions, Carrie Lam must keep her promise to help cross-border students

[Letter | Carrie Lam must keep her promise to help cross-border students](#)

As a concern group advocating for over 27,000 [cross-border schoolchildren](#), we have been deeply disappointed with the Education Bureau staff who have done virtually nothing to help this group of Hong Kong residents during the pandemic. Through the Legislative Council Redress System, we held a meeting with Ms Alice Mak Mei-ken, the deputy chairperson of the Legco panel on education, on September 2.

Before our meeting, we invited parents of cross-border schoolchildren to voice their concerns through a WeChat blog and make suggestions on how the government can better support the children. The blog entry was overwhelmed by parents' messages calling for more action from the governments of both Hong Kong and Shenzhen.

While the majority of them hope the government could exempt cross-border schoolchildren from the quarantine requirements, they also understand this is unlikely to happen in the near future. A more realistic solution, according to the parents, is to set up learning centres in Shenzhen where the children can take online classes together and learn more effectively through peer interaction.

Moreover, they suggested that the cross-border schoolchildren should be taught separately from their local peers as teachers often struggled to look after students online and offline at the same time.

During the meeting with Ms Mak, we summarised the parents' concerns and suggestions, and asked the lawmaker to follow up with the Education Bureau. Ms Mak agreed that bringing the schoolchildren together for online lessons was a feasible proposal that the government should further explore.

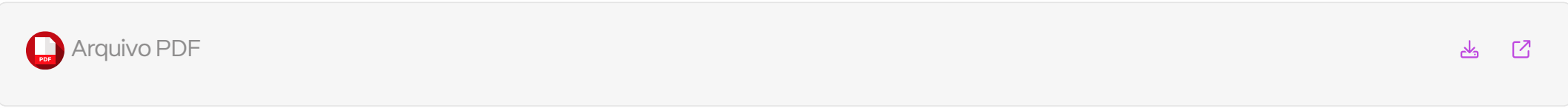
We also contacted International Social Service (ISS), an NGO with funding support from the government to serve cross-border schoolchildren. The ISS staff shared our concerns and expressed their interest in running learning centres for the schoolchildren if resources are available from the government.

On September 8, Ms Mak [raised this issue](#) during the Legislative Council question and answer meeting with Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor on our behalf. In response to her question, Mrs Lam promised that the Education Bureau would look into how to set up learning centres for the schoolchildren in Shenzhen.

We hope the bureau can take swift action and work with the NGOs such as ISS to create a more productive learning environment for those who cannot come to Hong Kong for school.

*Yichun Wang and Simon Wang, Kowloon Tong*

## A report circulated among Legco members and uploaded to the Legco website



## Recent engagement with Dr Wendy Hong

