

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2329/00-01
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/ED

LegCo Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 21 May 2001 at 4:30 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

- Members Present** : Dr Hon YEUNG Sum (Chairman)
Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung (Deputy Chairman)
Hon David CHU Yu-lin
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Prof Hon NG Ching-fai
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon SIN Chung-kai
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon SZETO Wah
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung
Dr Hon LO Wing-lok
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
- Members Absent** : Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah

**Public Officers
Attending** : Item IV

Mr Matthew CHEUNG, JP
Director of Education

Mr Anthony K H TONG
Deputy Director of Education

Item V

Mr Matthew CHEUNG, JP
Director of Education

Mr K F CHAN
Assistant Director of Education (Departmental
Administration)

Mr Robert TSUI
Chief Technology Officer
Education Department

Item VI

Mr Raymond YOUNG, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (2)

Ms Michelle LI
Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and
Manpower (1)

Item VII

Miss Janet WONG
Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (3)

Mr Gordon LEUNG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and
Manpower (6)

Mr Matthew CHEUNG, JP
Director of Education

Mr K S LEE
Assistant Director of Education (Planning and Research)

Clerk in Attendance : Miss Flora TAI
Chief Assistant Secretary (2)2

Staff in Attendance : Mr Stanley MA
Senior Assistant Secretary (2)6

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I. Confirmation of minutes
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1579/00-01]

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2001 were confirmed.

II. Information paper issued since the last meeting

2. Members noted that no information paper had been issued since the last meeting.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting
[Appendices I and II to LC Paper No. CB(2)1576/00-01]

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Monday, 18 June 2001 at 4:30 pm -

- (a) Teaching force for basic education;
- (b) Regulation of tutorial schools;
- (c) Secondary School Places Allocation System; and
- (d) Pilot scheme on the use of information technology in schools.

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[*Post meeting note* : At the request of the Administration, an item "Creation of a Senior Principal Executive Officer Post in Education and Manpower Bureau" was added to the agenda and discussion on item 3(c) was subsequently deferred.]

IV. Additional support to schools with a large intake of students of lower academic ability

[Paper Nos. CB(2)1335/00-01(01) and CB(2)1590/00-01(01)]

4. At the request of the Chairman, Deputy Director of Education (DDE) briefed members on the main points of the Administration's papers.

Effectiveness of remedial support measures

5. Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung expressed support for providing additional resources and professional support to schools with a large intake of academically low achievers (ALAs). However, he asked whether the Administration had reviewed the effects of the various support measures on school operation and on learning progress of students.

6. In response, DDE said that a pilot scheme, Understanding the Adolescent Project (UAP), was conducted by a joint project team of Breakthrough Limited and the Chinese University of Hong Kong from 1994 to 2000. Its objectives were to develop a comprehensive screening tool for early identification of developmental needs of youth and to draw up a set of preventive programmes for timely intervention for those who were identified to be in need of assistance. The results of the pilot UAP were considered effective by tertiary institutions and social organisations concerned. Student participants had demonstrated improvements in learning and problem-solving skills, as well as in areas like assertiveness, emotional management and optimism. The Government had undertaken to implement UAP in some 200 secondary schools over a three-year period starting from the 2001-02 school year. In addition, the on-site professional support services provided by the School-based Curriculum Tailoring Scheme (SBCTS) to primary and secondary schools were helpful to school management. Overall, the various support measures received favourable feedback from schools and ALAs.

7. Mr SZETO Wah expressed reservations about the effectiveness of the SBCTS. He questioned how an additional teacher could develop all the school-based curricula for ALAs at different secondary levels.

8. Director of Education (DE) explained that the additional teacher would collaborate with subject teachers in developing school-based curricula. He would

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be assisted by professionals from the school-based curriculum sections of ED. DDE supplemented that apart from SBCTS, schools with a large intake of ALAs were also assisted by a number of other support measures and additional resources. They were also encouraged to re-deploy available resources in the best interests of ALAs.

9. Mr Tommy CHEUNG asked how UAP would be extended to primary schools and how the budget of \$50 million would be allocated to some 400 primary schools.

10. DDE explained that UAP would be extended to primary schools by way of a pilot scheme and phased in over a three-year period. The comprehensive screening tool and primary preventive programmes identified would be implemented in some 400 primary schools to meet the developmental needs of primary pupils in upper forms and to build up their resilience in coping with future life challenges. Allocation of funding would initially be made by a one-off grant of \$100,000 for each school joining UAP. DE supplemented that there would be a total of 12 primary schools joining the pilot scheme. The allocation for UAP in primary as well as in secondary schools would be reviewed in the light of the findings of the pilot scheme.

11. Mr WONG Sing-chi opined that to cope with the need of integrated education, more resources should be provided to schools with a large intake of ALAs and students switched from practical schools. He considered that an allocation of \$100,000 was insufficient for the purposes of UAP and urged the Administration to review the level of allocation in the light of the special circumstances in these schools. DDE noted Mr WONG's view. He explained that the current level of allocation was based on the six-year pilot of UAP for secondary schools, and would also be reviewed in the light of changing circumstances.

Effect of a three-band system for allocation of secondary one places

12. Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung asked whether the current criteria and level of additional allocation for schools with a large intake of ALAs would be adjusted after implementation of a three-band system for allocation of secondary school places. DDE responded that the change from a five-band to a three-band system would not affect the existing criteria and additional allocation for these schools. Under the School-based Remedial Support Programme (SBRSP), secondary schools would be provided with one and 1.5 additional teachers for admitting every 75 secondary one students and every 150 secondary two and three students in the bottom decile respectively. Additional resources would be provided for schools with more ALAs.

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13. The Chairman expressed concern that school operation and learning environment would be adversely affected as implementation of a 3-band allocation system would lead to greater diversity of students' learning abilities. He suggested that the Administration should conduct more in-depth research projects on the effectiveness of remedial measures in order to ensure that the most needed support services would be provided to schools with a large intake of ALAs.

14. DDE responded that Education Department (ED) had conducted a number of researches on individual differences, student motivation and effectiveness of various modes of learning. The findings from these research projects would cast light on how ED should help these schools. Report on the research project on student motivation should be available in August 2002. A sub-committee on Catering for Students' Diverse Learning Needs was set up by the Board of Education in September 2000 with the aim of mapping out an overall strategy to enable schools to implement measures meeting students' needs. The Chairman remarked that the Panel would revisit the issue when the relevant information and reports were available for discussion.

Reduction of class sizes

15. Ms Emily LAU was of the view that reducing the class size was more fundamental to improve the learning environment so that teachers would be able to devote more time to individual students. She pointed out that given the existing class sizes in primary and secondary schools, most teachers were overloaded with the various educational initiatives implemented in recent years. Teachers simply did not have time to communicate with ALAs and identify their needs at an early stage.

16. DE responded that ED was well aware of the heavy workload of teachers. The Administration had implemented a number of remedial measures in 2000-01 to relieve their work pressure at different levels. For schools with a large intake of ALAs, the Administration had provided additional manpower and physical resources to help schools and ALAs in day-to-day teaching and learning activities, as well as to meet the diverse needs of ALAs. DDE supplemented that serving teachers were well-trained in teaching ALAs to learn. However, some ALAs with behavioural problems might create problems in class beyond a teacher's professional knowledge and skills to handle. These problems preferably should be followed up by school social workers and professionals from the Police Force.

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Additional support measures

17. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that many ALAs had behavioural problems originated from their family background which had adversely affected their self-images and self-confidence. He suggested that instead of providing an additional teacher for developing school-based curricula, the Administration should provide an additional teacher to provide counselling service and help ALAs restore self-confidence and self-esteem. He added that teachers in schools with a large intake of ALAs should have developed a tailor-made curriculum for the diverse needs of ALAs.

18. DE responded that in order to ensure early identification of developmental needs of youth and timely intervention, the Government had decided to implement UAP in both primary and secondary schools starting from the 2001-02 school year. Building on the six-year pilot of UAP, the Social Welfare Department and non-governmental organisations operating school social services would collaborate with schools to provide intensive support for up to 200 secondary and 400 primary schools by phases. In addition, the Administration had set aside \$50 million to expand the activities of uniform groups from 2001-02 to 2004-05 to provide opportunity for students to build up positive attitudes through diverse and interesting learning experiences under the guidance of upright role models. DDE supplemented that based on research findings, the joint efforts of parents, teachers and students themselves did improve students' confidence, outlook for life, abilities in problem-solving, and emotional management, etc.

19. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung agreed that support measures such as UAP would provide ALAs with opportunities to interact with parents, teachers, peers and other professionals by way of extra-curricular activities outside the school. However, within the school environment, teachers did not have sufficient time to interact with problem ALAs on a personal basis. Citing his experience as a teacher, Mr LEUNG said that around 80% of students from a single parent family were ALAs who needed special care in schools. He therefore maintained the view that apart from posting a social worker in each school, an additional teacher to provide counselling service to ALAs at risk should be most helpful.

20. DE noted Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung's suggestion. He said that enhancing parent education and co-operation between parents and schools would also help alleviate the problems of ALAs at risk. DDE supplemented that under UAP, the participating social welfare agencies would collaborate with integrated teams, local communities as well as volunteers to provide appropriate counselling services to ALAs at risk.

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21. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong enquired about the role and responsibilities of the School Liaison Officers (SLOs) in the Hong Kong Police Force. He hoped that SLOs would do more than delivering talks and information on the operation of triad societies and the problems of youth at risk.

22. DDE responded that liaison with the Hong Kong Police Force on the role and responsibilities of SLOs was underway. He assured members that SLOs would do more than delivering talks and giving advice to students, parents and schools on the question of youth at risk and the operation of triad societies. A total of 33 SLOs would be posted to Police School Liaison Teams of the 18 Police districts. Working in partnership with school management, parent-teacher associations and non-governmental organisations, these teams would strengthen support to students at risk on an ongoing basis. DDE added that in collaboration with school social workers and SLOs, ED would proactively identify students at risk in senior primary classes and provide appropriate support to prevent them from developing behavioural problems.

23. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong suggested that the Commanders of the 18 Police districts should meet with schools on the role of SLOs and the types of services and assistance which would be made available to schools in the 2001-02 school year. In response, DE undertook to liaise with the Police to provide the services needed by schools. The Chairman remarked that ED should discuss with the Police on the appropriate ways to handle students at risk. He pointed out that the skills for handling students at risk were not necessarily the same as those for handling juvenile gangs in streets.

24. Miss Cyd HO was of the view that teachers should play an integrated role in education. She was concerned that there seemed to be a trend towards segmentation of the integrated role which would be played separately by teachers, school social workers and SLOs. Miss HO considered that it did not seem to be consistent with the policy of integrated education.

25. DE responded that integrated education aimed to provide equal learning environment for students with different learning abilities. To meet the diverse needs of students, teachers nowadays were encouraged to pursue lifelong learning to enhance their knowledge and skills in teaching on a continuous basis. They were also required to attend various training and development programmes to meet the needs of students in a rapidly changing world. Miss Cyd HO remarked that the Government should reduce the teacher-pupil ratio for the sake of smooth implementation of integrated education in order to cater for the diverse needs of students.

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V. Personnel Information Management System

[Paper No. CB(2)1576/00-01(01)]

26. At the Chairman's invitation, Assistant Director of Education (Departmental Administration) briefed members on the proposal to set up a Personnel Information Management System (PIMS) in ED to support its human resources management functions. Members noted that subject to members' views, ED would submit the financial proposal to the Finance Committee for consideration at its meeting on 5 July 2001.

27. Noting that ED had around 6500 staff, Ms Emily LAU expressed concern about the size of its staff establishment. She considered that as a result of the implementation of school-based management, the staff size of ED should decrease. In response to Ms LAU's enquiry, DE explained that around 4 500 of the 6 500 staff were front-line teachers, principals and supporting staff members posted to work in the 70-odd government schools. In fact, PIMS was proposed to enhance the overall operational efficiency and effectiveness in ED. It would facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive computerised personnel information system which could capture all essential personnel information to support the human resources management functions of recruitment, manpower planning, performance management, and staff development and training. It would help streamline the various human resources management activities among different divisions and sections such as staff training, and compilation of necessary statistical returns including staff wastage, staff profile analysis, re-employment of retired officers, etc.

28. Mr SZETO Wah and Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed support for the proposal. Mr SZETO suggested that PIMS should cover teachers and principals in aided schools for the purpose of planning long-term manpower planning in education. He anticipated that ED should make effective use of the system to keep a clear picture of the supply of teachers in different subject areas, and design and arrange appropriate training and development plan for in-service and prospective teachers in the light of community needs. Mr CHEUNG added that he was pleased to know that ED would absorb the estimated non-recurrent staff costs of \$4.5 million and the recurrent staff costs \$0.34 million for the day-to-day management of the system by its existing manpower resources.

29. DE explained that PIMS would be used to provide accurate, up-to-date and comprehensive personnel information to support ED's day-to-day staff management function. A similar system to cover teachers and principals in the aided sector could be considered later after ED had been given the PIMS and had gained some experience in using it.

VI. Post Secondary College (Amendment) Bill 2001

[File Ref : EMB CR 2/3231/89 II]

30. In response to the Chairman, Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (2) (DS/EM(2)) briefed members on the background and purpose of the Post Secondary College (Amendment) Bill 2001 (the Bill). In essence, the Bill sought to amend section 10 of the existing Post Secondary College Ordinance to the effect that registered post-secondary colleges might award degrees with the approval of the Chief Executive-in-Council. Currently, a post-secondary college registered under the Ordinance might award diplomas and certificates but should not award degrees or issue any document which could reasonably be taken as signifying the award of a university degree. DS/EM(2) informed members that the Bill would be published in the Gazette on 25 May 2001 and introduced into the Legislative Council (LegCo) on 6 June 2001. Subject to the views of LegCo Members, the Administration would propose to resume Second Reading of the Bill before end of June 2001.

31. The Chairman reminded members that as a queue had been formed for the Bills Committees waiting for activation, formation of a Bills Committee to study the Bill might delay the offer of four degree programmes by the Hong Kong Shue Yan College in September 2001.

32. Prof NG Ching-fai and Mr SZETO Wah expressed support for the Bill and considered it unnecessary to form a Bills Committee to study the Bill. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong suggested and members agreed that subject to the confirmation by the Legal Service Division that the drafting and legal aspects of the Bill were in order, the Bill should resume its Second Reading debate as soon as possible. The Chairman undertook to convey the Panel's views to the House Committee after the First Reading of the Bill.

VII. Switch to use English as medium of instruction at Secondary Four and above by some Chinese-medium schools

[Paper No. CB(2)1576/00-01(02)]

33. At the invitation of the Chairman, Assistant Director of Education (Planning and Research) (ADE(PR)) introduced the Administration's paper to members.

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Policy for switch

34. The Chairman said that there were increasing number of schools adopting Chinese as the medium of instruction (CMI) switching to use English as the medium of instruction (MOI) for non-language academic subjects in their secondary four (S4) and secondary five (S5) classes. He requested the Administration to clarify its policy on MOI for senior secondary classes in CMI schools. ADE(PR) stressed that it was the Administration's policy that schools should adopt the appropriate MOI to ensure that their students could learn effectively.

Requirements for switch

35. DE informed members that CMI schools were allowed in September 2001 to opt to use English to teach some subjects in some classes at S4 and S5 if -

- (a) the subject teachers had the requisite capability to teach in English;
- (b) the students were sufficiently proficient in English; and
- (c) there were sound school-based support programmes and bridging courses to prepare students for the switch.

36. In response to the Chairman, ADE(PR) confirmed that CMI schools had discretion to decide the MOI for the non-language subjects for senior secondary classes in September 2001 but they had to make sure that they had satisfied the three requirements as specified in paragraph 3.8 of the Medium of Instruction Guidance for Secondary Schools.

Monitoring after switch

37. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong agreed that in line with the spirit of school-based management, the Administration should allow schools to determine MOI to teach non-language subjects for senior secondary classes. However, he considered that ED should monitor the learning progress of S4 students in CMI schools which had switched to use English as MOI for all non-language subjects at S4 level. He suggested that ED should assess whether these CMI schools had met the three requirements by examining the achievements of their S5 students in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education examination (HKCEE). In this connection, he requested the Administration to provide an updated list of CMI schools who had switched to use English for some or all non-language subjects in S4 classes.

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38. DE responded that ED would reinforce inspection on CMI schools which had switched to use English as MOI for all non-language subjects at S4 classes. He pointed out that 67% of the teaching periods in non-language subjects for S4 classes was taught in Chinese in the 2001-02 school year. The Administration was now consolidating the information on individual schools' MOI arrangements for specific subjects. He undertook to provide the Panel with the information in mid-June 2001.

[*Post-meeting note* : The Administration's written response was subsequently forwarded to members vide LC Paper No.CB(2)1869/00-01 on 18 June 2001].

39. The Chairman observed that some CMI schools publicised their switch to use English as MOI for all non-language subjects at S4 for the purpose of improving student intake at S1. ADE(PR) responded that these CMI schools should have decided to change MOI after careful consideration, since they would be held responsible for students' performance in HKCEE.

40. Ms Audrey EU expressed concern that it might be difficult for a teacher to make an objective assessment of his competence in teaching English. Ms Emily LAU asked how ED would ensure that CMI schools switching to use English as MOI for their S4 students had fulfilled the prerequisite requirements. She also asked how ED would follow up with those CMI schools which did not meet the requirements but had already implemented the switch in S4 classes.

41. DE responded that the Quality Assurance Teams and School Development Sections of ED would inspect and monitor the standards of teaching and learning activities in CMI schools on a regular basis. They would pay special attention to the learning progress of students in CMI schools which had switched to adopt English as MOI for senior secondary classes. Professional advice and support would be given as appropriate. Responding to the Chairman, DE assured members that ED should respect autonomy of the school management in its monitoring of the students' standards in the schools concerned.

42. Ms Emily LAU and Ms Audrey EU considered that the role of language teachers was most crucial in promoting the overall English standard of secondary school students. They asked how ED would follow up with teachers who were not up to the required standards. Ms LAU said that the President of the Lingnan University had reportedly said that some 95% of the university's first-year students could not accurately pronounce the 26 alphabets of English. Ms EU asked whether teachers in EMI schools would use cocktail languages in classes.

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43. DE responded that teachers were now encouraged to attend professional training and development programmes on a continuous basis. In particular, language teachers were now required to pass the appropriate language proficiency assessment. He added that according to his observations, many English language teachers in schools were competent in teaching English. ADE(PR) supplemented that in accordance with laid down guidelines, teachers should refrain from using mixed-code in teaching.

VIII. Any other business

44. There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6:25 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat
13 September 2001