

Extract from the minutes of the House Committee meeting on 14 January 2005Action

X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

VI. Proposed subcommittee to study issues relating to the provision of boarding places, senior secondary education and employment opportunities for children with special educational needs

(LC Paper No. CB(2) 633/04-05)

22. Dr YEUNG Sum, Chairman of the Panel on Education, said that at the joint meeting of the Panel on Education and Panel on Welfare Services on 10 January 2005, members expressed concern that the proposals for developing a new senior secondary and higher education academic structure provided little details about the provision of education for children with special educational needs. Members were of the view that those children were a disadvantaged group in the community and adequate support should be provided for them in the provision of boarding places, senior secondary education and employment opportunities. Members proposed that a subcommittee should be formed under the House Committee to follow up these issues which straddled the policy areas of the Panel on Education and the Panel on Welfare Services.

23. Mrs Selina CHOW said that while there was a need to study the issues relating to the provision of education for children with special education needs, she did not support the formation of subcommittees under the House Committee whenever the issues to be followed up straddled the policy areas of more than one Panel. Mrs CHOW added that under the existing mechanism, one Panel could take the lead and invite members of the other Panel(s) to join its meetings.

24. Mrs CHOW further said that although the provision of boarding places fell within the ambit of the Panel on Welfare Services, most issues relating to provision of education for children with special educational needs mainly fell within the purview of the Panel on Education. She considered it more appropriate for a subcommittee to be formed under the Panel on Education, and that the other relevant policy bureaux, in addition to the Education and Manpower Bureau, could be invited to the meetings of the subcommittee.

25. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that various options to follow up the relevant issues, including the one suggested by Mrs Selina CHOW, had been discussed at the joint Panel meeting on 10 January 2005. As the issues to be followed up were wide-ranging and involved the services provided by various policy bureaux, the joint meeting considered it more appropriate for the House Committee to set up a subcommittee to follow up the issues.

26. Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that he also attended the joint Panel meeting on 10 January 2005. While he agreed that the relevant issues should be followed up, he did not consider it necessary for the House Committee to set up a subcommittee. He suggested that a subcommittee should be formed under the

Panel on Education, and non-Panel Members could be invited to attend meetings of the subcommittee.

27. Ms Margaret NG said that setting up a subcommittee under the House Committee enabled the relevant issues to be followed up in a focused and efficient manner.

28. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that he had suggested at the joint Panel meeting on 10 January 2005 that a subcommittee should be set up, either under the Panel on Education or under the House Committee, to follow up the relevant issues. Some Members had expressed concern that non-Panel Members would not be able to join the subcommittee and did not have voting right in respect of the business of the subcommittee. The joint meeting finally decided that it would be more appropriate to set up a subcommittee under the House Committee, to enable interested Members to join the subcommittee and to facilitate the relevant policy bureaux to attend meetings of the subcommittee.

29. Mr James TIEN expressed concern about the pressure on Members' time, meeting venues and manpower resources of the Secretariat, if too many subcommittees were formed under the House Committee. Mr TIEN said that a subcommittee should be formed under the Panel on Education to follow up the relevant issues, and members of the Panel on Welfare Services should be invited to participate in the subcommittee's discussion.

30. Dr YEUNG Sum and Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that if a subcommittee was to be set up under the Panel on Education, members of the Panel on Welfare Services would only be able to participate as non-subcommittee Members. They pointed out that the existing committee system did not provide for non-Panel Members to join a subcommittee formed under a Panel, nor for the formation of a subcommittee under two Panels.

31. Dr YEUNG Sum further said that he noted the concern expressed by some Members about setting up too many subcommittees under the House Committee. However, as the issues relating to the provision of education for children with special educational needs straddled various policy areas, the appropriate forum to follow up the issues was a subcommittee under the House Committee.

32. The Chairman put the proposal that a subcommittee be formed under the House Committee to follow the issues relating to the provision of boarding places, senior secondary education and employment opportunities for children with special educational needs to vote. The outcome was that 23 Members voted in favour of the proposal.

Action

33. The Chairman then put the proposal that a subcommittee should be formed under the Panel on Education to follow up the issues and other Members be invited to join the subcommittee's discussion to vote. The outcome was that 10 Members voted in favour of the proposal.

34. The Chairman said that a subcommittee would be formed under the House Committee to study the issues. The following Members agreed to join: Mr LEE Cheuk-yan, Mrs Selina CHOW, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong (as advised by Dr YEUNG Sum), Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, Mr Jasper TSANG, Ms Emily LAU, Ms Audrey EU, and Dr Fernando CHEUNG.

X X X X X X X X