

Panel on Education

List of outstanding items for discussion

(position as at 4 January 2005)

**Proposed timing
for discussion**

1. Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) to conduct examinations outside Hong Kong

The Bills Committee on the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (Amendment) Bill 2003 requested the Secretary for Education and Manpower to report to the Panel on how HKEAA would enforce measures to secure confidentiality of public examinations when HKEAA is about to conduct examinations outside Hong Kong.

To be confirmed

2. Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme in primary schools

At the meeting on 17 November 2003, members of the Panel on Education expressed support for the implementation of the NET Scheme in primary schools and requested the Administration to review the performance of NETs in primary schools with a view to developing a long-term strategy for the provision of NETs in schools.

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The issue was originally scheduled for discussion at the Panel meeting to be held on 8 November 2004. As agreed, discussion will be postponed to the next meeting on 10 January 2005, at which the Administration will update Members on latest development of the NET Scheme in primary schools.

3. Future developments in the higher education sector

At the meeting on 15 March 2004, members of the Panel on Education requested the University Grants Committee (UGC) to report its work progress in respect of the proposals as detailed in its document entitled "To make a difference, to move with the times". Secretary General, UGC undertook to revert to the Panel at a later stage.

To be confirmed

4. Remuneration systems in UGC-funded institutions after

deregulation of university salaries

The Panel on Education received the views and concerns of the deputations on the matter at the meeting on 5 July 2004. Members of the Panel on Education in general expressed concern about the disputes between staff and management, and the role of the governing bodies of UGC-funded institutions in the development and implementation of their new remuneration systems. They considered that UGC-funded institutions should establish fair, open and transparent appeal mechanisms to facilitate the establishment and implementation of the new remuneration systems. In addition, some members suggested that a mechanism should be established to monitor the performance of university councils and the attendance of their members at meetings; and the minutes of the meetings of university councils should be made public.

To be confirmed

Members agreed that the Panel should follow up the issue in the new term. In this connection, Dr YEUNG Sum requested representatives of university administration to relay the views and concerns of deputations to university councils; and suggested that the universities, UGC and EMB should follow up the following issues raised by the deputations –

- (a) the offer of contract terms to new recruits which would affect the universities' ability to attract good academic staff;
- (b) larger percentages of salary reductions for staff in the lower echelon than those for staff in the top echelon;
- (c) availability of appeal and grievance mechanisms for staff who felt aggrieved by the implementation of the new remuneration system to lodge complaints;
- (d) adoption of reasonable and uniform salary scales for similar grades in UGC-funded institutions; and
- (e) complaints against universities' compelling

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serving academic staff on substantiated terms to accept the conversion of their terms of employment to contract terms.

5. The new Student Travel Subsidy Scheme

In discussing the proposed merger of Student Travel Subsidy Scheme and Cross-net Subsidy Scheme at the meeting on 8 November 2004, some members considered it necessary to review the eligibility criteria for a full rate and a half rate grant under the merged scheme (the new Student Travel Subsidy Scheme) for applicants from families with different incomes and number of members. The Administration undertook to revert to the Panel at a future meeting.

To be confirmed

6. Implementation of Small Class Teaching

At the meeting on 8 November 2004, the Panel has received 27 deputations/individuals which/who had expressed support for the implementation of small class teaching in school education. Members urged the Administration to consider the views of deputations on implementation of small class teaching.

To be confirmed

At the meeting on 13 December 2004, members agreed to discuss the implementation and evaluation of the pilot study on effective strategies of class and group teaching in the 37 primary schools and the effectiveness of professional development programmes for teachers to teach in small classes. Representatives of the Steering Committee established to advise on the pilot study throughout its duration would be invited to the meeting.

7. School Development and Accountability

The Panel discussed the progress of implementation of the school development and accountability framework at its meeting on 13 December 2004, with emphasis on the implementation of school self-evaluation and the external school review processes. Members agreed to revisit the

To be confirmed

issue and meet deputations at a future meeting.

8. Review of the Medium of Instruction for Secondary Schools and Secondary School Places Allocation

Item proposed by the Administration. The Administration has advised that a public consultation on the "Review of the Medium of Instruction for Secondary Schools and Secondary School Places Allocation" will be launched in early January 2005.

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9. Government funding to support the development work of the reform of the academic structure of senior secondary education and higher education

Item proposed by the Administration. The Administration intends to seek views from the Panel on setting aside funding deemed necessary to meet the core development costs for the proposed reform of the academic structure of senior secondary and higher education.

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10. Proposed retention of a supernumerary principal education officer post to oversee the preparation, development and implementation of the reform of the academic structure of senior secondary education and higher education (3+3+4 academic reform)

Item proposed by the Administration. The Administration have created a supernumerary Principal Education Officer (PEO) to strengthen the coordination of the implementation planning, in particular on coordinating the consultation exercise of the 3+3+4 academic reform. Although the Administration was still consolidating the views from the public and finalizing the consultation report, the direction and broad framework for development of the 3+3+4 academic reform commands widespread support among educators and the community at large. Many of the community feedback, while welcoming the reform direction, remind the Administration that the supporting conditions of the reform shall be well developed and provided timely and

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appropriately to ensure that the school sector and other relevant parties have the required capacity to take on the changes. Having regard to the scale and the stringent timeframe of the reform, the Administration proposes to retain the existing supernumerary PEO post up to end 2011 to professionally support the 3+3+4 academic reform and provide a holistic business plan and formulate strategy to coordinate cross-divisional responsibilities and activities related to the new system.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
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