

LegCo Panel on Education

Policy Initiatives of the Education and Manpower Bureau

Introduction

This note elaborates on the new initiative in the 2005 Policy Address and the new and on-going initiatives in the 2005 Policy Agenda that concern the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB).

2005 Policy Address

Helping the Poor and Needy

In collaboration with schools, to provide school-based after-school learning and other support services for needy children

2. Government is very concerned about the educational needs of children of low-income families. At present, we provide, for instance, nine-year free education, heavily subsidized senior secondary education, various kinds of recurrent subvention which may be used to support after-school learning and related activities, as well as different forms of student financial assistance (including school fee remission, textbook assistance, travel subsidy, etc).

3. We will earmark more resources in the coming financial year to enable schools to strengthen co-operation with youth organizations at the district level to provide school-based after-school learning support and extra-curricular activities as appropriate to those most in need of them. This we expect will increase the children's learning effectiveness, broaden their learning experiences outside classroom, and raise their understanding of the community and sense of belonging.

4. The new initiative will incur a recurrent expenditure of \$75 million. In rolling it out, we would take into account existing school activities and funding and the emphasis is to provide after-school remedial learning support and other activities conducive to the whole-person development of the children. Details would be developed in consultation with schools and non-government agencies.

2005 Policy Agenda

Enlightened People with a Rich Culture

A. New initiatives

Work on a detailed proposal to allow the entry of more non-local students into Hong Kong for education

5. Admission of non-local students into local education institutions brings educational, cultural and economic benefits to Hong Kong. The presence of these students increases our ethnic and cultural diversity, true to Hong Kong's position as Asia's World City. They also help broaden the perspectives of local students and stimulate healthy competition. As Hong Kong's education services enjoy high professional standards, apart from catering for local needs, they can be further developed to serve people in the Mainland and elsewhere in Asia. We believe Hong Kong has the potential to become the regional education hub in the longer term.

6. To this end, we wish to encourage non-local student to come to Hong Kong for study. The current immigration policy allows the entry of overseas students for full-time study at all levels, but the admission of Mainland students is restricted to full-time studies at degree and above levels at University

Grants Committee (UGC) – funded institutions, and their number is subjected to the sector’s overall quota for non-local students, which for the 2004/05 academic year is 4% within the publicly-funded approved student number targets. We wish to relax immigration control to allow more non-local students (in particular those from the Mainland) to come to Hong Kong for different types of programmes in different institutions. Our guiding principle is that the education opportunities of our local students must be fully taken into account, and necessary immigration control has to be in place to guard against abuse.

7. EMB is actively working with the relevant bureaux and departments regarding the operational details, with a view to implementing the new arrangements in the 2005/06 academic year.

Provide additional resources initially for three years starting from the 2005-06 school year to public sector primary schools with 12 or more classes to improve the teacher-to-class ratio with a view to reducing teachers' workload and implementing specialized teaching

8. The additional provision in the form of a cash grant provided to primary school will be calculated on the basis of improving the teacher-to-class ratio of whole day primary schools from 1.4:1 to 1.5:1 and the mid-point salary of Certificated Master/Mistress, resulting in a demand for about 900 teachers. For schools which are entitled to more than one additional teacher, the provision will be phased in one at a time over a period of up to three years starting from the 2005/06 school year.

9. Schools should use the additional resources to relieve the workload of teachers by allowing them to focus on the teaching of the subject they

specialise in, with priority to be given to the English Language, to be followed by Mathematics and/or the Chinese Language. The objective is to help teachers to deepen their pedagogical content knowledge and professional expertise to bring the best effect of learning and teaching based on the specific needs of their students and schools. Where a teacher is required to teach more than one subject for practical reasons, the teacher should be assigned to teach the same two subjects to the same class so as to enhance the teacher's knowledge of the students.

10. Schools are encouraged to adapt the idea flexibly depending on the expertise available. We appreciate that it may take time to move towards the ideal staff deployment, and will not impose unnecessary constraints on schools. There is no intention to require extra qualifications of teachers.

Introduce the school-based professional support programmes to provide targeted support at the school level to empower frontline educators in capacity building and to take forward education initiatives in a strategic manner

11. We will scale-up school-based professional support from 2005-06 school year with the setting up of the Education Development Fund. The support programmes focus on building networks of school leaders, seconding experienced teachers to work with schools on particular learning areas, identifying professional development schools, building school partnerships with universities and engagement of leading principals and teachers in other schools review processes.

12. The emphasis will be to enhance the professional capacity of principals and teachers, to build ownership of the various reform measures and to help them to inter-connect and prioritise the measures.

B. On-going initiatives

Studying the possibility of simplifying and rationalizing the teaching grade structure of public sector schools

13. The existing teaching grade structure of public sector schools is anachronistic and needs a holistic review. We have completed a preliminary study to incorporate competency-based career progression, delineation of responsibility by rank and continuing professional development of teachers. We are assessing the implications of the proposals and will consult teachers and the public at an appropriate time.

Planning with schools still operating in bi-sessional mode to work towards enabling all primary school students to have opportunities to study in whole-day primary school

14. Of the 100 school premises still operating in bi-sessional mode in the 2004/05 school, 70 have agreed plans for conversion to whole-day primary schooling. We shall monitor the conversion of these 70 schools.

15. We hope to reach an agreement with the remaining bi-sessional schools on the arrangement for conversion to whole-day operation by 2007. In the interim, we shall monitor their situation and consult the sponsors on the way to implement whole-day primary schooling.

Consulting the public on the long-term arrangements of the Secondary School Places Allocation System and the Medium of Instruction Policy

16. The Working Group on Review of Secondary School Places

Allocation (SSPA) and Medium of Instruction (MOI) for Secondary Schools, set up under the Education Commission, will conduct a public consultation in early 2005 with a view to gauging the public's views on the long-term arrangements for both the SSPA and MOI.

Consolidating the views expressed on the new senior secondary education and higher education reform and deciding on the way forward for the new academic structure including the design, implementation details and financial arrangement

17. We launched a three-month consultation on 20 October 2004 to seek feedback from the community on the design blueprint, time for implementation and financial arrangement of the new senior secondary education and higher education reform. We will analyse the feedback collected during the public consultation and publish a final report on "Reforming the Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education" before mid-2005.

18. Consultation on details of the proposed subject curriculum framework will be conducted around mid-2005. By then, more information regarding the University Admission Criteria will be released to schools. Other details which require further consultation and discussion will be specified in the final report.

Implementing the University Grants Committee's recommendations of the Higher Education Review

19. The UGC will implement the various initiatives set out in its Roadmap document "To make a Difference, To Move with the Times", in

particular to promote role differentiation and deep collaboration among the institutions with the aim of achieving international competitiveness and efficiency.

Education and Manpower Bureau
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