

Panel on Education

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 4 April 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. 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 serving academic staff on substantiated terms to accept the conversion of their terms of employment to contract terms.

3. 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

4. Implementation of Small Class Teaching

At its meeting on 8 November 2004, the Panel received views from 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.

June 2005

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 at a future meeting. Representatives of the Steering Committee established to advise on the pilot study throughout its duration would be invited to the meeting.

At the meeting on 14 March 2005, members agreed to invite academics to discuss the item on 6 April 2005. On 24 March 2005, the Administration suggested to defer discussion of the item to June 2005 when Professor Galton, the adviser cum consultant engaged for the pilot study, would be in town.

5. 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 issue and meet deputations at a future meeting. A proposed school list will be prepared by the Quality Assurance Division in due course.

To be confirmed

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

At its meeting on 14 March 2005, the Panel received views from 26 deputations on the Consultation Document entitled "Review of the Medium of Instruction for Secondary Schools and Secondary School Places Allocation". The Panel agreed to follow up the discussion on the item with the Administration and the Chairman of the Working Group on Review of Secondary School Places Allocation and Medium of Instruction for Secondary Schools at a future meeting.

6 April 2005

7. 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 deems necessary to meet the core development costs for the proposed reform of the academic structure of senior secondary and higher education.

To be confirmed

8. 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 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 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.

To be confirmed

9. Training of kindergarten teachers

Item proposed by Ms Emily LAU. Ms LAU is concerned about the quality of early childhood education. She would like to discuss policies on the requirements and professional development programmes for kindergarten teachers in the long term.

To be confirmed

10. Financial assistance scheme for evening adult education courses

Item proposed by the Administration. The Administration will provide a paper setting out the objectives, scope, levels of financial assistance, and implementation details.

6 April 2005

11. Use of the Language Fund

At its meeting on 4 March 2005, the Finance Committee approved a new commitment of \$500 million for injection into the Language Fund. The Administration undertook to arrange a further briefing for the Panel on the allocation of \$200 million of the injection among the various measures to strengthen support to schools and teachers in language education at primary and pre-primary levels. It was also agreed that the Panel meeting should be arranged before the exact allocation would be determined.

9 May 2005

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
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