

# 立法會 *Legislative Council*

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## Panel on Education

### Background brief prepared by Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 12 December 2005

#### Injection into the Language Fund

#### Purpose

This paper provides information on injection into the Language Fund. This paper also summarises relevant deliberations of the Panel on Education since the first term of the Legislative Council (LegCo).

#### Background

2. The Language Fund was set up in March 1994 with an initial allocation of \$300 million from the Government to fund projects and activities aimed at improving Hong Kong people's proficiency in Chinese (including Putonghua) and English. It is held in trust under the Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower Incorporation Ordinance (Cap. 1098). The Fund is operated in accordance with a Trust Deed which sets out the objects of the Fund, the broad principles governing the disbursements, as well as its management framework. The objects and disbursement principles of the Fund are in **Appendix I**. Its annual audited accounts are tabled in LegCo.

3. The Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR), which was established in 1996 to advise Government on language education issues, is responsible for advising the Trustee of the Language Fund on the policies and procedures governing the operation of the Fund. The terms of reference of SCOLAR are in **Appendix II**.

#### Injection into the Language Fund

4. Since the setting up of the Language Fund with an initial allocation of \$300 million, the Administration has further injected a total of 1,100 million into the Fund, i.e. \$200 million in 2001, \$400 million in 2003 and \$500 million in 2005, details of these injection proposals are summarised in the following paragraphs.

## First injection proposal

### *Need for the injection*

5. The Panel on Education was consulted on the Administration's proposal of injecting \$200 million into the Language Fund at its meeting on 15 January 2001. According to the Administration, SCOLAR had taken stock of the work done since its establishment and had identified possible priority areas for further action which included –

- (a) strengthening language teaching and learning for the young (i.e. pre-school and primary students), given the importance of early exposure;
- (b) enriching the language environment for students through, for example, strengthened immersion programmes for students;
- (c) strengthening and continuing projects which had been piloted and proven to be effective and successful in enhancing language teaching and learning, such as the Support Centre for Teachers Using Chinese as the Medium of Instruction;
- (d) supporting Government's overall policy on teacher training; and
- (e) studying education systems in other places where students had proven to be able to master both mother tongue as well as one or more second/foreign languages, and identifying proven practices which might have application in Hong Kong.

As the Language Fund had a balance of \$79.2 million only at that time, there was a need to replenish the Language Fund so that further initiatives to raise Hong Kong people's standards in Chinese and English could be funded.

### *Members' concerns*

6. Hon Emily LAU expressed concern that despite huge investment in the Language Fund, the language standard in Hong Kong was on the decline. She also expressed reservations about the effectiveness of a three-year pilot scheme to be conducted by SCOLAR to send pre-service teachers to attend overseas immersion training as part of their training programme. Ms LAU considered that recruiting quality teachers would be the most straightforward and important way to raise the language standard of students. The Administration should increase funding allocation, such as using the Language Fund, to employ more quality teachers for language teaching in order to achieve the objective of enabling students to become biliterate (in written Chinese and English) and trilingual (in Cantonese, Putonghua and spoken English).

7. The Administration pointed out that feedback from educational institutions and participants on the effects of immersion programmes had been encouraging. One of

the main objectives of injecting \$200 million into the Language Fund was to implement the pilot scheme. The Administration would also consider measures to attract more qualified language teachers. However, the Language Fund which was established to provide non-recurrent funding support to quality language projects would not have sufficient funds to support projects requiring recurrent expenditures.

8. In response to Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong's query on why English language projects had received more funding vis-à-vis Chinese and Putonghua projects, the Administration explained to the Panel that the large difference in total funding between English and Chinese projects could be attributed to some costly English language projects such as the Funding Scheme for Workplace English Training which had a \$50 million budget.

9. The Administration's proposal was approved by the Finance Committee (FC) at its meeting on 23 February 2001.

### Second injection proposal

#### *Need for the injection*

10. SCOLAR conducted a review of language education in Hong Kong at the invitation of the Secretary for Education and Manpower in 2001-2002. The Panel on Education received a briefing on the findings and recommendations of the review at its meeting on 20 January 2003. The Administration also informed the Panel that while the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority were expected to implement most of the SCOLAR's recommendations with their own recurrent resources, SCOLAR also planned to carry out a number of new non-recurrent initiatives with the support of the Language Fund. A list of these initiatives is in **Appendix III**. According to the Administration, there was a need to inject \$400 million into the Language Fund to meet the funding requirements of the initiatives being planned by SCOLAR and other proposals from interested parties.

#### *Members' concerns*

11. In its consultation document published in January 2003, SCOLAR recommended that schools should, as far as possible, recruit teachers with a Bachelor of Education degree in the relevant language subject; or a first degree in the relevant language subject and a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate in Education with a major in the language subject to teach languages from the 2003-04 school year. Members noted that SCOLAR had proposed to set up an incentive grant scheme to encourage serving language teachers, particularly those who had neither a degree nor any teacher training in the relevant language subject, to upgrade their professional qualifications to match that required of their counterparts entering the profession in the 2004-2005 school year or later (subsequently called the Professional Development Incentive Grant Scheme for Language Teachers). Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed concern that as serving language teachers would prefer to acquire a degree qualification in education, there might be insufficient degree and postgraduate level programmes for enrolment of serving language teachers within a short period of time.

12. The Administration explained to the Panel that it had maintained close contact with the University Grant Committee-funded institutions and other education providers on the provision of degree and postgraduate level programme places for the teaching profession and had impressed upon them the great demand for language teachers. The Chairman of SCOLAR also pointed out that SCOLAR did not recommend a deadline for some 20 000 serving Chinese and English language teachers to acquire the required qualifications. SCOLAR would give priority to some 6 000 serving Chinese and English Language teachers who did not have post-secondary education or teaching training in the language subject they taught.

13. In response to Hon SZETO Wah's enquiry about the budget for the incentive grant scheme to meet the demand of serving Chinese and English language teachers, the Chairman of SCOLAR informed the Panel that a budget in the region of \$200 million would be required. He added that SCOLAR had recommended the establishment of a special task force of teaching consultants to help serving language teachers acquaint with the latest pedagogical knowledge and skills required for the curriculum reform. Additional resources would be required if the recommendation was accepted by the Administration.

14. The Administration's proposal was approved by FC at its meeting on 21 February 2003.

15. SCOLAR published the Final Report of Language Education Review in June 2003. A summary of its recommendations is in **Appendix IV**.

16. The distribution of funded projects by project type and application group (as at 15 January 2005) available on the SCOLAR's website is in **Appendix V**.

### Third injection proposal

#### *Need for the injection*

17. At its meeting on 7 February 2005, the Panel on Education was consulted on the Administration's proposals of injecting \$500 million into the Language Fund. According to the proposals, \$300 million would be allocated for the expansion of the Professional Development Incentive Grant Scheme for Language Teachers in primary and secondary schools. Another \$200 million would be allocated to strengthen support for language education at primary and pre-primary levels with the following breakdown –

- |     |  |               |
|-----|--|---------------|
| (a) | overseas immersion course for primary school teachers  | \$140 million |
| (b) | intensive training on specific aspects of the learning and teaching of language subjects for primary school teachers | \$20 million  |
| (c) | professional development of pre-primary school teachers  | \$20 million  |

- (d) other miscellaneous support measures \$20 million

18. On the expansion of the existing Professional Development Incentive Grant Scheme for Language Teachers, the Administration informed the Panel that the initial allocation of \$225 million could provide subsidies to about 7 500 teachers in a five-year timeframe. However, SCOLAR had already received 4 200 applications as at mid-January 2005 and 3 790 had been approved. The Administration further informed the Panel that the 2003 teachers survey conducted by EMB showed that there were over 20 000 serving Chinese or English language teachers in primary or secondary schools in Hong Kong who had not acquired the new entry qualification requirements. The Administration proposed that an additional \$300 million should be allocated from the Language Fund for the expansion of the Scheme which could cover at least an additional 10 000 serving teachers for their professional development.

19. Regarding the strengthened support in language education for children in the pre-primary and primary levels, the Administration pointed out that results of the first Territory-wide System Assessment Test in 2004 revealed that –

- (a) 76% and 83% of primary three students had attained the minimally acceptable level of basic competency in English and Chinese languages respectively; and
- (b) 24% and 17% of primary three students had not attained the basic competency in English and Chinese languages respectively.

As empirical studies showed that the gap between students not attaining the basic competency in the Territory-wide System Assessment Test and the better performing students would widen at primary six level if the students not attaining the basic competency were not urgently assisted, there was a need to strengthen support to schools and teachers of the language subjects at primary three level as soon as possible.

20. The Administration further informed the Panel that studies had been conducted which generally concluded that an early stage of a student between pre-primary and primary three levels was the most critical period for his language learning. The Administration had already planned various measures to improve language education at these levels.

*Members' concern*

21. Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong stressed that while he had no objection to the proposal, the Administration must ensure that the funds would be distributed fairly for the use of both Chinese and English language teachers. At Mr CHEUNG's request, the Administration had provided the following sets of figures on the disbursement of the Language Fund –

- (a) breakdown of committed Language Fund projects by relevant language (**Appendix VI**);
- (b) profile of applications to the Professional Development Incentive Grant Scheme for Language Teachers by subject and level taught (**Appendix VII**); and
- (c) provision of support by the Task Force of Language Support<sup>1</sup> (**Appendix VIII**).

22. When FC considered the Administration's proposal of injecting \$500 million into the Language Fund at its meeting on 4 March 2005, some FC members expressed concern about the inadequacy of the provision made to language education at pre-primary level. FC had given approval to the Administration's proposals, but the Administration was requested to brief the Panel on Education on the allocation of \$200 million of the injection among the various measures to strengthen support to schools and teachers in language education at pre-primary and primary levels.

*Allocation of fund to strengthen support in language education at pre-primary level*

23. The Panel on Education was consulted on the proposals to strengthen language education at pre-primary and primary levels with the injection of \$500 million into the Language Fund at its meeting on 9 May 2005. According to the Administration, it would explore the implementation of a basket of measures, including sponsoring teachers to go onto overseas immersion courses, intensive training on specific aspects of the learning and teaching of language subjects (e.g. grammar/phones in context, and writing and vocabulary building skills, etc), programmes specific for professional development of pre-primary teachers, and other support measures to be designed.

24. Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong and Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG expressed concern that the professional development of pre-primary teachers had received only very small allocation out of the \$500 million injection into the Language Fund. Mr CHEUNG pointed out that as some 7 000 pre-primary teachers had not completed a certificate programme in early childhood education and the costs of the Compulsory Language Immersion Programme for pre-service English Language and Putonghua teacher trainees in teacher education institutes were as high as \$42,000 and \$16,000 respectively, it was unfair that only \$20 million would be used in the professional development of pre-primary teachers.

25. The Administration pointed out to the Panel that while the Administration noted the view of some members that more emphasis should be given to support for schools and teachers at pre-primary level, it should be appreciated that the qualifications requirements, learning approaches and hence the needs in professional development, between kindergarten and primary school teachers were quite different.

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<sup>1</sup> The Task Force of Language Support was set up in the 2003-04 school year under SCOLAR's recommendation to support schools to implement the curriculum reform, with particular respect to language learning and teaching.

The Administration therefore had proposed to develop separate programmes for strengthening the professional development of kindergarten teachers. Nonetheless, there was still room for leverage of support measures between the two groups of teachers. For example, kindergarten teachers might also benefit from overseas immersion courses. Training on specific aspects of the learning and teaching of language subjects might also be provided to kindergarten teachers.

26. The Administration further explained that SCOLAR would examine the needs of pre-primary teachers in professional development and determine their share of the \$500 million injection into the Fund. The allocation of \$20 million was an initial estimate and could be adjusted with the aim of providing sufficient training opportunities for pre-primary teachers' professional development in language education. The Administration further explained that based on past experience, short duration courses focused on specific areas of teaching and learning would be more suitable for serving pre-primary teachers to complement their general professional upgrading. Given the strong views of members on the need to upgrade the pre-primary workforce to enhance quality of language teaching in early childhood education, EMB would examine the development needs of pre-primary teachers in an extensive manner, and make recommendations in support of their professional development.

27. In response to Dr Fernando CHEUNG's enquiry about the difference between the professional development programmes for pre-primary teachers and primary school teachers, the Administration explained that there were different expectations in primary schools and kindergartens related to language education. For instance, English language teachers in primary schools were required to teach students in regular classes and students were expected to achieve a set of learning objectives which would be assessed through the Territory-wide System Assessment at primary three and six levels. On the other hand, pre-primary teachers were expected to prepare kindergarten pupils with the abilities and confidence to attend primary schools, and exposure and experience in language education was part of the whole programme to ensure school readiness of young children. They were expected to acquire a different set of skills and pedagogies for exposing kindergarten pupils between the ages of three to six to the languages of English and Chinese in a quality manner. In the light of their different needs in professional development, EMB would collaborate with SCOLAR to provide specific development programmes for pre-primary teachers in language education.

28. Hon Emily LAU pointed out that researches had concluded that quality language education at an early age was most critical for children in language learning. She asked how the Administration would conduct in-depth researches into language learning at an early age. She also asked how pre-primary teachers would benefit from the four to eight weeks development programmes and become competent language teachers.

29. The Administration informed the Panel that there were already a number of empirical researches into the language education in Hong Kong. EMB would study the results of these researches with a view to promoting a wider adoption of the best practices in language education at pre-primary and primary levels. The

Administration explained that it would plan the implementation of the support measures having regard to the qualifications and needs of the pre-primary workforce. The proposed allocation would mainly be used in the development of separate programmes for strengthening the professional development of pre-primary teachers in specific aspects of language teaching in a more focused approach. For instance, pre-primary teachers would be provided with five to six three-hour courses on promotion of language activities, such as songs, stories, games and on-line/web-based learning materials, which were structured around the current guideline issued to kindergartens by the Curriculum Development Institute.

30. The Administration was requested to report to the Panel on the use of the \$500 million injected into the Language Fund and the implementation progress of the Professional Development Incentive Grant Scheme for Language Teachers and other professional development programmes to strengthen support in language education at pre-primary and primary levels.

### **Relevant questions raised at Council meetings**

31. Details of the questions raised at Council meetings which are relevant to the Language Fund are in **Appendix IX**.

### **Relevant papers**

32. Members may wish to refer to the minutes of the relevant meetings of the Panel on Education and the Finance Committee, as well as the relevant papers provided by the Administration for these meetings as set out in **Appendix X**. Soft copies of these documents are available at the website of the Legislative Council at <http://www.legco.gov.hk>.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
6 December 2005



## **Objects and Disbursement Principles of the Language Fund**

### **Objects**

The Trustee shall hold the capital and income of the Language Fund upon trust to apply the income and all or such part or parts of the capital at such time, in such manner, to such extent and subject to such conditions as the Trustee may (after considering the advice of SCOLAR) determine for any one or all of the following purposes –

- (a) to support, directly and indirectly, proficiency in the use of the Chinese (including Putonghua) and English languages by the people of Hong Kong; and
- (b) to fund programmes, projects, research, textbooks, reference materials, teaching aids, language teachers, language experts, educationalists, education and training institutions, courses, training, publications and publicity directed towards the enhancement in the use of the Chinese (including Putonghua) and English language by the people of Hong Kong.

### **Disbursement Principles**

The following broad principles shall be observed in the disbursements from the Language Fund –

- (a) equal importance should be given to improving proficiency in Chinese and English;
- (b) a balance should be maintained between meeting the specific needs of schools and those of the community at large;
- (c) for school children, emphasis should be put on increasing opportunities for language learning, in particular through extra-curricular activities;
- (d) innovative ideas and learner-friendly, pragmatic approaches should be encouraged; and
- (e) a positive attitude towards learning and acquiring proficiency in the languages should be cultivated.

**Enclosure 3 to FCR(2004-05)44**

**Standing Committee on Language Education and Research  
Terms of Reference**

To advise the Government on language education issues in general, and in particular –

- (a) to advise on the overall policy on language education, including the medium of instruction;
- (b) to advise on the setting of language standards, including general goals for language learning at different levels of education and specific language attainment targets at each stage of education;
- (c) to advise on measures to be adopted to attain the standards mentioned in (b) above;
- (d) to identify research and development projects which are necessary for the enhancement of language proficiency and language in education, and to implement or oversee the satisfactory completion of such projects;
- (e) to co-ordinate all research and development activities relating to language proficiency by relevant agencies; monitor their progress, evaluate their effectiveness, and make recommendations to the Government accordingly;
- (f) to develop and promote a public education and information programme in respect of language proficiency issues; and
- (g) to advise the Trustee of the Fund on policies and procedures governing the operation of the Fund, and to provide such assistance as the Trustee may require to support, directly or indirectly, the enhancement of the language proficiency of the community.

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**New Non-recurrent Initiatives Being Planned by SCOLAR**

|    | <b>Initiative</b>  | <b>Estimated Funding Commitment (\$M)</b> |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | Setting up <b>district-based task forces of teaching consultants</b> to assist individual schools to enhance the teaching approaches of their language panels (training and engaging 180 experienced teachers for three years) | 300                                       |
| 2. | <b>Incentive grants for serving language teachers</b> to upgrade their subject knowledge and pedagogy (covering 50% of the course fees, subject to a maximum of \$30,000)  | 200                                       |
| 3. | <b>Pilot projects on new and effective Chinese and English teaching approaches</b>   | 50  |
| 4. | <b>Putonghua Summer Immersion Course Subsidy Scheme</b> for eligible Chinese Language teachers to attend immersion course in the mainland (maximum grant at \$10,000)  | 20  |
| 5. | Development of a <b>Putonghua proficiency scale</b> to help working adults plan and assess their Putonghua learning  | 2   |
| 6. | <b>Further research on using Putonghua to teach Chinese Language</b> to better understand conditions necessary for successful switch from using Cantonese to using Putonghua to teach Chinese Language                         | 2   |
| 7. | <b>Promoting the use of television programmes in the teaching and learning of English</b>  | 2   |
| 8. | <b>Research on pre-primary language education</b>  | 1   |
| 9. | <b>Sponsoring the Annual Hong Kong News Awards</b> for three years to recognise high language standard in Chinese and English news and headline writing  | 1   |
|    | <b>Total</b>   | <b>578</b>                                |

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) has issued the final report of its language education review. The report can be found on the SCOLAR website at [www.language-education.com](http://www.language-education.com). Following is a summary of the Committee's recommendations:

### **SPECIFYING AND ASSESSING LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES EXPECTED OF OUR STUDENTS AND WORKFORCE**

- To give our students and working adults a clear target to work towards, **Chinese and English competencies** expected of our students, university graduates and entry-level professionals **should be specified** using descriptors and exemplars.
- **Assessment instruments should be developed** to help the Government, educators and the learners themselves evaluate if the expected language competencies are being achieved.

### **Students in Primary 1 to Secondary 7**

#### ***Basic competencies***

- The development of **basic competencies in Chinese and English Language for Key Stages 1 to 4** (i.e. Primary 1 to Secondary 5) by the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) is supported. The same effort should be extended to Key Stage 5 (i.e. Secondary 6-7).
- Both **educational and vocational considerations** should be taken into account in developing the basic competencies for Key Stages 3 to 5 (i.e. Secondary 3-7). The advice of human resources professionals with expertise in language training should be sought.
- Basic competencies should be regularly reviewed to cater for changes in societal demand as well as changes in the language proficiency of the population over time.
- School management and teachers should **help students achieve** not only the basic competencies but **the full range of learning outcomes** that the language curricula aim to deliver.

### *Basic Competency Assessment*

- The **System Assessment** of the Basic Competency Assessment (BCA) to be conducted on students at the end of Key Stages 1 to 3 **should be a low-stakes assessment**. Neither the Government nor the school management should release the results of individual schools to the public.
- The **Student Assessment** of the BCA is an online programme, which will give schools additional information on individual students' attainment of the basic competencies in reading and listening. It will provide a large pool of assessment items, which teachers and students can use as **a language learning resource**.
- The Government should channel available resources to schools taking into consideration their need for support in language education as reflected in their performance in the BCA.
- School management should provide additional support to students who have difficulty in achieving the basic competencies in Chinese or English Language for their Key Stage. However, these students should not be kept from moving up to the next school level unless they also had problems in other subjects.

### *Standards-referenced public examinations*

- The development of **standards-referenced Hong Kong Certificate of Education (HKCE) Chinese and English examinations** by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) and their implementation **in 2007** are supported.
- The Authority should also develop standards-referenced Hong Kong Advanced Level (HKAL) Chinese and English examinations and implement them in 2009.
- The HKEAA and CDC should decide which grades in these standards-referenced examinations reflect the basic competencies of students in Secondary 5 and Secondary 7 (i.e. Key Stages 4 and 5) respectively.
- **To help evaluate Secondary 3 and Secondary 5 students' proficiency in Putonghua**, the HKEAA should revamp its HKCE Putonghua examination to make it **a standards-referenced assessment** of listening and speaking suitable for students of Secondary 3 and above. The Authority should complete the

revamping of the examination in time for implementation **in 2007**.

- The HKEAA and CDC should decide which grades in the standards-referenced HKCE Putonghua examination reflect the levels of proficiency expected of students who have completed the Secondary 3 and Secondary 5 Putonghua curricula respectively.

### ***Language requirements for university admission***

- The University Grants Committee should work with local universities to determine, with the help of HKEAA and CDC, which grades in the standards-referenced HKAL examinations reflect the level of Chinese and English required for university admission, taking into account relevant English standard adopted overseas.

### **University graduates and working adults**

- University graduates and working adults should strive to attain the language competencies expected of individuals at their educational level. However, imposing a minimum language requirement for university graduation is not recommended.
- **Employers**, particularly the Government, **should adopt the language competencies expected** of working adults at different educational levels **as requirements for recruitment and/or promotion**.
- To assess their competence in English, working adults can make use of the international English tests available in Hong Kong, including the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the tests accepted by the Workplace English Campaign.
- To help local working adults assess their competence in Chinese, the HKEAA should develop **a general Chinese proficiency assessment** and offer it to the public **no later than 2010**.
- To help local workers plan and assess their progress in Putonghua learning, the HKEAA has been commissioned by SCOLAR to develop **a Putonghua proficiency scale** based on its Test of Proficiency in Putonghua.

### **CREATING A MORE MOTIVATING LANGUAGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

- School management, teachers, parents, the mass media and other

relevant parties in the community should work together to create a more motivating language learning environment for local students and working adults.

### **Curriculum and pedagogy**

- At the pre-primary level, development of a child's mother tongue should take precedence over the acquisition of other languages. Language activities should be authentic, enjoyable and pressure-free. **Exposure to English and Putonghua should only be introduced where teachers with the required proficiency are available and an appropriate informal approach is adopted.**
- The **student-centred approach** of the ongoing **curriculum reform** at primary and secondary levels is supported. School management and teachers should adopt **more lively teaching methods** and make use of a wider variety of print texts, multi-media resources and co-curricular activities to **increase students' interest in language learning.**
- More attention should be given to the **teaching of grammar, phonics and phonetics in English Language and Cantonese pronunciation and standard modern Chinese writing in Chinese Language.** **Language arts should also be promoted** to enrich students' understanding of Chinese and English-speaking cultures.
- **Native-speaking English teachers (NETs)** should be **properly deployed** to enrich the language environment in schools, bring in innovative teaching methods and promote the professional development of local English Language teachers. The Education and Manpower Bureau should **ensure** that the NETs recruited are **adequately prepared in subject knowledge and pedagogy to teach English as a second language in local schools.**
- The Curriculum Development Institute should encourage publishers to produce **more stimulating and interesting language textbooks.**

### **Teachers**

- To ensure the success of the curriculum reform, **more intensive and focused professional development programmes** on curriculum leadership, development and management will be provided **for panel chairpersons** (or curriculum leaders) of language subjects.

- In addition, **a task force of district-based teaching consultants** should be set up to **help individual schools improve their language curricula and pedagogy.**
- To ensure that **language teachers** are adequately prepared for their work, i.e. **proficient** in the language they teach, well grounded in **subject knowledge** and acquainted with the **latest theories and practices in language teaching and learning** –
  - All English and Putonghua teachers should **meet the Language Proficiency Requirement for Teachers (LPR) within the time frame specified by the Government.** The attainment of LPR should be recognised by teacher education providers with the granting of credits or advanced standing for Bachelor of Education (BEd) programmes, and become a pre-requisite for admission to postgraduate-level teacher education programmes.
  - Starting from the 2004/05 school year, new language teachers should hold at least a **BEd degree majoring in the relevant language subject**, or both **a first degree and a Postgraduate Diploma (or Certificate) in Education (PGDE/PCEd) majoring in the relevant language subject.**
  - New language teachers without the recommended qualifications should **acquire them within 3 to 5 years of their entry into the profession.** The Education and Manpower Bureau should re-deploy its resource to provide more training places for these new language teachers.
  - **New language teachers who have not received any initial teacher training should attend a preparatory course** before and/or shortly after assuming teaching duty. The course should cover basic language teaching skills.
  - An **incentive grant** covering 50% of the course fees, subject to a maximum of \$30,000, **should be provided to encourage serving language teachers to acquire the recommended qualifications.** Priority will be given to those who have neither a degree nor any teacher training in the relevant language subjects.
  - The Education and Manpower Bureau should develop a career ladder for language teachers, specifying the qualifications and core competencies to be attained for advancement in the teaching grade.



### School management

- **School principals should** familiarise themselves with the principles of the curriculum reform and **enhance their skills in change management** through continuing professional development.
- To allow language teachers to focus on improving the quality of language teaching and learning, school management should critically review their schools' work processes and deployment of resources to **reduce language teachers' non-teaching workload**, and facilitate the adoption of appropriate group teaching strategies.
- School management should nurture a high quality team of language teachers, promote a language-across-the-curriculum approach, and discourage ineffective use of textbooks, homework and assessment in their schools. They should encourage more extensive use of information technology and multi-media resources, and explore new experiential learning opportunities for their students, such as language camps and joint school activities with international schools.
- School management should **strengthen their communications with parents** and **help them understand the school's approach to language teaching and learning**.

### Parents

- **Parents should help their children** cultivate an interest in language learning and **develop good reading habits**.
- Parents should learn more about the current curriculum reform and support their children's teachers in its implementation. Parent-teacher associations can act as a forum for the exchange of views on language teaching and learning among school management, teachers and parents.

### The wider community

- Schools, parents and students should **make better use of the mass media**, particularly English and Putonghua television and radio programmes, **as resources for language learning**.
- To promote the use of English television programmes in the teaching and learning of English –

- **All** English television programmes should have **English subtitles**; and
- Students, teachers and parents should help to select programmes of interest to students for broadcast on the free English television channels.
- The Language Fund will continue to sponsor the Annual Hong Kong News Awards to recognise Chinese and English news and headline writing of high language standard.
- Adult language learners should take advantage of the various funding schemes and training programmes offered by the Government to improve their language competence.
- A **high-level inter-bureau working group should be set up and chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration to consider language policy issues** that are relevant to enhancing the biliterate and trilingual environment in Hong Kong but **beyond the scope of language education**. Relevant issues may include -
  - whether certain organizations in public and private sectors should provide written materials for public consumption in both Chinese and English and provide trilingual frontline services;
  - how to enhance the quality of language used in programmes produced and/or broadcast by local television and radio service operators, including ensuring the accurate Cantonese, Putonghua and English pronunciation of presenters and performers;
  - whether more quality English and Putonghua radio programmes, with improved quality of reception, should be provided through, e.g. the introduction of digital radio service; and
  - whether support should be given to non-Chinese residents and new immigrants for learning Cantonese and written Chinese.

### **MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION (MOI)**

- **SCOLAR supports adopting the students' mother tongue as the MOI**. If a second language is to be adopted as the MOI, three preconditions – teachers with the capability to teach in that language, students with the proficiency to learn in that language, and the provision of suitable support measures - must be fulfilled.

- The MOI policy review should re-examine the mechanisms used to ensure that these three preconditions are being met by schools using or wishing to use English as the MOI for all subjects.
- Both English-medium and Chinese-medium schools should create an environment that provides more opportunities for the use of English outside the classroom.

## TEACHING CHINESE LANGUAGE IN PUTONGHUA

- **SCOLAR fully endorses the Curriculum Development Council's long-term goal of teaching Chinese Language in Putonghua.**
- Findings from a limited number of local studies conducted so far indicate that students who learn Chinese Language in Putonghua show improvement in Putonghua proficiency and Chinese writing but not necessarily in general Chinese competence. No firm policy or timetable is thus recommended for using Putonghua to teach Chinese Language, pending further studies on the conditions required to ensure a successful switch and prevent possible negative outcomes.
- **Schools** that believe they have the preconditions for success in place are strongly **encouraged to try using Putonghua to teach Chinese Language**. As a basic condition, these schools **should ensure** that the Chinese Language **teachers** deployed to teach the subject in Putonghua **satisfy the Language Proficiency Requirement for Putonghua teachers in speaking and classroom language**.
- To help Chinese Language teachers enhance their Putonghua proficiency, the Language Fund will provide them with subsidies to attend Putonghua summer immersion courses in the mainland.
- Engagement of Chinese Language teachers from the mainland is supported as an interim measure to help interested schools try teaching Chinese Language in Putonghua. The teachers engaged should hold qualifications equivalent to a local degree and recognised teacher training both majoring in Chinese Language.

**SCOLAR**

June 2003

**Distribution of Funded Projects by Language Group,  
Project Type and Applicant Group(as at 15.1.2005)**

| <b>Applicant Group</b>  | <b>No. of Projects</b> | <b>Amount of Grant (\$ in million)</b> |
|---|------------------------|--|
| School  | 83                     | 5.3                                    |
| Tertiary Institution/Post-secondary college                   | 56                     | 72.7                                   |
| Educational Body  | 36                     | 40.6                                   |
| Individual  | 25                     | 17.5                                   |
| Community Organization  | 27                     | 11.5                                   |
| SCOLAR Support Unit (SSU)/Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) | 27                     | 478.1                                  |
| Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK)                             | 19                     | 27.1                                   |
| Education Department  | 15                     | 113.7                                  |
| HK Examinations and Assessment Authority                      | 1                      | 0.2                                    |
| Commercial/Industrial Organization                            | 3                      | 1.6                                    |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>292</b>             | <b>768.3</b>                           |

| <b>Project Type</b>                         | <b>No. of Projects</b> | <b>Amount of Grant (\$ in million)</b> |
|---|------------------------|--|
| Language Learning Activity                  | 125                    | 152.2                                  |
| Research on Language Teaching and Learning  | 53                     | 67.0                                   |
| Production of Teaching and Learning Package | 44                     | 42.6                                   |
| Public Education Programme                  | 42                     | 128.7                                  |
| Teacher Training                            | 28                     | 377.8                                  |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>292</b>             | <b>768.3</b>                           |

**Breakdown of Language Fund Projects by Relevant Language**

| Relevant Language   | Number of Projects Completed / Committed | Grant Disbursed / to be Disbursed (\$ million) |
|---------------------|--|--|
| English             | 112                                      | 260.4  |
| Chinese             | 104                                      | 58.2   |
| Putonghua           | 43                                       | 63.8   |
| Chinese & Putonghua | 5  | 6.6  |
| Cross Languages     | 28                                       | 325.3  |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>292</b>                               | <b>714.3</b>                                   |

**Professional Development Incentive Grant Scheme  
for Language Teachers**

**Profile of Applications by Applicants' Subject and Level of Teaching**

|                                | <b>English</b> | <b>Chinese</b> |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Applications Approved</b>   |                |                |
| <i>Primary</i>                 | 998            | 1734           |
| <i>Secondary</i>               | 491            | 508            |
| <i>Primary /<br/>Secondary</i> | 79             | 114            |
| <b>Total Approved</b>          | <b>1568</b>    | <b>2356</b>    |
| <b>Applications Received</b>   |                |                |
| <b>*Total Received</b>         | <b>1780</b>    | <b>2529</b>    |

\* Applications received but not yet approved are under process.

## Statistics on the Task Force of Language Support

### I. Members of the Task Force

| Subject Specialized in | Current Strength of Team |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Chinese                | 38 *                     |
| English                | 17                       |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>55</b>                |

\* Including 15 language experts from the Mainland under a Guangdong-Hong Kong exchange programme.

### II. Support received by Schools

| Subject Supported | Number of Schools receiving support in the Subject |
|-------------------|--|
| Chinese           | 180  |
| English           | Over 160   |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>Over 340</b>                                    |

**Questions relating to the Language Fund raised by Members  
at Council meetings since the first term of the Legislative Council**

| <b>Meeting Date</b> | <b>Question</b>  |
|---------------------|--|
| 27.1.1999           | Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung raised a written question on operation of the language fund.                         |
| 26.1.2000           | Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung raised an oral question on Workplace English Campaign.                                 |
| 10.12.2003          | Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong raised a written question on language teachers to acquire recommended qualifications. |
| 5.1.2005            | Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee raised a written question on enhancing language proficiency of language teachers.   |

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## Relevant documents on Language Fund

| Date of meeting | Meeting            | Minutes/Paper   | LC Paper No.  |
|-----------------|--------------------|---|---|
| 15.1.01         | Panel on Education | Minutes of meeting  | <a href="#">CB(2)1107/00-01</a>   |
|                 |                    | Administration's paper on "Language Fund"   | <a href="#">CB(2)666/00-01(04)</a>  |
| 23.2.01         | Finance Committee  | Minutes of meeting  | <a href="#">FC123/00-01</a>   |
|                 |                    | New Item "Grant to the Language Fund"   | <a href="#">FCR(2000-01)74</a>  |
| 20.1.03         | Panel on Education | Minutes of meeting  | <a href="#">CB(2)1177/02-03</a>   |
|                 |                    | Legislative Council Brief on "Language Education Review by the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research" issued by the Administration                      | <a href="#">EMB/SSU/CR 6/2041/96</a>  |
|                 |                    | Consultation document and a leaflet entitled "Action plan to raise language standards in Hong Kong" issued by the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research | <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/ed/papers/ed_act_plan_e-scan.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/ed/papers/ed_act_plan_e-scan.pdf</a> |
| 21.2.03         | Finance Committee  | Minutes of meeting  | <a href="#">FC80/02-03</a>  |
|                 |                    | New Item "Grant to the Language Fund"   | <a href="#">FCR(2002-03)57</a>  |
| 7.2.05          | Panel on Education | Minutes of meeting  | <a href="#">CB(2)1028/04-05</a>   |
|                 |                    | Administration's paper on "Injection into the Language Fund"  | <a href="#">CB(2)795/04-05(04)</a>  |
|                 |                    | Administration's paper on "Disbursement of the Language Fund"   | <a href="#">CB(2)884/04-05(01)</a>  |

| <b>Date of meeting</b> | <b>Meeting</b>     | <b>Minutes/Paper</b>   | <b>LC Paper No.</b>                 |
|------------------------|--------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 4.3.05                 | Finance Committee  | Minutes of meeting   | <a href="#">FC89/04-05</a>          |
|                        |                    | New item "Grant to the Language Fund"  | <a href="#">FCR(2004-05)44</a>      |
| 9.5.05                 | Panel on Education | Minutes of meeting   | <a href="#">CB(2)1824/04-05</a>     |
|                        |                    | Administration's paper on "Use of Language Fund – proposals to strengthen support in language education at pre-primary and primary levels" | <a href="#">CB(2)1429/04-05(01)</a> |

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