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6 July 2006

Members of the Panel on Education

Dear members,

Panel on Education

I wish to draw your attention to the sequence of events happened in the last two days concerning the meeting of the Panel to be held on 10 July 2006 and the reasons for my handling of the matter.

The sequence of events is as follows –

- (a) on 3 July 2006, the Administration provided to the Legislative Council Secretariat a discussion paper entitled “An update on the latest developments of 334 including the feedback on Further Consultation on Career-oriented Studies and the New Senior Secondary Academic Structure for Special Schools” for agenda item IV “Latest developments of new academic structure” of the meeting of the Panel on 10 July 2006;
- (b) on 4 July 2006, the Panel Clerk drew my attention to the paper;
- (c) I considered that paragraph 12 of the paper concerning class restructuring was not relevant to the agenda item as the focus of which would be on career-oriented studies and special education under the new senior secondary academic structure. A number of organisations have been invited to attend the meeting to give views on these issues. I therefore requested that paragraph 12 be deleted from the paper;
- (d) the Secretariat conveyed my request to the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) in the morning of 4 July 2006;
- (e) EMB acceded to my request and provided a revised version taking out the paragraph concerning class restructuring;

- (f) with my consent, the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(2)2642/05-06(02)] was issued to members on 4 July 2006;
- (g) on 5 July 2006, EMB provided a revised paper to the Secretariat reinserting the paragraph concerning class restructuring;
- (h) the Panel Clerk drew my attention to the revised paper;
- (i) I issued a letter dated 5 July 2006 to the Secretary for Education and Manpower (SEM) conveying to him the grounds for my request;
- (j) SEM provided his response on 5 July 2006 insisting to make reference to class restructuring in the paper.

I must stress that the issue of class restructuring is not relevant to agenda item IV of the Panel meeting on 10 July 2006. The Panel had already indicated its stance on class restructuring at its meeting on 12 June 2006. Members have expressed grave concern on the effect of the proposed class restructuring, namely closure of a great number of secondary schools. Should the Administration proceed with class restructuring, this would obviously be against the view of the Panel.

Notwithstanding my strong request, SEM had insisted to include class restructuring in the Administration's revised paper. I am very dissatisfied with the way EMB has dealt with the matter. As the revised paper is for the Panel meeting on 10 July 2006, it is therefore issued to members.

From SEM's insistence to include class restructuring in the revised paper, I have reasons to believe that the Administration intends to impose its proposed criteria for class restructuring for secondary schools in the near future.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

(YEUNG Sum)
Chairman of the Panel on Education