

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1546/06-07
(These minutes have been seen by
the Administration and
the English Schools Foundation)

Ref : CB2/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Thursday, 22 March 2007, at 10:45 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon SIN Chung-kai, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
Hon MA Lik, GBS, JP
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
- Members attending** : Hon Albert Jinghan CHENG
Hon TAM Heung-man
- Members absent** : Dr Hon YEUNG Sum (Deputy Chairman)
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP

**Public Officers
attending** : Item IV

Mrs Betty FUNG CHING Suk-ye, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education & Manpower (1)

Miss Charmaine LEE Pui-sze
Principal Assistant Secretary (Higher Education),
Education and Manpower Bureau

Item VI

Mr CHENG Man-yiu, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education & Manpower (3)

Mr Steve LEE Yuk-fai
Principal Assistant Secretary (Professional
Development and Training), Education and
Manpower Bureau

**Attendance by
invitation** : Item IV

The Open University of Hong Kong

Professor John LEONG Chi-yan, OBE, JP
President

Professor LEUNG Chun-ming
Vice President (Technology & Development)

Item V

English Schools Foundation

Professor Felice LIEH MAK
Chairman

Mrs Heather Du Quesnay
Chief Executive

Dr Alex CHIU
Parent Representative

Mr Jonothan ABBOTT
Barrister and Legislative Drafting Consultant

Item VI

Council of The Hong Kong Institute of Education

Mr Eddie NG Hak-kim, JP
Deputy Chairman

Academic Staff Association of The Hong Kong Institute of Education

Dr WONG Ping-ho
President

Mr Litwin CHENG Chun-chor
Representative

Ms Sylvia SAM Chi-ah
Representative

The Hong Kong Institute of Education Students' Union

Miss Jane LEUNG Chi-yan
President

Mr Victor AU Kin-ho
Internal Vice-President

Professor Louisa LAM

Associate Vice President (Learning Enhancement and Development), The Hong Kong Institute of Education

Professor Phillip MOORE

Associate Vice President (Curriculum and Quality Assurance), The Hong Kong Institute of Education

Clerk in attendance : Miss Odelia LEUNG
Chief Council Secretary (2)6

Staff in attendance : Mr Stanley MA
Senior Council Secretary (2)6

Miss Carmen HO
Legislative Assistant (2)6

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I. Confirmation of minutes

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1292/06-07 and CB(2)1329/06-07]

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2007 and the verbatim record of the special meeting held on 28 February 2007 were confirmed.

II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

2. Members noted the following papers issued since the last meeting -

- (a) submission from Dr Anita POON Yuk-kang, Associate Professor, Department of Education Studies, Hong Kong Baptist University concerning alleged Government interference with academic freedom [LC Paper No. CB(2)1183/06-07(01)];
- (b) extract from the confirmed minutes of the meeting of the Legislative Council Members with Kowloon City District Council members on 9 November 2006 concerning Mainland women giving birth in Hong Kong [LC Paper No. CB(2)1225/06-07(01)]; and
- (c) letter dated 14 March 2007 from Mr Craig BOSWELL and Ms LEE Weston concerning the Special Allowance for Native-speaking English Teachers [LC Paper No. CB(2)1380/06-07(01)].

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[Appendices I and II to LC Paper No. CB(2)1333/06-07 and LC Paper No. CB(2)1277/06-07(01)]

3. Referring to the letter from Mr Craig BOSWELL and Ms LEE Weston concerning the special allowance for native-speaking English Teachers (NETs) under the NET Scheme, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong suggested that an opportunity be provided to the Native English-speaking Teachers' Association to express their views on the subject to the Panel.

4. Mrs Selina CHOW opined that instead of discussing individual cases, the Panel should examine the implementation of the NET Scheme from the policy perspective. She suggested that principal associations be invited to give views on the Scheme.

5. Ms Emily LAU agreed with Mrs Selina CHOW's view and suggested that the Administration be requested to evaluate the effectiveness of the Scheme in improving the English proficiency of students.

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6. Mr Abraham SHEK considered that one of the main objectives of the NET Scheme was to help develop the skills and abilities of local teachers to teach English. He suggested that local teachers associations should also be invited to give views on the NET Scheme.

7. Professor Patrick LAU and Ms Audrey EU suggested discussing the use of vacated school premises at a Panel meeting in the near future.

8. Referring to his letter to the Chairman [LC Paper No. CB(2)1277/06-07(01)], Dr Fernando CHEUNG suggested discussing the remuneration policy for staff seconded to the Community College of the City University of Hong Kong at a Panel meeting.

9. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong suggested that the Administration should brief the Panel on its policies and timetable for the implementation of small class teaching as both candidates for the Chief Executive for the Third Term had pledged to implement small class teaching in their election platform.

10. After discussion, members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for 16 April 2007 -

- (a) Small Class Teaching;
- (b) Review of Native-speaking English Teacher Scheme; and
- (c) Remuneration policy for staff seconded to the Community College of City University of Hong Kong.

11. Members also agreed to discuss the use of vacated school premises at the regular meeting in May 2007.

12. Ms Audrey EU noted that the Administration's response on certain issues on the Panel's list of follow-up actions had remained outstanding for a long time. Some of the issues had been on the list since 2002. She considered that the Administration should be requested to provide responses expeditiously. Members agreed that the matter be followed up by the Clerk.

[*Post-meeting note* : A letter was issued by the Clerk to the Secretary for Education and Manpower on 22 March 2007 requesting the Administration to provide responses by 10 April 2007.]

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IV. Grant to The Open University of Hong Kong for establishing a Centre for Innovation

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1333/06-07(01)]

Briefing by the Administration

13. Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower 1 (DS(EM)1) briefed members on the Administration's proposal to provide a capital grant of \$62.8 million to The Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK) for establishing a Centre For Innovation (CFI) to support its initiatives to enhance pedagogy, programme delivery and students' learning experience. She highlighted that although OUHK had been operating on a self-financing basis, the Administration had provided funding support for worth-while projects that were in line with OUHK's mission. In particular, the Administration acknowledged that effective use of information technology in teaching and learning would inject new impetus into the development of open and distance learning and believed that the proposed grant would help OUHK fulfil its mission in response to the rapid technological changes and developments in the e-learning arena.

14. Professor John LEONG Chi-yan, President of OUHK, thanked the Education and Manpower Bureau for the proposed provision of the capital grant to support OUHK in the development of CFI. Professor LEUNG Chun-ming, Vice President (Technology & Development) of OUHK, added that as a self-financing institution, OUHK relied on its tuitions fees to recover the recurrent costs. OUHK needed Government grants for its major capital developments, such as the proposed grant for the development of CFI to upgrade the quality of education.

Recurrent costs for the CFI project

15. Referring to paragraph 10 of the Administration's paper, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong asked whether the estimated staff cost of \$10.2 million was a one-off or recurrent allocation.

16. DS(EM)1 explained that of the \$10.2 million grant, about \$4 million and \$5.4 million would be used to employ a project manager and three technical leaders respectively for a period of three years. The project manager would oversee the project development work. The three technical leaders would each be responsible for the development of a major component of the project, namely, an information infrastructure in the form of a web-based service delivery platform, an intelligent flexible learning model of open learning, and other related projects such as an intelligent student counselling system. The remaining allocation would be used to recruit some supporting staff. As a self-financing institution, OUHK had undertaken to absorb all recurrent costs, including maintenance and repairs, arising from the CFI project.

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17. Following up on the Administration's reply, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong asked whether OUHK was able to absorb the recurrent costs for the employment of the project manager and the three technical leaders, if necessary, and the on-going operation of CFI in the long term.

18. In response, Professor John LEONG Chi-yan confirmed that OUHK would absorb the recurrent costs for running CFI after its establishment. Professor LEUNG Chun-ming added that like the architects and consultants for the design and development of a new building, the service of the project manager and technical leaders would not be required after the establishment of CFI.

19. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung was concerned that OUHK might increase tuition fees to cover the recurrent costs arising from the operation of CFI. Professor John LEONG Chi-yan said that the tuition fees could recover around 90% of the recurrent costs of OUHK, and the operation costs of CFI would not be transferred to students. OUHK had been successful in maintaining a balanced account. If needed, OUHK might use its reserve to cover any deficit.

20. Mrs Selina CHOW said that the Liberal Party supported the proposal to provide a grant to OUHK to develop CFI and hoped that the project would be implemented as soon as practicable. Mr Abraham SHEK said that the Alliance supported the Administration's proposal.

21. Summing up, the Chairman said that the Panel supported the Administration submitting the proposal to the Finance Committee for approval.

V. Member's Bill on the governance structure of the English Schools Foundation

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1333/06-07(02), CB(2)1358/06-07(01) and (02)]

22. Members noted the papers provided by the English Schools Foundation (the Foundation) and the letter from Mr Abraham SHEK to the Chairman appealing to members to support the English Schools Foundation (Amendment) Bill 2007 (the Bill).

Briefing by Mr Abraham SHEK

23. Mr Abraham SHEK introduced the Bill which provided for the amendment to The English Schools Foundation Ordinance (the Ordinance) to update the governance structure of the Foundation and the administration of schools of the Foundation in the light of the results of the value-for-money audits in the Director of Audit's Report No. 43 (Audit Report) published in October 2004 and the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee Report No. 43 (PAC Report) published in February 2005. Mr SHEK said that the Bill was approved by the Foundation at its meeting on 8 June 2006, and would be introduced into the Legislative Council (LegCo) shortly.

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Briefing by the Foundation

24. Professor Felice LIEH MAK, Chairman of the Foundation, said that the Foundation was established in September 1967 under the Ordinance and initially operated two schools with students mainly from British families in Hong Kong. At present, the Foundation operated 10 primary schools, five secondary schools and one special school. In addition, the ESF Educational Services Limited (ESL), the Foundation's associated company, operated three kindergartens and one private independent school. Around 80% of the students in these schools were permanent residents of Hong Kong. Given the substantial increase in the number of schools over the years, the Foundation considered it appropriate to review and reform its governance structure.

25. Professor Felice LIEH MAK further said she was elected Chairman of the Foundation on 1 March 2004. On 24 March 2004, the re-constituted Executive Committee of the Foundation (the Executive Committee) invited the Director of Audit to perform value-for-money audits of the Foundation. The findings of the audits were subsequently scrutinized by PAC. The findings of the two reports and the response of the Foundation were detailed in paragraphs 13 to 17 of the Brief on the Bill [LC Paper No. CB(2)1333/06-07(02)]. Professor Felice LIEH MAK added that the Bill was prepared with reference to the findings and recommendations in the Audit Report and the PAC Report. She thanked EMB for support in preparing the Bill, and hoped that the Bill could be enacted in the near future.

26. Mrs Heather Du Quesnay, Chief Executive of the Foundation, briefed members on the consultation conducted in formulating the framework for the future governance of the Foundation and drafting the Bill, as detailed in paragraph 22 of the Brief. She added that the reform framework was approved by the Foundation with a significant majority at the meeting on 8 June 2006.

27. Dr Alex CHIU, a parent representative of the Foundation, said that the parents of students of the schools welcomed the reform proposals and the establishment of the Governance Task Force comprising mainly of parents and independent members. He expressed appreciation of the Foundation for respecting the views of parents from the very beginning, and consulting the parents in working out the reform framework and the proposals in the Bill. As a parent, he supported most of the proposals in the Bill. Dr CHIU highlighted that should the Bill be enacted, the Board of Governors of the Foundation would comprise 27 members and of which, seven would be parent representatives.

Staff recruitment and school administration

28. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that according to newspaper reports in December 2006, the Foundation had accepted about 66% of the

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recommendations made by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) concerning staff recruitment and school administration. He enquired about the reasons for not putting in place the other recommendations.

29. Professor Felice LIEH MAK clarified that the Foundation had accepted all the recommendations of ICAC, and had implemented about 60% of the recommendations in December 2006. The Foundation would continue to develop the necessary systems and measures to implement the remaining recommendations on a progressive basis.

30. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong considered it necessary to work out a timetable for implementing the remaining recommendations proposed by ICAC. He suggested that if necessary, the Foundation might discuss with ICAC on how the remaining recommendations could be implemented.

31. Mrs Heather Du Quesnay explained that the Foundation had had recent meetings with ICAC on the matter and, so far, ICAC was satisfied with the work done and planned by the Foundation in response to its recommendations. After the enactment of the Bill, the Foundation would be empowered to implement some of the recommendations from September 2007 onwards. She added that the implementation of some recommendations would take time. For instance, the development of a web-based budgeting financial control system for the 20 schools would involve tremendous system design and development works as well as staff training before the system could be implemented. Subject to the early enactment of the Bill, the Foundation envisaged to implement all the ICAC recommendations by the end of 2007.

Government subsidies

32. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that parents were concerned about the provision of Government subsidies after the Bill had been enacted. At present, the level of subsidies to the Foundation's schools was lower than that to aided schools which was calculated on the average unit costs. Many parents were of the view that the level of Government subsidies to schools operated by the Foundation should be on a par with aided schools and based on the average unit costs.

33. Professor Felice LIEH MAK responded that the Foundation was well aware of the parents' concern about the provision of Government subsidies to its schools, and would continue to liaise with the Administration on the matter. She pointed out that the Administration had indicated that it would discuss with the Foundation on subvention matters after it had implemented the necessary reforms in governance and school administration.

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Board of Governors and School Councils

34. Mr Tommy CHEUNG declared interest as one of the two LegCo members elected among themselves as members of the Foundation. While expressing support for the Bill, Mr CHEUNG suggested that the Foundation should take the opportunity to amend the Ordinance to remove representation from LegCo on the Board of Governors. He considered it more appropriate to allocate the proposed two seats for LegCo Members in the Board of Governors to the key stakeholders.

35. Professor Felice LIEH MAK responded that the Foundation had no strong view on LegCo representation on the proposed Board of Governors. She, however, pointed out that parents of students of the schools preferred to have representatives from LegCo sitting on the Board of Governors.

36. Dr Alex CHIU confirmed the preference of parents of students of the schools for LegCo representation on the Board of Governors to supervise the work of the Foundation. Since the Foundation operated some 20 schools providing education to some 17 000 children, he considered it necessary to have LegCo representation on the Board of Governors.

37. Mr Tommy CHEUNG expressed appreciation of the parents' confidence in LegCo Members in supervising the operation of the schools under the Foundation. He, however, pointed out that LegCo did not have representation on the governing bodies of other major school sponsors, and such practice should apply to the Foundation alike. Mr CHEUNG was of the view that LegCo Members might participate in school management in the capacity of parents.

38. Ms Audrey EU noted that at the meeting of the Foundation on 8 June 2006, the proposed amendments to the Ordinance and the proposed provisions of the draft Regulation were approved by 69 votes to 27 votes with five abstentions. She sought information on the persons voted against the proposed amendments to the Ordinance.

39. Professor Felice LIEH MAK replied that the persons voted against the proposed amendments to the Ordinance were mainly teachers of the schools of the Foundation. This was understandable as they considered that the proposed amendments would reduce their rights. Under the Bill, principals, teachers and support staff of the schools would have respectively only one, two and one representatives elected among themselves in the future Board of Governors

40 Ms Audrey EU asked how the new governance structure of the Foundation and its schools compared with the school-based governance structure for aided schools under the Education Ordinance in accordance with which an incorporated management committee would be established.

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41. Professor Felice LIEH MAK responded that the Foundation had maintained close dialogue with EMB in the course of formulating the framework for the future governance of the Foundation and its schools. EMB considered that the proposals in the Bill were not in conflict with the provisions on school-based management in the Education Ordinance.

42. Mrs Heather Du Quesnay supplemented that the Foundation was aware of the spirit of school-based management and had followed the same principles in proposing the governance structure at the school level. She pointed out that there were significant differences between the schools operated by the Foundation and the local schools which were subject to the Education Ordinance. The Foundation was responsible for the management of its schools including their properties and financial position. She highlighted the proposed establishment of a Nominating Committee, election of representatives from teachers, parents and support staff as well as the appointment of community leaders in the Board of Governors and the School Councils. She added that the operation of the School Councils of the Foundation had been commended in the PAC Report and the proposals in the Bill were built on the existing structure.

43. Ms Audrey EU requested the Foundation to provide a paper to explain the differences between the governance structure of the Foundation and its schools and the school-based management structure of aided schools under the Education Ordinance and the reasons for such differences when the Bill was ready for introduction in LegCo.

Financial management and system reviews

44. Miss TAM Heung-man expressed appreciation that the Foundation had demonstrated a high level of cooperation with PAC in scrutinising the findings in the Audit Report. She asked whether and how the reform in the governance structure of the Foundation and their schools would improve the monitoring of the daily operation of the schools, including the administration and financial management matters.

45. Mrs Heather Du Quesnay responded that the Foundation had put in place various systems and measures to monitor the daily operation of the schools with emphasis on the administrative and financial aspects. Under the new governance structure, schools would be responsible for their own financial management and required to submit regular reports to the Board of Governors and the Chief Executive on their financial position. Currently, the Foundation was developing a web-based financial management system to facilitate on-line monitoring of the financial operation and transactions in each school. Any significant or unreasonable spending by individual schools would be readily detected by the system. In addition, the Foundation had strengthened the internal audit functions as recommended by PAC, including the establishment of an audit committee to oversee the strategic issues as well as to examine the internal audit reports prepared by individual schools.

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46. Mr TAM Heung-man asked how often internal reviews on the financial and audit systems would be conducted. She pointed out that early detection and rectification of any system irregularities was important to ensure system reliability and integrity in the long term.

47. Mrs Heather Du Quesnay responded that the internal auditors would be expected to conduct internal audits for each school in every two years. Apart from the Board of Governors, the Chief Executive and the Finance Director, the schools and the principals would be provided with a copy of the audit findings for follow-up. The internal auditors would revisit each school after half a year to check whether the schools had followed up the irregularities identified in the internal audits. At the same time, the internal auditors would consolidate their findings and prepare a general report incorporating the major issues for schools to observe in financial management. In addition, the Audit Committee would oversee the system reliability matters and recommend the appropriate timing for conducting reviews on system operation and applications. Overall, there were sufficient checks and balances in school operation and management, as well as sufficient external pressure and internal commitment to put things in the right track.

Special and integrated education

48. Dr Fernando CHEUNG declared interest as a parent of two students currently studying in the Foundation's schools. He expressed support for the provision of integrated and special education in the Foundation's schools. He considered it important that the Foundation should establish channels for parents of students with special educational needs (SEN) to express their views and suggestions. He suggested that the Board of Governors and the School Councils should include parents of students with SEN. He asked how the Foundation would implement the recommendations of its review on the provision of special and integrated education for students with SEN which was completed two years ago.

49. Mrs Heather Du Quesnay responded that she was concerned about the provision of quality education for students with SEN and had recently discussed with parents on the matter at a number of meetings. The Foundation had consulted parents on the inclusion of a representative of parents of students with SEN in the Board of Governors and individual School Councils, and finally agreed with parents' view that parent representatives in these bodies should better be elected through open competition. In addition, the Board of Governors and School Councils were encouraged to admit people with an enthusiasm as well as substantial expertise in supporting students with SEN in learning.

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50. Mrs Heather Du Quesnay further said that the Foundation had taken steps to implement the recommendations of the review on SEN of students. The Foundation had formulated a policy on integrated education and developed a system to assess the degree of inclusion of individual schools on the basis of feedback from teachers and parents. In addition, the Foundation had taken a number of measures to enhance the quality of integrated education for students with SEN, including arranging for teachers with substantial experience in special education to train teachers in ordinary schools to teach students with SEN; arranging for students with SEN to switch studies from the special schools to ordinary schools and vice versa in the light of their learning needs and abilities; developing a Vocational Diploma as an alternative to the International Baccalaureate for students with SEN; providing learning support classes in mainstream schools for students with SEN.

51. Mr Abraham SHEK said that as a manager of a school operated by the Foundation, he appreciated the efforts of the Foundation in providing special and integrated education for students with SEN. He shared the view of Dr Fernando CHEUNG that the Foundation should provide channels for parents of students with SEN to express their views and suggestions to the management.

52. Summing up, the Chairman requested the Foundation to consider members' views and suggestions expressed at the meeting. He added that members could scrutinise the Bill in detail after the Bill had been introduced in LegCo.

VI. Retitling of The Hong Kong Institute of Education as a university
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1333/06-07(03) and (04)]

53. Members noted the Administration's paper and the background brief prepared by the LegCo Secretariat on the subject.

54. Responding to Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's query concerning his capacity in attending the meeting, Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower 3 (DS(EM)3) clarified that although he was a member of the Council of The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIED Council), he was representing EMB to attend the meeting.

Oral presentation by deputations

Council of The Hong Kong Institute of Education

55. Mr Eddie NG Hak-kin said that HKIED was formally established in 1994 by merging the four former Colleges of Education (i.e. Grantham, Northcote, Sir Robert Black and the Hong Kong Technical Teachers' College) and the Institute of Language in Education, offering sub-degree teacher education

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programmes at the initial stage. HKIEd started to offer programmes at degree and above levels in September 1998, and was granted self-accrediting status in respect of its own teacher education programmes at degree and above levels in March 2004. The HKIEd Council considered that retitling HKIEd as a university specialised in teacher education would signify the recognition of the Government and the community of teachers' professionalism; enhance the quality of student intake of HKIEd and its ability to solicit private donations; help the development of Hong Kong as a regional hub in teacher education; and facilitate the development of a knowledge-based economy in Hong Kong. HKIEd was developing a 10-year development blueprint with a view to submitting it together with an application for retitling to university status in mid-2007.

Academic Staff Association of the Hong Kong Institute of Education
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1412/06-07(01)]

56. Dr WONG Ping-ho presented the views of the Academic Staff Association of the Hong Kong Institute of Education as detailed in its submission. He highlighted that the Administration had adopted double standards for the award of university title. Both Lingnan University and Shu Yan University did not have a science faculty but had been granted a university title. The Association considered it groundless for the Administration to say that if monotechnic institutions could acquire a university title, the schools such as law schools and medical schools in local universities would also be encouraged to become independent universities. Dr WONG pointed out that institutions specialised in teacher education in many Asian and European countries had been awarded university titles. Without a university title, HKIEd had encountered unnecessary difficulties in furthering its work in the Mainland. The Association believed that retitling HKIEd as a university would help promote Hong Kong as a regional educational hub.

The Hong Kong Institute of Education Students' Union
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1412/06-07(02)]

57. Miss Jane LEUNG Chi-yan presented the views of the Hong Kong Institute of Education Students' Union as detailed in its submission. She highlighted that retitling HKIEd as a university was supported by the community including many LegCo Members and educational bodies. The Union believed that with a university title, HKIEd would be more able to attract secondary school graduates with high calibre to pursue a teaching career. The Union was disappointed with the response of SEM at the informal meeting held on 29 December 2006 concerning the award of a university title to HKIEd. The Union strongly urged the Administration to duly recognize the quality of HKIEd's programmes and graduates by granting it a university title.

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Professor Louisa LAM
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1427/06-07(01)]

58. Professor LAM said that the role and mission of HKIEd in the provision of teacher education was defined by the University Grants Committee (UGC). This explained why HKIEd had been specialized in offering teacher education programmes over the past years. Professor LAM pointed out that the teacher education programmes offered by HKIEd covered various disciplines. She then described the wide variety of undergraduate and post-graduate teacher education programmes offered by HKIEd to illustrate that HKIEd was not monotechnic. Professor LAM stressed that there were sufficient justifications for HKIEd to be awarded a university title.

Professor Phillip MOORE
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1427/06-07(02)]

59. Professor Moore said that university title had all along been awarded to institutions meeting three basic criteria, namely, acceptance and implementation of the role differentiation among institutions as defined by UGC, acceptance and implementation of a common basis for funding as applied to the UGC-funded institutions, and the attainment of self-accrediting status. He described the major achievements of HKIEd in recent years to illustrate the quality of its programmes and graduates, as well as the recognition of its programmes by employers and institutions in the higher education sector. He stressed that many areas of HKIEd's work had been thoroughly examined by external parties and HKIEd should be retitled as a university to reflect its academic status and the quality of its graduates. He queried why the criteria for the award of a university title to HKIEd had been different from those applied to other institutions.

Other submission received
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1412/06-07(03)]

60. Members noted the submission from Dr LAI Kwok-chan.

The Administration's response

61. DS(EM)3 said that the Government had all along had an open mind as to whether HKIEd should acquire a university title. The Administration had exchanged views with representatives of HKIEd on the retitling issue at an informal meeting on 29 December 2006. The Administration was aware that HKIEd would submit a development blueprint together with its application for retitling in mid-2007. Upon receipt of HKIEd's application, the Administration would examine it with reference to the future needs of, and overall benefits to, the society. The Administration would also consult UGC and, if necessary, the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation before submitting a recommendation to the Chief Executive in Council for consideration. In the case

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of HKIEd, the change of title would involve legislative amendments to its governing ordinance which would require the approval of LegCo.

Development of and resources allocation for HKIEd

62. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that on the one hand, the Administration claimed that the prevailing international trend was to develop comprehensive universities offering a range of degree programmes in various disciplines. On the other hand, the Administration had taken a number of measures to reduce the variety of programmes provided by HKIEd in recent years. Mr CHEUNG pointed out that with reduced funding, HKIEd had been compelled to reduce its number of schools and departments from four to two and 12 to eight respectively. The Department of Creative Arts and Physical Education might need to be closed in the 2008-2009 school year. Although HKIEd had been recognised by the Research Grants Council as being qualified for the provision of post-graduate programmes, it was the only UGC-funded institution that had not been allocated any places from the 450 additional research postgraduate places in the 2005-2008 triennium. Most disappointingly, the Administration had allocated resources for other institutions to operate pre-primary teacher education programmes, which were conventionally offered only by HKIEd. Under these circumstances, Mr CHEUNG queried how HKIEd could develop into a comprehensive university.

63. DS(EM)3 stressed that the Administration remained open as to whether HKIEd should be retitled as a university, although the prevailing international trend was to develop comprehensive universities. He explained that under the funding mechanism for the UGC-funded institution, EMB would be responsible for planning the overall teacher education places while UGC would allocate places to teacher education institutions based on which resources were allocated. Historically, HKIEd had been the sole provider of pre-primary teacher education programmes. The Administration considered it appropriate to have more programme providers in order to create more capacity and diversity in the provision of pre-primary teacher education to meet the emerging demand.

64. Ms Audrey EU said that cultivating a culture to respect the professionalism of teachers was crucial for the healthy development of teacher education and quality education in the long run. She shared the view of Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong that in the past few years, HKIEd had always been disadvantaged in resources allocation within the UGC sector. This was unreasonable as the Administration had repeatedly confirmed that HKIEd had been providing quality programmes for pre-service and in-service teachers. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan also considered that over the past few years, HKIEd had been treated unfairly in resources allocation.

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65. DS(EM)3 responded that all along the Administration had respected HKIED for providing teacher education programmes and its graduates for their professionalism. SEM had highlighted this in his reply to Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's oral question at the Council meeting on 7 February 2007

66. Mr Tommy CHEUNG asked whether the Administration considered HKIED was monotechnic in the provision of higher education, and whether the Administration considered it inappropriate to grant a university title to a monotechnic institution.

67. DS(EM)3 responded that HKIED had all along been recognised for its education programmes for pre-service and in-service teachers. Despite the prevailing international trend on the development of comprehensive universities, it was not the Administration's policy to consider the application of an institution for a university title on the sole basis of the variety of its programmes.

Criteria for the award of a university title

68. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong pointed out that according to the UGC Quadrennial Report 1991-95, the award of a university title was subject to three basic criteria, namely, the adoption of a common salary scale, the fulfilment of the institution's role in higher education, and the acquisition of self-accrediting status. He queried why the Administration had imposed additional criteria for granting a university title. The factors to be considered by the Administration had increased from three to 10 as stated in paragraph 6 of its paper. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan also considered it unfair to change the criteria for the award of a university title in the case of HKIED.

69. DS(EM)3 explained that apart from the three basic criteria, the other factors mentioned in paragraph 6 of the Administration's paper had been quoted in the past for consideration of granting a university title to an institution. DS(EM)3 clarified that the Administration so far had not received an application from HKIED for retitling as a university. It was unfair to claim that the Administration had intended to reject the application by introducing additional factors in considering the award of a university title.

70. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan remarked that the Administration's emphasis on the prevailing international trend on the development of comprehensive universities was already indicative of its intention to reject HKIED's application for a university title. He considered that the reported response of SEM at the informal meeting on 29 December 2006 with The Hong Kong Institute of Education Students' Union also reflected the Administration's attitude towards HKIED's retitling as a university.

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Admin 71. Ms Audrey EU considered it unreasonable to impose additional criteria for considering HKIEd's application for retitling as a university, and requested the Administration to provide documents to substantiate its claim that the additional criteria in paragraph 6 of its paper had been quoted in the past for consideration of granting university titles.

72. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that the Administration should have considered the factors in paragraph 6 of its paper before granting the self-accrediting status to HKIEd. He questioned the need to reconsider these factors for the award of a university title to HKIEd and to examine its application with reference to the future needs of, and overall benefits to, the society.

73. DS(EM)3 explained that the Administration had made it clear that self-accreditation and university status were two separate issues, and that granting self-accrediting status carried no implication on university status. Given that HKIEd was the major teacher education institute in Hong Kong, it was in the interest of the community that HKIEd should have a robust and sustainable long-term development plan. The Administration was aware that HKIEd Council was preparing a development blueprint together with its application for a university title for submission to the Government in mid-2007.

Application for retitling

74. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong asked why HKIEd had not submitted an application for retitling as a university so far.

75. Mr Eddie NG explained that at its meeting on 24 November 2005, the HKIEd Council had resolved to set up a working group to proceed with the preparatory work for submitting an application for retitling HKIEd as a university within a period of 18 to 24 months. The working group had held two meetings in January to March 2006. At the meeting on 7 February 2007, HKIEd Council decided to set up a new special working group to proceed with the preparation of a 10-year development blueprint with a view to submitting it together with a formal application for university title by mid-2007. In a retreat on 3 March 2007, HKIEd Council members, senior management, staff and student representatives had discussed the way ahead in the development of the blueprint.

76. Mr Abraham SHEK expressed disappointment that HKIEd Council had not made an application for a university title so far. He considered that HKIEd Council should review its internal arrangement and progress of work. He also opined that given the agreement between HKIEd and the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) on deep collaboration in the area of teacher education, HKIEd should be well qualified for the award of a university title.

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77. DS(EM)3 pointed out that the fact that HKIEd had entered into an agreement with CUHK on deep collaboration in the area of teaching education in July 2005 had no implication on the Administration's examination of HKIEd's application for a university title.

78. Concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that the staff and student representatives of HKIEd had strongly requested for the retitling of HKIEd as a university. HKIEd Council might need to review its work progress in the preparation of a development blueprint and the submission of an application for retitling as a university to the Administration. The Chairman hoped that Mr Eddie NG could relay the views of members and the deputations to the HKIEd Council for consideration.

VII. Any other business

79. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:02 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
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