

Discussion Paper
26 March 2008

Legislative Council Panel on Education

Creation of a Senior Primary School Master/Mistress Rank for Deputy Heads in Public Sector Primary Schools

PURPOSE

This paper sets out the arrangements for the creation of a new Senior Primary School Master/Mistress (SPSM) rank in the Primary School Master/Mistress (PSM) grade for deputy heads in public sector primary schools with effect from the 2008/09 school year.

BACKGROUND

2. At present, there is no formal deputy head rank in primary schools. Primary schools with 12 classes or more may assign a senior teacher at the PSM rank (of the graduate PSM grade) or Assistant Master/Mistress (AM) rank (of the non-graduate Certificated Master/Mistress (CM) grade) to take up the duties of a deputy head. These deputy heads are given a responsibility allowance (RA) at a rate equivalent to three-quarters of one increment above their substantive salary. On the other hand, primary schools with 11 classes or less are currently served by school heads at the PSM/AM rank. They are awarded an RA at a rate equivalent to one increment above the level of their substantive salary.

3. Changes in our society and in the education sector, such as the increase in demand and expectation of parents/students and the implementation of various education reform initiatives including the school-based management (SBM), curriculum reform, whole-day schooling, school self-evaluation, and teachers' continuing professional development, have made primary schools a much more complex workplace. The education sector has expressed concerns that unlike secondary schools, primary schools do not have a specific rank for deputy heads.

4. As announced in the Policy Agenda under the 2007 Policy Address, we plan to create a deputy head rank in public sector primary schools as soon as possible to enhance the quality of primary school education services.

PROPOSALS

5. We propose to create a new SPSM rank in the PSM grade in public sector primary schools, which will be paid at Master Pay Scale point (MPS) 34-35. We propose that one post in the SPSM rank be provided in ordinary primary schools with 12-23 classes, by re-ranking one PSM post to the SPSM rank, and two posts in such schools with 24 classes or more, by re-ranking two PSM posts to the SPSM rank to serve as deputy heads. The school head in primary schools with 11 classes or less will also be re-ranked from the PSM rank to the SPSM rank. Upon the creation of the SPSM rank, the provision of the RA for deputy heads and the RA for PSM school heads in primary schools will cease. The job description of the new rank is at Appendix I. We also propose to raise the minimum pay point of the Headmaster/Headmistress II (HM II) rank¹ from MPS 34 to MPS 35.

JUSTIFICATIONS

6. The proposal to create a new SPSM rank in the PSM grade for deputy heads in primary schools is justified on the following considerations:

- (a) with the introduction of various education reforms mentioned in paragraph 3 above, deputy school heads are required to take up more responsibilities and workload. There is a need to provide adequate recognition and a remuneration higher than the current RA to attract teachers who are professionally competent as curriculum developers and leaders; adept in implementing school-based continuing professional development; and equipped with ability in organisation of work to take up the responsibilities of deputy school heads; and
- (b) the work environment in schools has become more complicated following the introduction of a participatory school governance framework under SBM involving school sponsoring body representative, principals, teachers, parents, alumni and community members in decision-making. As one of the key personnel in school management, deputy heads have to liaise with different stakeholders and address their concerns tactfully. This leads to a wider gap of the requirement between a deputy school head and teachers of equivalent ranks deployed on teaching duties.

7. In view of the more complicated work environment, additional responsibilities and increasing complexity of the work of school heads, and having

¹ HM II is the rank for heads of primary schools with 12-23 classes. The existing pay scale is MPS 34-39.

regard to the staff complements (*viz.* Headmaster/Headmistress I (HM I) will be underpinned by two SPSMs while HMII will be underpinned by one SPSM) as detailed in paragraph 5 above, we propose the minimum pay point of HMII be adjusted from MPS 34 to MPS 35. We also propose that upon the adjustment of the minimum pay point of the HM II rank, normal conversion arrangement would be applied to serving school heads of HM II².

8. Primary schools with 11 classes or less are currently served by school heads of the PSM/AM rank. Although the size of these schools is relatively smaller and a deputy head post will not be provided for them, we consider it justifiable to re-rank PSM school heads to the new SPSM rank in view of their higher responsibility and their need to attain additional qualifications before appointment.

9. For special schools, since almost all special schools offer instruction at both primary and secondary levels, the proposed calculation of SPSM entitlement will be based on the combined number of primary and secondary classes, using the conversion ratios³ as specified in the Code of Aid for Special Schools. It is also proposed to allow special schools to opt for the provision of deputy head post at either the primary or secondary level.

10. The proposed SPSM rank will be a promotion rank for both the PSM rank and AM rank of the CM grade. The new rank is proposed to be filled by substantive PSM/AM incumbents who possess a recognised degree and teacher training with specified requirements for promotion⁴. The proposed opening of the SPSM rank to both PSM and AM incumbents is in line with the current practice in primary schools, which allows AM incumbents with a recognised degree to compete with PSM incumbents on equal terms for promotion to HM II posts⁵.

² Under the normal conversion, in the event of an upward adjustment of the minimum pay of a rank, the pay of a serving officer will be (i) brought up to the new minimum if his existing pay is below the new minimum or (ii) adjusted to the next higher pay point if his existing pay is equal to or above the new minimum, subject to not exceeding the maximum pay of the rank on the effective day of the revised salary of the rank.

³ In the proposed calculation of SPSM entitlement in special schools, the number of primary and secondary classes is counted together, according to a weighting system set out in the Code of Aid for Special Schools:

- a) 1 special primary class = 0.6 full-streamed special secondary class;
- b) 1 special junior secondary class = 0.8 full-streamed special secondary class;
- c) 1 special senior secondary class = 1 full-streamed special secondary class; and
- d) 1 school with 18 full-streamed special secondary class = 1 school with 24 ordinary classes.

⁴ The proposed requirements for promotion include a refresher training programme with a minimum of 90 contact hours and a training programme in primary school administration/management/curriculum development, pastoral care and extra-curricular activities with a minimum of 40 contact hours. It is anticipated that the provision of training places will not be sufficient to meet initial needs. To avoid the undesirable possibility that promotion to the SPSM rank is determined by the provision of training places, it is proposed that the above training requirements be waived for all teachers promoted to the SPSM rank in the first three years of implementation. However, they are encouraged to receive the training as soon as possible. In addition, relevant experience is required for the promotion to the new rank in aided schools.

⁵ Upon creation of the SPSM rank, qualified PSMs/AMs in government primary schools can only be considered for promotion to the SPSM rank. On the other hand, we will promulgate in a circular in mid-2008 that no non-graduate teachers should be appointed as new school heads in both aided and government primary schools.

Such an arrangement has been running smoothly.

11. The proposed changes to the teaching ranks arising from the creation of the SPSM rank in primary schools are summarised at Appendix II.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATONS

12. In implementing the proposals in paragraph 5, the annual expenditure by the Government is estimated to be around \$68 million. The RA for current deputy heads and PSM school heads will cease with the provision of the posts in SPSM rank⁶. There will be a saving of about \$10 million. Hence, the additional annual cost of the proposed arrangements amounts to \$58 million.

CONSULTATION

13. Consultation has been made with major schools councils, school sponsors, education organisations and school heads/teachers associations. They generally support the proposals. The Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service has also been consulted and has accepted the proposed creation of the SPSM rank in the PSM grade in the Education Bureau and the increase of the minimum pay point of the HM II rank from MPS Point 34 to MPS Point 35.

⁶ For the aided sector, as it takes time for schools to handle procedures for the promotion of teachers to the new rank, it is proposed that the current RA for deputy school heads will gradually be phased out within the first two years of implementation. During these two years, the RA for deputy school heads should cease immediately upon the appointment of a teacher/teachers to the new rank in aided schools. All RA for deputy school heads will cease with effect from the third year of implementation. The RA for PSM school heads will cease immediately upon the creation of the new rank.

ADVICE SOUGHT

14. Members are invited to comment on the proposals in paragraph 5 above. Subject to Members' views, we will seek the approval of the LegCo Establishment Subcommittee and the Finance Committee on the proposed creation of the new SPSM rank and the increase of the minimum pay point of HM II rank from MPS 34 to MPS 35 with effect from the 2008/09 school year.

Education Bureau
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Job description of the new SPSM rank

(as the deputy head of a primary school with 12 classes or more)

In addition to class teaching, the deputy head will mainly assist the school head in the following areas:

(a) Curriculum development and management, learning, teaching and assessment of students

- (i) to lead Primary School Master/Mistress (Curriculum Development) and subject panel heads in developing a school-based curriculum which meets the needs of students and promotes whole person development and life-long learning; and
- (ii) to make assessment and promote quality learning and teaching by promoting professional sharing and lesson observation.

(b) Whole school pastoral care and student support including whole-school approach to Integrated Education

- (i) to lead the Student Guidance Teacher/Student Guidance Officer and school counseling team in formulating policy and programmes on whole school approach to pastoral care; and
- (ii) to monitor programmes on whole-school approach to Integrated Education so that students with special educational needs are provided with appropriate support.

(c) Human resources management

- (i) to co-ordinate activities of continuing professional development for teachers; and
- (ii) to guide and supervise the work and performance of senior teachers, write or countersign staff reports.

(d) School management, evaluation and development

- (i) to assist the school head in implementing the school development plan, monitor progress of work and conduct school self-evaluation (SSE) during the school year; and
- (ii) to assist the school head in nurturing a quality culture in school through continuous school improvement and development by making use of the SSE findings.

Job description of the new SPSM rank
(as the head of a primary school with 11 classes or less)

The SPSM, as a school head, will mainly be responsible for the following four domains of leadership:

(a) Management and organization

- (i) to provide strategic direction for the school development;
- (ii) to lead the school development planning and monitor its implementation;
- (iii) to ensure that teachers' continuing professional development is an important and integral part in the school development plan and to formulate effective strategies to motivate and facilitate staff's professional development;
- (iv) to oversee human resource management including staff recruitment and deployment, performance appraisal and promotion and to serve on recruitment, promotion and other boards and committees as required;
- (v) to oversee the effective and proper use of school resources including school funds, school facilities, and equipments; and
- (vi) to oversee the operation and administration of the school.

(b) Learning and teaching

- (i) to formulate curriculum goals, appropriate policies and a strategic curriculum development plan based on the principle of life-long learning and whole person development that is in line with the aims of education in Hong Kong;
- (ii) to promote effective teaching and student learning through a broad, relevant and balanced curriculum including a school-based curriculum which meets the learning diversity of the students; and
- (iii) to engender a collegiate environment for staff that encourages professional sharing, collaboration and innovation.

(c) Support for students

- (i) to formulate policy on pastoral care;
- (ii) to oversee extra-curricular activities and cross-curricular programmes;
- (iii) to formulate policy on home-school co-operation and establish a partnership with parents in educating their children; and
- (iv) to tap community resources by networking the local and overseas

communities.

(d) Attainment and achievement

- (i) to steer the school self-evaluation (SSE) during the school year in respect of academic performance and non-academic performance of students;
- (ii) to commend progress and improvements made; and
- (iii) to nurture a quality culture in school by a critical study of the SSE findings for mapping out continuous school improvement and development.

