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Panel on Education

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 26 March 2008**

Deputy headship in public sector primary schools

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the creation of the rank of deputy head in public sector primary schools and summarizes members' concern on the matter.

Background

2. Under the existing teaching grade structure, there is no deputy head rank in public sector primary schools. Before September 1991, a responsibility allowance in the range of \$100 to \$300 per month was granted to Assistant Masters/Mistresses (AMs) serving as headmasters of small ordinary primary schools (less than 17 classes) in recognition of their greater overall responsibilities than their counterparts who were not heads of schools. No allowance was given to Principal Assistant Masters/Mistresses and Senior Assistant Masters/Mistresses serving as headmasters of large and medium-sized schools. AMs who were assigned to deputize for headmasters in addition to their normal class teaching also did not receive any allowance.

3. The Standing Commission on Civil Service Salary and Conditions of Services (the Commission) recommended in its Third and Final Report on the 1989 Salary Structure Review the creation of new ranks, the restructuring of grades and the payment of allowances to a number of grades. To implement the recommendations of the Commission, the Finance Committee approved on 9 August 1991 a package of proposals including the payment of a responsibility allowance to heads and deputy heads of public sector and aided primary schools. The responsibility allowance was paid to heads and deputy heads of primary schools at the rates of 100% and 75% respectively of one increment above the officer's substantive salary.

4. In October 1997, the Board of Education published the Report on the Review of 9-year Compulsory Education (the Report). The Report recommended, among others, the consideration of the introduction of appropriate rank(s) for deputy heads in primary schools in the context of a comprehensive staff review for schools in order to give due recognition to the post holders.

5. In his 2003 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced the proposal to review the teaching grade structure of public sector schools (the Review). The underlying principle of the Review was to streamline the structure so as to institutionally promote and encourage teachers' professional development and reward teachers with excellent performance. The Review would cover, among others, the feasibility of establishing the rank of deputy head in primary schools.

Members' concerns

6. The issue of the creation of a deputy head rank in public sector primary schools has not been discussed by the Panel on Education (the Panel). A question about the Report was raised at the Council meeting on 30 September 1998. In October 2006, the Administration provided to the Panel information concerning the Review in connection with the policy initiatives on education set out in the 2006-2007 Policy Agenda. The relevant information is summarized below.

Implementation timetable for the Report

7. In response to the Council question about the implementation timetable for the Report, the Administration advised that the Report had put forward 77 sets of recommendations. After careful consideration, the Administration had categorized the recommendations into three major groups for follow-up actions. Group 1 items were being implemented progressively; Group 2 items were generally in line with the overall direction of the existing policies, and the Administration would consider these items from the practical and financial points of view when the policies concerned were implemented. For Group 3 items which included the introduction of a new deputy head rank in primary schools, further consideration as to whether they should be implemented was required. The Administration did not have a detailed timetable for their implementation.

Review of the teaching grade structure

8. In its paper entitled "Policy Initiative on Education in the 2006-07 Policy Agenda" for the Panel meeting on 19 October 2006, the Administration reported that it had reviewed the existing teaching grade structure and the initial recommendations had been discussed by the Education Commission. Since teachers were pre-occupied with the senior secondary education reform and teacher establishment would be affected by the decline of student population in the coming years, the Education Commission advised to shelve the Review and revisit it in 2009.

Latest development

9. In his 2007-2008 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced the proposal to create a new deputy head rank in public sector primary schools with 12 classes or more with effect from the 2008-2009 school year. According to the Administration, with the implementation of various new education initiatives in recent years such as school-based management, curriculum reform, whole-day primary schooling and the teachers' continuing professional development framework, the duties of a deputy head had become more complex and diverse. The responsibility allowance could no longer adequately reflect the increasing workload on deputy heads and attract the best teachers to take up the post.

Relevant papers

10. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
25 March 2008

**Relevant papers on
deputy headship in public sector primary schools**

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper
Finance Committee	9.8.1991	FCR(91-92)91
Legislative Council	30.9.1998	Official Record of Proceedings (Question 2)
Panel on Education	13.1.2003	Minutes
Legislative Council	16.1.2003	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 118 - 124
Panel on Education	19.10.2006	Minutes Agenda
Panel on Education	18.10.2007	Minutes Agenda

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