

(Translation)

**Motion on
“Immediately reviewing the
Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme”
moved by Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
at the Legislative Council meeting
of Wednesday, 10 June 2009**

**Motion as amended by Hon Starry LEE Wai-king and Hon Tommy
CHEUNG Yu-yan**

That, the purpose of introducing the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme is to lessen the financial burden of parents and provide them with direct fee subsidy, but the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme, since its implementation in the 2007-2008 school year, has given rise to a number of problems, including the failure of the policy on fee remission which has rendered a number of parents having to pay higher school fees; moreover, the Administration has abolished the proposed pay scale for kindergarten teachers, resulting in the loss of salary protection for kindergarten teachers, who can hardly enjoy salary increase even after upgrading their qualifications, whereas pressure from work and studies has substantially increased; as the voucher system has aroused strong discontent among the early childhood education sector and parents of kindergarten children, this Council urges the Administration to immediately conduct a comprehensive review on the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme, including:

- (a) reviewing the Kindergarten Fee Remission Scheme and adjusting the level of fee remission with reference to the changes in price indices on an annual basis, so as to ensure that low-income families receive appropriate assistance;
- (b) comprehensively reviewing the various subsidies for early childhood education institutions, as well as increasing the manpower and resources for such institutions, so as to ensure the quality of early childhood education;
- (c) offering subsidies under the voucher scheme on a fair and equal basis so that all kindergarten children are benefited and parents are free to choose the early childhood education institutions;
- (d) formulating a pay scale for kindergarten teachers which is commensurate with their qualifications, and directly subsidizing the remuneration of kindergarten teachers, so as to relieve the burden on parents;

- (e) relieving the work pressure on kindergarten teachers, including simplifying the administrative work arising from self-evaluation, external evaluation and the voucher scheme, as well as providing sufficient support staff, etc; and
- (f) allowing kindergarten teachers who are still taking Certificate in Early Childhood Education courses at the end of the 2011-2012 school year to keep their teaching posts;
- (g) reviewing the mechanism under which kindergarten teachers are subsidized to pursue further studies, so that teachers working in independent private kindergartens or non-profit-making kindergartens which do not receive or cannot benefit from voucher subsidies and those working in kindergartens receiving voucher subsidies may enjoy the same opportunities and subsidies for further studies, thereby eliminating the unfair treatment faced by kindergarten teachers in receiving subsidies for further studies;
- (h) expeditiously resolving the discrepancies between the voucher system and the various fee subsidy schemes for child care centres and kindergartens, so as to avoid the problem of parents with financial difficulties having to pay higher school fees after the implementation of the voucher system; and
- (i) immediately reviewing the existing problem that the proportion of voucher subsidies received by students attending whole-day kindergartens is substantially lower than that received by students attending half-day kindergartens, as well as appropriately raising the proportion, so that parents of whole-day students can receive subsidies in a fair manner.