

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2393/08-09
(The minutes have been seen by
the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/ED

Panel on Education

**Minutes of special meeting
held on Wednesday, 17 June 2009, at 9:00 am
in Conference Room B of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan (Chairman)
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king
Hon Tanya CHAN

Members absent : Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP
Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP

Public Officers attending : Agenda item I

Mr Kenneth CHEN, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Mrs Betty IP
Deputy Secretary for Education (3)

Dr Thomas CHUNG
Head, Emergency Response and Information Branch,
Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health

Agenda item II

Mr Kenneth CHEN, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Ms Mable CHAN
Deputy Secretary for Education (2)

Mrs Betty IP
Deputy Secretary for Education (3)

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

Staff in attendance : Mr Stanley MA
Senior Council Secretary (2)8

Ms Judy TING
Council Secretary (2)3

Miss Jenny LEE
Legislative Assistant (2)6 (Acting)

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I. Primary 5 second-term examination arrangements pursuant to class suspension

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1928/08-09(01)]

Members noted the Administration's paper entitled "Arrangements of Class Suspension under Human Swine Influenza" which was tabled at the meeting.

2. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Education (US(Ed)) and Deputy Secretary for Education (3) (DS(Ed)3) briefed members on the precautionary work and the arrangements of class suspension in schools against the spread of Human Swine Influenza (HSI) as detailed in the Administration's paper.

3. Head, Emergency Response and Information Branch (Head(ERIB)) of Centre for Health Protection (CHP) supplemented that the Department of Health

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(DH) had been working closely with the Education Bureau (EDB) and would continue to monitor the situation closely to prevent the spread of HSI in schools.

Arrangements for internal examinations

4. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong noted that if schools could not conduct the Primary (P5) second-term examination in early July 2009 for some reasons, they could make school-based decision to arrange the examination between July and early September 2009 for the purpose of Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA). He pointed out that parents were concerned about the deferral of the examination to early September as it would adversely affect students' summer holiday activities. He considered that subject to the pandemic situation that was being closely monitored by DH, EDB should encourage schools to clean up their school premises and arrange suitable venues for their Primary 5 (P5) students to take the second-term examination before the start of the summer holiday. For the same reason, EDB should encourage secondary schools to conduct their internal examinations within the week wherever feasible, and make use of the coming Saturday and Sunday if necessary.

5. DS(Ed)3 responded that EDB was working closely with DH in preparing the guidelines on special arrangements for schools to conduct the second-term examination for P5 students (the Guidelines). If classes were resumed before 10 July 2009, schools could conduct school activities, including internal examinations, before the start of the summer holiday. In the event that classes could not be resumed before 10 July 2009, EDB would issue the Guidelines to schools in early July 2009. If schools could not conduct the P5 second-term examination in early July for some reasons, they could consider making school-based decision in arranging the P5 second-term examination between July and early September 2009. Under all circumstances, schools should inform parents of the arrangements well in advance.

Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA)

6. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that the school sector did not object to the cancellation of the TSA examinations scheduled for 17 and 18 June 2009 as it did not affect school operation.

7. DS(Ed)3 advised that the TSA examinations scheduled for 23 and 24 for Secondary 3 (S3) classes would also be cancelled if secondary school classes were suspended territory-wide during the assessment dates.

Graduation ceremonies

8. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that graduation ceremonies were important and memorable events for students and parents. Schools should not cancel their graduation ceremonies without an alternative arrangement. In his

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view, graduation ceremonies could be held in any month even after the end of the current school year.

9. US(Ed) responded that during the period of class suspension, schools should refer and act in accordance with the guidelines set out in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the "Handbook on Prevention of HSI in Schools" compiled by EDB. Since class suspension was a mitigation measure, parents had been advised that students should stay at home during the class suspension period and avoid going to crowded places.

10. DS(Ed)3 supplemented that depending on the professional advice given by DH on the pandemic situation, EDB would accordingly advise schools of the precautionary measures to be taken when conducting extra-curricular activities and functions including graduation ceremonies.

Class suspension of secondary schools

11. Dr Priscilla LEUNG was given to understand that many secondary schools had arranged to complete their internal examinations within the week in anticipation of the possible territory-wide class suspension starting from the following week. She said that students supported such an arrangement as they would prefer completing the examinations as soon as practicable. She asked whether EDB would encourage secondary schools to adopt such an arrangement.

12. DS(Ed)3 responded that she had met representatives from the secondary sector on 15 June 2009, and gathered that most secondary schools had arranged to conduct their internal examinations in late June. She pointed out that schools had to take into account the views of parents and the preparations of students for taking the examinations when deciding their school-based examination arrangements. In general, parents and students preferred the conduct of internal examinations as soon as practicable. She further pointed out that the secondary school sector was more concerned about the conduct of internal examinations for S3 students as the examination results would have a bearing on students' selection of subjects at S4 under the New Senior Secondary Curriculum. If classes could be resumed before 10 July 2009, schools could have sufficient time to conduct their internal examinations. In case territory-wide class suspension was necessary, the secondary school sector considered the arrangements adopted for the primary school sector generally feasible and acceptable. The Guidelines referred to in paragraph 5 above would also be applicable to the conduct of S3 internal examinations. EDB would issue a letter to secondary schools with details on the arrangements should territory-wide class suspension be required. The results of public examinations including the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) and the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) would be announced as scheduled.

13. Ms Audrey EU enquired about the period of class suspension for

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secondary schools if considered necessary. DS(Ed)3 replied that similar to the arrangements for primary schools, class suspension of secondary schools, if considered necessary, would last for a period of 14 days. If classes were resumed before 10 July 2009, schools could conduct school activities, including internal examinations, before the start of the summer holiday.

14. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that most secondary schools would complete their internal examinations within this or the following week. As these examinations would normally last two to three hours in the morning and there were no classes in the afternoon during the examination period, he considered that secondary school classes should not be suspended unless it was definitely necessary to avoid disruption to the planned activities in individual schools before the start of the summer holiday. He added that during the examination period, social contact among students in school was minimal.

15. US(Ed) responded that based on the assessment and advice given by DH, EDB would decide on the need for class suspension of secondary schools. As explained, EDB would maintain close communication with schools on the latest developments of the HSI situation, and would inform them immediately if a decision on class suspension was made. DS(Ed)3 supplemented that the Administration was aware of the concerns of the secondary schools on the conduct of internal examinations, and would consider prudently the need to suspend classes having regard to its effect on school operation.

Oral examination in HKCEE

16. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that parents were concerned about the arrangements for conducting the oral examination of the subject of English Language in HKCEE. As assessment of students' proficiency in spoken English was an essential and integral part of HKCEE, he hoped that the Administration would collaborate with the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) and the schools concerned to make appropriate arrangements for the oral examination. He added that the wearing of a mask in an oral examination would affect the reliability of the assessment.

17. DS(Ed)3 responded that HKEAA and DH had worked out the necessary precautionary arrangements for the conduct of oral examinations under HKCEE in a safe manner. She shared the view that the wearing of a mask by the candidates might affect the assessment. She pointed out that according to DH's advice, the risk of HSI infection during the oral examination would be reduced if an adequate physical distance between the candidate and the assessor could be arranged.

Class suspension of kindergartens

18. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong pointed out that unlike aided schools,

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kindergartens relied on tuition fees as their main source of income. During the period of class suspension, parents might refuse to pay kindergarten tuition fees for July and August 2009, and the situation was particularly acute for the upper class as the students concerned would complete their kindergarten study. He was concerned that without sufficient tuition fee income, some kindergartens might have to reduce staff salaries or require staff to take no-pay leave. He enquired whether the Administration would assist kindergartens financially, as in the case of class suspension during the SARS period.

19. DS(Ed)3 responded that EDB was aware of the concern of the pre-primary institutions about fee collection from parents during the class suspension period. She pointed out that most kindergartens had joined the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (the Scheme) and could still redeem the voucher under the Scheme during class suspension. The voucher could cover a substantial part of the tuition fee for most kindergartens. While parents should note their obligation to pay tuition fees during class suspension period, the Administration would keep in view closely the situation of non-payment of tuition fees in the pre-primary education sector.

20. Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that around 10% of kindergartens had not joined the Scheme for various reasons and parents with children attending these kindergartens paid the tuition fees in full without any subsidy. Some parents would have to take care of their children and could not go to work during the class suspension period. He was concerned that these parents might have difficulties to pay the tuition fees.

21. Mr Tommy CHEUNG queried the need to start the class suspension of all kindergartens, kindergartens-cum-child care centres, primary schools (including English Schools Foundation and International) and special schools (except the Schools for Social Development with secondary section only) from 12 June 2009, the date after the meeting of the Steering Committee on Pandemic Strategies in the morning of 11 June 2009. Whilst acknowledging the Administration's duty to protect children from being infected with HSI, he considered that the Administration should also consider the practical difficulties of service providers relating to schools such as school bus and meal-box providers in deciding the commencement date for class suspension. As it was widely speculated that secondary school classes would also be suspended from the following week, he called on the Administration to make announcements as earlier as practicable to enable service providers to make preparation. He also requested the Administration to take appropriate measures to assist small-scale service providers such as by providing interest-free loans during the class suspension period.

22. In response, US(Ed) undertook to relay Mr Tommy CHEUNG's request to the relevant bureaux and departments for consideration.

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Tutorial schools

23. Miss Tanya CHAN said that a suspected HSI infection case at a tutorial school was reported. She sought information on measures applicable to tutorial schools.

24. DS(Ed)3 replied that all guidelines and circulars to schools related to the prevention of HSI infection and class suspension were also issued to tutorial schools for reference. Tutorial schools were advised to avoid operating tutorial classes for primary students and take all necessary precautionary measures in the light of their circumstances such as class size and space should supplementary lessons or activities be arranged. Similar to the arrangements in secondary schools, tutorial schools with a confirmed case of HSI infection would be required to suspend their classes. EDB had disseminated the relevant information regarding the prevention of HSI to tutorial schools and inspection to those schools with a larger enrolment of primary students would be arranged, if required.

Continuation of learning during class suspension

25. The Chairman said that during the period of class suspension, teachers and students could continue to teach and learn via the internet. As needy families could not afford internet services, she asked whether the Administration would provide free internet services to enable their children to continue learning at home during class suspension.

26. US(Ed) responded that internet learning was not the only approach adopted by schools. During class suspension, schools would also distribute worksheets to students as home assignments. In fact, schools had made preparation for class suspension and adopted appropriate measures to facilitate learning at home. He added that class suspension should not be taken as learning suspension.

27. Ms Starry LEE said that as small children and primary students could not stay at home all day during class suspension, they would go to public libraries and leisure places. She considered it necessary to step up hygienic and cleansing measures in these places. The Chairman requested EDB to convey Ms LEE's view to the relevant departments.

Long-term solution

28. The Chairman said that HSI would sooner or later become an endemic disease in Hong Kong. She asked whether class suspension was the only means to avoid cross infection of HSI among students. She hoped that school learning would not be disrupted indefinitely.

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29. H(ERIB) said that the characteristics of HSI were better understood since its outbreak in Mexico and the United States in April 2009. Based on the existing information, HSI was assessed to be comparable to seasonal influenza. However, as HSI was a new disease and most persons were not immune to it, the Administration considered it necessary to adopt a prudent approach to prevent its widespread in the community, in particular among the vulnerable groups such as young children and institutional inmates. As HSI had an incubation period of 7 days, it was therefore decided that class suspension should last for a period of 14 days i.e. double the incubation period, to break the transmission in schools. DH would continue to closely monitor the pandemic situation of HSI locally and overseas, and would recommend appropriate measures to minimize cross infection in the community.

II. Relocation of Christian Zheng Sheng College to the former New Territories Heung Yee Kuk Southern District Secondary School
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1900/08-09(01)]

Proposed visit to Christian Zheng Sheng College (CZSC) and public hearing on CZSC relocation

30. Members noted Miss Tanya CHAN's letter dated 15 June 2009. At the invitation of the Chairman, Miss CHAN elaborated that she proposed that the Panel should conduct public hearing to receive views on CZSC relocation to the former New Territories Heung Yee Kuk Southern District Secondary School (SDSS) and on the provision of school places on Islands. She also proposed that the Panel should consider paying a visit to CZSC to better understand its experiences of and difficulties in operating a rehabilitation centre-cum-school.

31. The Chairman appealed to Legislative Council (LegCo) Members belonging to different political groupings and affiliations to sign the joint statement supporting the relocation of CZSC to SDSS which was initiated by Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong and Mr LEE Cheuk-yan. The Chairman said that as the subject matter was currently under heated discussion by the stakeholders, she considered it more appropriate to give some time to them to sort out the matter and conduct the public hearing in the beginning of the next LegCo session. She noted that members belonging to different political parties had visited CZSC already, but she would not object to the proposed visit to CZSC by the Panel.

32. Ms Audrey EU considered it important for LegCo Members or the Panel to pay a visit to CZSC to better understand and support its roles in helping young drug abusers. She also supported the proposal to convene public hearing to receive views of the school sector as well as Mui Wo residents concerning the provision of school places in the area. Ms EU said that the principal of CZSC welcomed the proposed visit and the conduct of public hearing.

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33. Mr Tommy CHEUNG recalled that members had expressed views at the meeting on 25 May 2009 that the Panel should not discuss individual cases such as Pegasus Philip Wong Kin Hang Christian Primary School cum Junior Secondary School incident. He said that the Panel should take a consistent approach and should not discuss the CZSC relocation per se. He considered it more appropriate for the Panel to discuss the matter from the policy perspective such as the provision of land and resources for rehabilitation centres-cum-schools, in particular whether such schools should be under the purview of the Security Bureau (SB) or EDB.

34. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan agreed to the proposed visit to CZSC by the Panel. He said that as many LegCo Members had already expressed support for the CZSC relocation, the proposed public hearing should focus on the provision of school places on Islands instead of the relocation of CZSC.

35. Dr Priscilla LEUNG considered it important to have regard to the feelings of CZSC students in deciding the appropriate time for holding the proposed public hearing. She agreed that the Panel should visit CZSC to enhance communication with its students.

36. Ms Starry LEE shared the view of Dr Priscilla LEUNG that it was not the opportune time for holding the public hearing to stir up the feelings of both parties. She was concerned that the public hearing might be used as a forum for hostile dialogue. Ms LEE also considered it inappropriate for Mui Wo children joining the protest against the relocation.

37. Professor Patrick LAU supported the proposal for visiting CZSC to better understand its need for relocation. In his view, in addition to EDB and SB, the Development Bureau should also be involved in considering the relocation of CZSC as it related to long-term planning and development.

38. Having regard to members' view, the Chairman proposed to visit CZSC in the first week July 2009. She also proposed that the public hearing should deal with two matters, namely, the provision of school places on Islands and the provision of resources for rehabilitation centres-cum-schools. The Chairman pointed out that many high cost and under-utilized rural schools had been closed down by the Administration and children living on Islands had to travel long distance to school. The provision of school places on Islands had been a concern to many parents. She also pointed out that CZSC was the only rehabilitation centre-cum-school in Hong Kong subject to the Rehabilitation Centres Ordinance. Since the demand for rehabilitation services for at-risk students was surging, it was necessary for the Administration to increase the number of rehabilitation centres-cum-schools and special schools, such as Schools for Social Development.

39. Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that to facilitate discussion on rehabilitation

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centres-cum-schools, LegCo Secretariat might conduct a research on experiences of overseas jurisdictions. He was of the view that there was no urgency to discuss the two subject matters, and the proposed public hearing could be held at a later date.

40. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong considered that the Panel should focus its discussion on issues relevant to rehabilitation centres-cum-schools instead of the provision of special schools.

41. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan considered that as a matter of priority, the Panel should discuss the provision of school places on Islands to better understand the supply and demand situation there. In his view, there was no need to conduct public hearing on CZSC relocation since many LegCo Members had pledged full support for its relocation. The public hearing should focus on long-term policy issues pertaining to rehabilitation centres-cum-schools and could be held at a later date. He hoped that by then, the issue of CZSC relocation had been resolved.

42. Miss Tanya CHAN was of the view that the Panel on Security should be invited to join the discussion on rehabilitation centres-cum-schools.

43. Ms Audrey EU reiterated that the visit to CZSC should be carried out as soon as practicable. She shared the view of Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong that the proposed public hearing should focus on issues relevant to CZSC and the issue of special schools should not be considered in that context. She also said that the Panel on Education and not the Panel on Security was the appropriate platform for discussing issues relating to school drug abuse.

44. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that the conflict between CZSC and Mui Wo residents on the issue of CZSC relocation was attributed to the Administration's mishandling of the matter. First, it had closed down many rural schools and forced children living on the Islands to travel long distance to school. Second, it failed to implement long-term strategies for rehabilitation of student drug abusers. Mr LEUNG considered that the Panel should first discuss the provision of school places on Islands and then the rehabilitation services for student drug abusers.

45. Professor Patrick LAU said that the Council had held a motion debate on the subject of youth drug abuse problem at its meeting on 29 April 2009, and the Administration should respond to Members' views as soon as practicable. He considered that the Panel should discuss the issues relevant to CZSC relocation as well as drug abuse in schools.

46. In concluding the discussions, the Chairman said that the Panel was in full support for the work of CZSC in rehabilitating young drug abusers, and would visit CZSC in early July 2009. The Panel would hold a special meeting as

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soon as practicable to receive views on the provision of school places in Mui Wo. The Panel would also hold a joint meeting with the Panel on Security to discuss the policy issues relevant to rehabilitation centres-cum-schools for students abusing drugs.

47. Ms Audrey EU opined that the focus of the special meeting should not be confined to the provision of school places in Mui Wo only but on Islands in general. Members agreed.

Briefing by the Administration

48. US(Ed) said that the Administration was in full support for CZSC relocating to SDSS and would continue to discuss with the stakeholders on the matter. As regards the provision of school places in Mui Wo, US(Ed) pointed out that there were sufficient public sector primary school places in the area to meet the demand of students. Around 50 students in Mui Wo took part in the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System last year. Such a small number of students was not adequate to sustain the operation of a secondary school. In the Administration's view, SDSS was an appropriate site for relocating CZSC to accommodate the growing number of youth drug abusers.

49. The Chairman requested the Administration to provide a discussion paper on the subject after the meeting.

Relocation of CZSC

50. Ms Audrey EU said that the issue of CZSC relocation had reflected squarely the lack of policies on the provision of support for rehabilitation centres-cum-schools. She queried the passive attitude adopted by EDB so far on the issue of CZSC relocation, and the work done by EDB in consulting Mui Wo residents on their need for school places in the area.

51. Miss Tanya CHAN considered it important for EDB to implement long-term policies on the provision of support for rehabilitation centres-cum-schools. She sought information on long-term measures to address the concern about inadequate school places on Islands to meet the demands of the increasing population in the Islands District.

52. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong criticized EDB for not proactively resolving the issue of CZSC relocation. He supported the relocation of CZSC to SDSS. He urged the Administration to consult the Heung Yee Kuk, Islands District Council and Mui Wo residents with a view to achieving the purpose. He sought the view of the Administration on his proposal to allow CZSC to relocate to SDSS for three years and then review whether the site was suitable for CZSC for long. It was hoped that in the three-year interim period, the behaviour of CZSC students could impress upon the Mui Wo residents for a change in their attitude.

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Mr CHEUNG also considered it important for the Administration to address the problem of inadequate school places in Mui Wo in order to alleviate the grievances of the residents against CZSC relocating to the area.

53. Dr Priscilla LEUNG said that she was opposed to the closing down of many rural schools including SDSS. She commended on the work done by CZSC in rehabilitating young drug abusers, and stressed that the fact that many CZSC students had turned over a new leaf would have positive influence on and set a good example for Mui Wo youngsters. Dr LEUNG supported the proposal for the immediate relocation of CZSC to SDSS for a certain period of time, say three years. In the meantime, the Administration should plan and provide a long term site for CZSC.

54. Mr Tommy CHEUNG questioned whether EDB had any role to play in the relocation of CZSC and whether it had any discussion with SB. While supporting the relocation of CZSC to SDSS as a temporary measure, he was of the view that SDSS might not be an ideal site for accommodating both boarding and classroom facilities given their different building structural requirements. In the long term, the Administration should allocate adequate resources and land to CZSC as well as other rehabilitation centres-cum-schools. He considered it necessary to formulate a policy on rehabilitation centres-cum-schools.

55. Professor Patrick LAU also questioned the suitability of SDSS, with only 24 classrooms, for accommodating the boarding facilities of CZSC. He urged the Administration to accord sufficient resources to refurbish SDSS to meet the needs of CZSC.

Provision of school places in Mui Wo

56. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan opined that the Administration should attach importance to the needs of the 50 Mui Wo students for secondary school places and allow flexibility in the ways to meet the demand of the local residents, such as by running an international school. He queried whether the Administration had undertaken any liaison work in facilitating the relocation of CZSC to SDSS. He urged EDB to coordinate with Heung Yee Kuk and Islands District Council to consult Mui Wo residents to facilitate CZSC relocation.

57. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung was strongly opposed to the policy of closing down rural schools, with the result that children living on Islands had to travel long distance to school. He urged the Administration to take into account the different circumstances of urban and rural areas and implement policies tailored to the special needs of the small number of students on Islands. He said that many children living in rural areas preferred studying in rural schools because of their unique environment and adoption of small class teaching. He considered that sufficient school places should be provided in the Islands District. He regretted that the Administration had not formulated any long term policies to

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tackle the problem of drug abuse including the provision of rehabilitation centres-cum-schools. In his view, resolving the relocation issue of CZSC was far from resolving the problem.

58. The Chairman said that the current subsidy policy was confined to grammar schools and the role of special schools such as rural schools and rehabilitation centres-cum-schools to meet the specific needs of students had not been given due regard, notwithstanding the demand for such schools. Referring to the protest of residents of Richland Gardens against the building of Kowloon Bay Health Centre to provide treatment and rehabilitation services to patients suffering from Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome in 1995, the Chairman was worried that even if CZSC was relocated to SDSS successfully, Mui Wo residents might persist with their protest and cause nuisance. She considered it necessary for the Administration to clarify whether such behaviour would breach the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Ordinance, consult Mui Wo residents and find ways to ventilate their anger. The Chairman enquired whether and when the Islands District Council was informed of CZSC relocation to SDSS.

59. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong reiterated that if there was no better option, CZSC should be relocated to SDSS as soon as practicable. The Administration should not adopt any delaying tactics on the pretext of identifying a more suitable site.

The Administration's response

60. In response, US(Ed) said that CZSC needed to relocate to a bigger site to accommodate the growing number of youth drug abusers and SDSS was considered suitable for the purpose. In terms of the provision of public sector school places in Mui Wo, US(Ed) reiterated that there were sufficient school places to meet the demand of primary students. However, the small number of students requiring secondary school places could not sustain the operation of a secondary school there. He pointed out the various convenient modes of transport for students travelling from Mui Wo to other outlying Islands and the urban areas. As regards the provision of educational programmes for young drug abusers, US(Ed) shared the view that formal study in mainstream schools might not be appropriate for young drug abusers while receiving treatment and rehabilitation. The Administration acknowledged the need to explore new services/modes to meet their needs and was taking a multi-disciplinary approach in youth drug rehabilitation. He emphasized that the Administration would continue to provide subvention for non-governmental organizations to operate educational programmes for young drug abusers and would look into new ways to expand the existing support measures.

61. Deputy Secretary for Education (2) (DS(Ed)2) supplemented that EDB had been working closely with SB in identifying a new site for CZSC over the

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past two years. Some vacant rural school premises in the North and Yuen Long districts had been identified but were found unsuitable for the purpose. Regarding the provision of school places in the Islands District, DS(Ed)2 pointed out that the existing public sector school places at the primary level were sufficient to meet the demand in Mui Wo. Mui Wo School offered 29 primary school places and Bui O Public School offered 28, and the student population of Mui Wo had been stable in the recent years. At the secondary level, about 50 P6 students in Mui Wo took part in the SSPA System every year and this student number had remained stable for the past eight years. There were five secondary schools in Tung Chung, two in Cheung Chau and more than 10 on Hong Kong Island for students' choice. DS(Ed)3 added that as only 50 students required secondary school places in Mui Wo, the number was too small for a secondary school to operate with at least three classes at each level, a scale marginally viable to offer a broad and balanced curriculum under the New Secondary Academic Structure.

62. DS(Ed)2 further said that there were around 1 300 P6 students in the whole of Islands District taking part in the SSPA system each year, and in order to meet the possible future demand for public sector school places, the Administration had reserved sites in Tung Chung for the school building purpose. The Administration would continue to keep in view the supply of and demand for public sector primary and secondary school places to ensure adequate provision of public sector school places in the Islands District.

63. Miss Tanya CHAN enquired whether the aforesaid 1 300 P6 students included the students of Discovery Bay. DS(Ed)2 answered in the affirmative that P6 students in the Islands District and those in the primary school in Discovery Bay taking part in the SSPA system added up to some 1 300 students.

64. US(Ed) said that SB had taken the lead in coordinating the relocation of CZSC with the participation of EDB in the process. He reiterated that the Administration had been providing subvention for non-governmental organizations to operate education programmes for young drug abusers but CZSC had ceased to apply for this type of subvention from EDB. EDB would work together with CZSC to plan for the way forward. US(Ed) clarified that the mode adopted by CZSC, i.e. drug treatment and rehabilitation centre (DTRCs)-cum-school did not fall within the category of special schools. The main function of DTRC-cum-school was to provide drug treatment and rehabilitation services to youth drug abusers instead of providing formal education. The youth drug abusers would be assisted to return to the mainstream education system as soon as practicable after rehabilitation.

65. DS(Ed)3 added that as only 50 P6 students took part in the SSPA system for allocation of public secondary school places in Mui Wo, the number was too small to sustain the operation of a secondary school. As regards consultation with Mui Wo residents on the provision of public sector school places, DS(Ed)3

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said that EDB had explained to the residents the practical difficulties in sustaining the operation of a secondary school in Mui Wo with the small number of secondary students. As regards the criteria for operating P1 classes, EDB had been exercising flexibility with primary schools in remote areas. However, there were practical difficulties in applying such flexibility to secondary schools given the need to provide a broad and balanced curriculum under the New Senior Secondary Structure.

66. Dr Priscilla LEUNG emphasized that the Administration should take the lead in expediting CZSC relocation to SDSS and consulting Mui Wo residents to understand their needs. It was also important for the Administration to formulate long term strategies to meet the needs of rehabilitation centres-cum-schools, such as CZSC.

67. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung queried why the Administration had not taken the initiative to refurbish existing vacant school premises to accommodate CZSC all these years. He considered that EDB should apply the flexibility with regards to the prescribed minimum number of students for operating primary and secondary schools in remote areas alike to meet the needs of local students. In his view, small class teaching was suitable for both primary and secondary classes.

68. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that it took time to rehabilitate drug abusers from psychological addiction to drug. Some youth drug abusers chose to stay in CZSC after drug rehabilitation to finish education. As such, the Administration should not regard the provision of education in CZSC transient in nature. It was important to enhance the provision of educational programmes to students in CZSC.

69. Miss Tanya CHAN echoed the view of Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong, and said that CZSC served as a safety place for students from relapsing into drug abuse. She called on the Administration to project the demand for rehabilitation centres-cum-schools and make long-term planning.

70. In conclusion, the Chairman said that the Panel would visit CZSC in early July 2009. The Panel would convene a special meeting to receive views on the provision of school places on Islands. The Panel would also hold a joint meeting with the Panel on Security, subject to its consent, to discuss the policy on support measure for rehabilitation of students abusing drug.

(Post-meeting note: the proposed visit to CZSC had been cancelled as Members belonging to different political groupings and affiliations had already visited the college. The Panel held two special meetings on 2 and 11 July 2009 to receive views respectively on the subjects of support measures for rehabilitation of students abusing drug and the provision of school places on Islands.)

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71. The meeting ended at 10:55 am.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
21 August 2009