

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1887/08-09

Ref : CB2/PL/ED

Report of the Panel on Education for submission to the Legislative Council

Purpose

This report gives an account of the work of the Panel on Education during the 2008-2009 Legislative Council (LegCo) session. It will be tabled at the Council meeting on 24 June 2009 in accordance with Rule 77(14) of the Rules of Procedure of the Council.

The Panel

2. The Panel was formed by a resolution passed by the Council on 8 July 1998 and as amended on 20 December 2000, 9 October 2002, 11 July 2007 and 2 July 2008 for the purpose of monitoring and examining Government policies and issues of public concern relating to education matters. The terms of reference of the Panel are in **Appendix I**.

3. The Panel comprises 17 members, with Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan and Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun elected as its Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively. The membership list of the Panel is in **Appendix II**.

Major work

Capital works projects for the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions

4. During the current legislative session, capital works projects proposed for the UGC-funded institutions were high on the agenda of the Panel. A total of 12 capital works projects in relation to the implementation of the four-year undergraduate programmes under the new 334 academic structure were needed for the purpose of expanding the existing space and facilities in the university campuses in order to accommodate the additional students starting from the

2012-2013 school year. With the exception of one project which has yet to be submitted for the Panel's consideration, members had examined the following 11 projects –

- (a) the Baptist University Road Campus Development by the Baptist University of Hong Kong;
- (b) development of Centennial Campus, Phases 1 and 2 by the University of Hong Kong;
- (c) development of Phase 8 and Innovation Tower by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University;
- (d) development of a new academic building and extension to the existing Academic Building by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology;
- (e) development of a centralized general research laboratory complex and a Student Amenity Centre, and extension to the existing university library by the Chinese University of Hong Kong;
- (f) development of an academic and administration building by the City University of Hong Kong; and
- (g) development of a new academic block and a student hostel block by the Lingnan University.

5. In the course of discussions on individual projects, members had raised concern relevant to all 334-related capital works projects. Members noted that about \$6 billion had been earmarked for the carrying out of these projects. The total estimated costs of the 12 projects increased from about \$3.4 billion in 2004-2005 prices to around \$4.9 billion in 2008 prices. Members sought information on the reasons for the substantial increase in the estimated costs and the parties concerned for shouldering the additional costs.

6. According to the Administration, the adjustments were mainly attributed to the significant increases in construction material prices and changes in market sentiments from the date of the original estimated costs in 2004 and 2005. There were steady increases in construction material prices since 2004, but the increase had accelerated from mid-2007 onwards. To ensure cost-effective use of public funds in the light of the prevailing economic downturns, members welcomed the adoption by the UGC-funded institutions of contract price fluctuation (CPF) payments for their capital works projects. The CPF payment allowed for upward/downward adjustments to contract payments in accordance with movements in the cost of labour and materials in Government civil engineering and building contracts. The objective of this system was for equitable risk sharing between the Government as an employer and the contractor.

7. Members noted that the provision of campus space and facilities for the UGC-funded institutions was calculated on the basis of student number in accordance with the prescribed accommodation standards. The funding for the capital works projects for the UGC-funded institutions was based on the provision of standard facilities as laid down in the established formula. The institutions would have to shoulder the costs for the construction of any additional/enhanced facilities. The institutions were also reminded that, given the prevailing uncertain economic prospects, non-essential facilities should be avoided as far as practicable.

8. In examining the proposals for each of the projects, members had considered the green features adopted for sustainable development and the impact of the works projects on the nearby residents. The institutions concerned provided detailed information on the design and orientation of the buildings to be constructed, the energy conservation measures to be adopted and management of construction waste arising from the projects. Members were of the view that the UGC-funded institutions should set a good example for green buildings even if a higher cost might have to be incurred. Members took note that all the proposed projects were supported by the relevant stakeholders in the consultation conducted.

Hostels for tertiary students

9. Apart from the 334-related capital works projects, the Panel had also considered three other projects for the construction of student hostel blocks as follows –

- (a) two student hostel blocks by the City University of Hong Kong;
- (b) two student hostel blocks by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology; and
- (c) three student hostel blocks by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

10. Members were concerned that each of the UGC-funded institutions had a shortfall of publicly-funded hostel places, and the shortfall was as many as 2 000 places for some institutions. The implementation of the four-year undergraduate programmes, the increase in student exchange activities and the development of Hong Kong into a regional education hub all required additional hostel places. Members considered it necessary for the Administration to proactively assist the UGC-funded institutions in finding ways to meet the shortfall. They noted that the Administration was examining the feasibility of constructing two "joint hostels" in Ma On Shan and Tseung Kwan O to accommodate students from different UGC-funded institutions. The Administration had considered giving the UGC-funded institutions an option of applying for a one-off grant to build, rent or purchase premises to meet with the agreed provision. However, the suggestion was considered financially not viable by the institutions. Members suggested that consideration should be given to redeveloping vacant factory buildings or

converting vacant Government quarters and school premises into hostels for the UGC-funded institutions. The Administration undertook to examine the matter. Members were also aware of the community's concerns about the possible noise nuisance caused by student activities conducted at midnight. The UGC-funded institutions were reminded to, as far as practicable, designate either indoor areas or areas not facing residential buildings as student activity areas.

Inter-institutional independent redress mechanism

11. To follow up on the discussions in the Third LegCo, the Panel invited the eight UGC-funded institutions to report on their consideration of members' request for them to enhance public accountability and transparency of their governance structure by inter alia, making public the minutes of and papers for their council meetings. Members welcomed the decisions of most institutions to upload the papers and minutes of their council meetings which were not of a confidential nature onto their university websites.

12. However, members were disappointed with the response of the Heads of Universities Committee (HUCOM) to the Panel that it did not support the proposal for establishing an elected independent inter-institutional complaints committee, contrary to the views of the staff associations of the UGC-funded institutions. In the view of members, the establishment of such a committee comprising university management and staff should be the best way forward as university staff had no confidence in the existing grievances and complaints mechanisms in individual institutions; the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman did not cover the UGC sector; and the costs of legal proceedings were beyond the means of staff.

13. To take forward the proposal, members sought in-house legal advice on the HUCOM's response that the setting up of an inter-institutional complaints committee was tantamount to usurping the legal powers of the university councils, infringing on the autonomy of the institutions, and slighting the judgement of the courts. Members requested the Research and Library Services Division of the LegCo Secretariat to conduct a research on external complaints handling mechanisms in the higher education sector in overseas countries. Members also asked the Administration to explore the feasibility of extending the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman to cover the UGC sector. All the deputations which had expressed views on the subject were invited to provide written submissions on the details of the proposed elected independent inter-institutional complaints committee including its jurisdiction and composition. The Panel will revisit the matter in early July 2009 when all the relevant information will be available.

Retitling of the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) as a university

14. Following the release by the UGC of the Report of the Review Group on the Hong Kong Institute of Education's Development Blueprint, the Panel discussed the future development of HKIEd, and received views from its Council, staff association and student union. The management, staff, students and alumni of

HKIED were disappointed with UGC's conclusion not to support HKIED for attaining the university title. They considered that the absence of a university title had adversely affected HKIED in enrolling quality secondary school graduates and had hindered its scholarly exchanges with other institutions, especially those in the Mainland where the title 'institute' referred to provincial institutions offering sub-degree programmes. They also considered that HKIED's students were unfairly treated as they were pursuing degree programmes. The Council, staff association and student union of HKIED stated categorically clear of their preference for HKIED developing into an education-focused and multi-disciplinary university with research capability to merging with another institution with such attributes.

15. The majority of members of the Panel supported the retitling of HKIED as a university. They noted that for HKIED to develop into a multi-disciplinary university, it had to provide 120 additional first-year-first-degree (FYFD) and 30 research postgraduate places. Given that the resources involved for the provision of 120 additional FYFD places in HKIED were only \$27 million per annum, these members urged the Administration to take immediate actions to seek the support of the Executive Council for retitling HKIED as a university. A member had expressed reservations about the retitling of HKIED as a university on the grounds that the absence of a university title had no bearing on the status and standard of an institute as evident in many renowned overseas colleges and institutes, and that universities should preferably be multi-disciplinary in nature and should not be monotechnic.

16. Members agreed to follow up the matter again after the Administration had completed its study of the policy and financial implications of the recommendations in the UGC's Report.

334-new academic structure

17. With the imminent implementation of the new academic structure for senior secondary and higher education starting from the 2009-2010 school year, the Panel received a progress report from the Administration on the preparation work including curriculum, learning and assessment, preparation of and support for schools, interface with post-secondary and university education, and communication with stakeholders.

18. Members were concerned in particular about the international recognition of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) qualification which would replace the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination and the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination. Members noted that instead of using grades A to F as in the current reporting system in the two public examinations, a standards-referencing reporting system would be adopted in HKDSE. Students' results in HKDSE would be reported with reference to a set of defined levels or standards of performance, and the standards were held constant with no fixed proportion of students for each level. As a large number of Hong Kong students

applied for admission to undergraduate programmes in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom each year, members urged the Administration to complete as early as practicable the benchmarking exercise of the HKDSE qualification for seeking international recognition.

19. Members remained concerned about the implementation of school-based assessment for various subjects under the new academic structure. Although the Administration had revised the implementation timetable in view of the concern raised by the school sector and had deferred school-based assessment for 11 subjects, some members considered that school-based assessment should only be implemented for subjects with such a component in the current Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination in order not to create undue stress on teachers who had to cope with the various changes under the new academic structure.

20. As Liberal Studies would be one of the four core subjects under the new senior secondary curriculum and its contents would cover a wide range of areas, members sought information on the assessment of student performance on the subject. According to the Administration, there would be no model answers to examination questions. To enhance objectivity in assessment, double marking of examination scripts would be adopted and assessors would be guided by detailed marking guidelines.

21. Noting that the history and development of China would be one of the modules under Liberal Studies, some members considered that history was of paramount importance in understanding the development of motherland and strengthening the national identity. They held the view that Chinese History should be made a compulsory and not an elective subject under the new academic structure. The Panel would convene a special meeting in early July 2009 to examine issues relating to Liberal Studies.

Special schools

22. The Panel had examined the school leaving arrangements for students with intellectual disability (ID) studying in special schools. Members noted that in 2002-2003, the Education Bureau (EDB) launched a two-year Extension of Years of Education (EYE) Programme for ID students after completion of junior secondary education. ID schools submitted to EDB a list of students who had applied for an extension of stay when reaching the age of 18 in every school year. EDB processed the applications on the merits of individual cases and approved a certain number of students to extend their study. Like mainstream schools, ID schools would start to operate Senior Secondary One classes under the new academic structure in the 2009-2010 school year and progress up to Senior Secondary Three year by year.

23. Concern was raised by some parents with ID children about the requirement for ID students to leave schools when reaching the age of 18. They pointed out that the age requirement did not apply to students studying in mainstream schools.

Moreover, according to the Code of Aid for Special Schools, students could remain in a secondary class of a special school until they reached the age of 20. In their views, the requirement for ID students to apply for an extension of stay in special schools at the age of 18 constituted a breach of the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Ordinance and the Code of Aid. These parents requested that ID students, irrespective of age, should be given the right to enjoy three-year senior secondary education starting from 2009-2010.

24. Members requested the Administration to provide information on the resources involved for the provision of three-year senior secondary education for ID students and legal advice on whether the age requirement was in breach of the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Ordinance and the Code of Aid. The Panel will revisit the matter in late June 2009.

Fine-tuning the medium of instruction (MOI) for secondary schools

25. The Panel continued to follow up the proposed fine-tuned MOI arrangements for secondary schools. The Panel received views from 28 deputations including school councils, schools, teacher associations and parent-teacher associations. While most of the parent-teacher associations supported the proposed fine-tuning framework to allow secondary schools with greater autonomy in selecting the appropriate MOI and to increase the exposure of junior secondary students to English inside the classroom, some principals and teachers were concerned about the possible increase of workload and the intensification of labeling among students within a school.

26. Members expressed diverse views on the fine-tuning proposal. Some were of the view that a more direct and effective approach to enhance the English proficiency of students was to improve the teaching and learning of the subject of English Language. They doubted the effectiveness of enhancing students' English proficiency by adopting English as the MOI for content subjects. There was a view that schools should be given full autonomy in determining the MOI arrangements, and the adoption of English as the MOI should not be subject to the three prescribed criteria of "student ability", "teacher capability" and "support measures of schools". Other members, however, supported the implementation of the fine-tuning proposal, and called on the Administration to work in partnership with schools to address their concerns. To mitigate the concern about under-enrolment arising from the drop in student population, it was suggested that the consolidation policy for secondary schools should be put on hold.

27. Following the approval of the fine-tuned proposal by the Executive Council in May 2009, the Panel convened an urgent special meeting to discuss the finalized arrangements. The finalized arrangements were largely the same as originally proposed in that there would no longer be pure bifurcation of schools into schools using English (EMI schools) and Chinese (CMI schools) as the medium of instruction; schools would be given full discretion to determine its MOI arrangements if the average proportion of Secondary One intake admitted to a class

belonging to the "top 40%" group in the previous two years reached 85% of the size of the class; other schools adopting mother tongue for teaching content subjects could use 25% of the total lesson time for extended learning activities (ELA) in English; and schools could transform the ELA time into the adoption of EMI for individual subjects, up to a maximum of two subjects.

28. Some members were worried that to enhance enrolment, some schools would make use of the ELA time to adopt EMI for certain science subjects, irrespective of the readiness of teachers and the ability of students. This would have profound impact on local student performance in science subjects which ranked high by international standards. Members were also concerned about the monitoring by EDB to ensure the compliance of schools with the prescribed criteria. The Panel has scheduled a further meeting in July 2009 to receive views of deputations on the finalized MOI arrangements.

International school places

29. The Panel had examined the provision of international school places and boarding facilities for non-local students. Members noted with concern that while the Administration claimed that there was an increasing demand for international school places, the enrolment in the 51 international schools stood at 30 900 students, with 3 700 places unfilled as at September 2008. The Administration explained that as non-local children of families coming to Hong Kong for work or investment and non-local students holding student visas for entry into Hong Kong for studies came and went for various reasons, there were bound to be some unfilled places in international schools in the course of a school year but at the same time there were waiting lists for admission to such schools. The student turnover rate in international schools was around 10% on average. Overall, the supply of international school places was insufficient to meet with the increasing demand.

30. Members were also concerned that under the existing policy, local students could make up as high as 50% of the total student number in an international school. Members considered such a percentage of local students too high. Although according to the Administration, only about 14% of the students in international schools were local students, notwithstanding the ceiling of 50%, members considered the average figure of 14% misleading. Members believed that the percentage of local students in international schools adopting English as the MOI might be considerably higher than that adopting other languages as the MOI. They noted that a large number of children of families of means and civil servants were studying in international schools. Members stressed that international schools should target at non-local students, and called on the Administration to adjust the percentage of local students in international schools in the light of the demand from non-local students.

31. To facilitate further discussion on the matter, the Panel had requested the Administration to provide information on the number and percentage of local and non-local students in each of the 51 international schools, and the number of civil

servants in receipt of local education allowance whose children were attending international schools. The Administration has yet to provide the requisite information.

Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme

32. The Panel received a progress report on the implementation of the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme, and the views of 31 pre-primary education providers and concerned organizations. The deputations pointed out the many problems associated with the Scheme. These included the ineligibility of non-profit making (NPM) kindergartens (KGs) for joining the Scheme; whole-day KGs not receiving as much subsidies as half-day KGs; the absence of a comprehensive remuneration structure for KG teachers commensurate with their qualifications; the non-adjustment of the ceilings on fee remission under the Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme until the 2011-2012 school year; the requirement for serving KG teachers to obtain the Certificate in Early Childhood Education (C(ECE)) qualification by 2011-2012; and the requirement for uploading the results of quality review onto the website of EDB. Many deputations called for a comprehensive review on the Scheme as soon as possible; formulation of a blueprint for post-2012 development; and relaxation of the ceilings on school fees.

33. Members noted with grave concern the adverse effect on whole-day KGs and the need for low-income families to pay more for the KG fee after the implementation of the Scheme. They considered it necessary for the Administration to take immediate actions to address the problems. The Panel passed a motion urging the Administration to establish instantly a committee which should include representatives of the pre-primary education sector and parents to immediately review the KG fee subvention system, as well as to establish a remuneration system commensurate with teachers' training and qualifications. The Panel will convene a special meeting in late June 2009 to follow up the matter.

Loan schemes for post-secondary providers and students

For providers

34. Members supported the Administration's proposal to provide from the Loan Fund loans totalling about \$420 million to Chu Hai College of Hong Kong, the University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong College of Technology for constructing a purpose-built campus and refurbishing vacant school premises for the operation of full-time locally accredited post-secondary programmes. As the loan to Chu Hai College of Hong Kong amounted to \$350 million, members were of the view that to facilitate its development, the loan should be repaid over 20 years instead of 10. According to the Administration, the borrowing institutions with proven financial difficulties could apply for extension of the loan repayment period up to 20 years with interest payment at the no-gains-no-loss interest rate after the first 10 years.

For students

35. Members examined the existing provision of financial assistance for post-secondary students. Under the existing policy, a risk-adjusted factor of 1.5% was imposed on the various non-means-tested loan schemes administered by the Student Financial Assistance Agency, and interest would be charged on the capital once the loan was drawn down and on the reducing capital throughout the repayment period. Members objected to the imposition of the risk-adjusted factor for the various non-means-tested loan schemes. To address the problem of default in loan repayment, members urged the Administration to reinforce education on students on repayment responsibility, establish mechanisms to assist borrowers who had genuine difficulties in repayment, and work out effective measures to reduce default and recover debts. Members considered that loan interest should only be accrued upon the completion of the study programmes by full-time students.

36. Members pointed out the major causes for the growing need to borrow the non-means-tested loans. They were the exceedingly high tuition fees of self-financing programmes which were beyond the means of many families, and the non-adjustment of the criteria for the provision of means-tested grants and loans and of the method in calculating the level of expenses under the low-interest loan schemes. Members noted that many items, such as computer expenses and property mortgage repayments, which had become a necessity nowadays, were not taken into account in considering the eligibility for low-interest loans.

37. The Panel passed a motion urging the Administration to; allow graduates to defer the repayment of non-means-tested loans for two years at no interest, in anticipation that Hong Kong would continue to experience an economic downturn in the near future; permanently remove the risk-adjusted factor of 1.5% from the interest rate; accrue interest on the loans after the students had completed their studies; and review and relax the method of calculating the level of expenses of students under the low-interest loan schemes.

38. Following the passing of the motion, the Administration announced in May 2009 two one-off measures on student finance to alleviate the financial burden on needy families. These were the provision of a one-off grant of \$1,000 each for students eligible for means-tested financial subsidies under the various student finance schemes administered by the Student Financial Assistance Agency in the 2009-2010 school year, or for students eligible for flat-rate grant for school-related expenses under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme in the 2009-2010 school year, and the extension of the total loan repayment period for a maximum of two years for both means-tested and non-means-tested student loans for borrowers with repayment difficulties. Members welcomed these measures.

School-based management

39. The Panel received views from major school sponsoring bodies on the Administration's proposal to move a resolution in LegCo to extend the deadline for the submission of draft constitutions for incorporated management committees (IMCs) to the Permanent Secretary for Education for two years. The Education Ordinance was amended in 2004 to require all aided schools to set up their IMCs, and to submit the draft constitutions for IMCs by 1 July 2009. Members noted that as at 1 March 2009, about 50% of aided schools had yet to come up with a timetable for the implementation of IMCs. Of these schools, 64% were Catholic, Sheng Kung Hui and Methodist Church schools.

40. While supporting the spirit of school-based management, three major school sponsoring bodies considered that IMCs should not be the only model in achieving the objective. They pointed out that Government schools, Direct Subsidy Scheme schools and private schools were not required to set up IMCs. Members noted that a school sponsoring body had lodged an appeal against the decision of the Court of First Instance in respect of the judicial review about the constitutionality of the statutory requirement to set up IMCs. To allow time for the Administration to further discuss the matter with school sponsoring bodies and for some aided schools to prepare for the setting up of IMCs, members supported the moving of the resolution to extend the deadline.

Development of electronic textbooks and prices of printed textbooks

41. The Panel received views from the stakeholders concerning the development of electronic textbooks and the increase of textbook prices. While supporting the development of e-learning resources in schools and information technology in education, a number of deputations raised concern about the costs of hardware and software to support e-learning and the financial burden on low-income families. They urged the Administration to expand the scope of the School Textbook Assistance Scheme to cover internet access service fees.

42. Members were gravely concerned about the increasing textbook prices and proposed various measures to address the problem. These included the de-bundling of textbooks from teaching resources; strict enforcement of the three-year rule in textbook revision; prohibition of acceptance of gifts and donations by schools; stringent monitoring of compliance by publishers and schools with the requirements for textbook sale as trading operation in schools; and promotion of textbook recycling. Members requested publishers, schools, parents and the Administration to tackle the problem from different fronts.

Recognition of non-local academic qualifications

43. Members noted with concern the lack of a formal arrangement for the recognition of academic qualifications awarded by higher education institutions in

the Mainland and Taiwan. Under the existing practice, qualification assessment conducted by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) was neither an institutional nor a programme accreditation, and the result pertained only to the application under assessment. Members considered such a practice out of touch with the enhanced exchange of activities between Hong Kong and the Mainland and Taiwan in various domains including education. Such a practice was also not conducive to the pursuit of further studies in the Mainland and Taiwan by local students as it was uncertain whether the qualifications to be obtained would be recognized for enrolment or employment purposes in Hong Kong.

44. Instead of making an assessment on a case-by-case basis, members called on the Administration to formulate a policy on the recognition of qualifications awarded by higher education institutions in the Mainland and Taiwan. Members considered that based on the outcome of assessment cases completed by HKCAAVQ in the past many years, the Administration should at least compile a list of the programmes offered by certain higher education institutions in these two places which were assessed to have met the standard of a particular qualification level in Hong Kong and update such a list regularly. Such information should form the basis for the recognition of qualifications pertinent to particular programmes awarded by these institutions.

Drug abuse in schools

45. Following a spate of media reports on drug abuse by students, the Panel received views from welfare organizations and youth groups on measures to curb the problem. Diverse views were expressed on the proposal of drug testing for voluntary adoption in schools. Some organizations considered it an effective anti-drug measure for youth, while others objected to the proposal and raised concern about privacy, possible stigmatization and method of testing.

46. Members were of the view that both preventive and rehabilitative measures were important to tackle the problem. Members stressed their concern that students identified to have drug abuse problem should not be expelled from schools and the students should continue to receive education in the course of drug rehabilitation. Members noted that the Panel on Security would continue to follow up on the progress of implementation of the 70-plus recommendations of the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse and the Administration would report to the Panel on Security the work progress before the end of 2009, with emphasis on the proposal for drug testing and measures in tackling cross-boundary drug abuse.

47. Following the objection by the residents of Mui Wo to the relocation of Zheng Sheng College to the former New Territories Heung Yee Kuk Southern District Secondary School, the Panel convened an urgent meeting to discuss the matter. Many members expressed regret that the relevant Principal Officials including the Secretary for Education had not actively participated in resolving the matter. They queried the roles of the various bureaux in providing support to drug

rehabilitation agencies such as Zheng Sheng College in achieving their missions. While supporting the relocation of Zheng Sheng College to Heung Yee Kuk Southern District Secondary School, members were also concerned about the provision of schools places on Islands. The Panel will convene two meetings in July 2009 to receive views on the subjects of support measures for rehabilitation of students abusing drug and the provision of school places on Islands. The Panel will also conduct a visit to Zheng Sheng College in early July 2009 to better understand its operation and its vicinity environment.

Class suspension under Human Swine Influenza

48. The Panel discussed the impact of class suspension in primary schools for 14 days in June 2009 against the spread of Human Swine Influenza. Members were concerned about the arrangements for Primary 5 second-term examination for the purpose of Secondary School Places Allocation. Members supported EDB's arrangement that if schools could not conduct the Primary 5 second-term examination in early July, they could consider arranging such an examination between July and early September 2009. Members urged the Administration to make announcement as early as practicable should primary classes be continued to be suspended after the 14-day period. As many secondary schools were conducting internal examinations in mid-June 2009, members called on the Administration to be prudent in considering the need for class suspension in secondary schools. Given that Human Swine Influenza might become an endemic disease, members requested the Administration to formulate measures to prevent the spread of the disease without resorting to class suspension lightly, and even if class suspension was warranted, to enable continued learning by students.

University of Hong Kong (Amendment) Bill 2009

49. Dr Hon David LI briefed the Panel on the University of Hong Kong (Amendment) Bill 2009 which sought to rectify the inconsistency in the role of the Court and the Council of the University of Hong Kong as provided in the University of Hong Kong Ordinance and Statutes and to streamline the academic titles used by the University. Members noted that the proposed legislative amendments would clarify the role of the Court as the supreme advisory body of the University and the Council as the supreme governing body. As five members of LegCo were currently sitting on the Court which was an advisory body, members requested the University to make use of the legislative amendments to include LegCo representation in its Council.

50. Members were also concerned about the impact of the proposal to amend the academic titles of "Teachers" to comprise Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, Professors and Chairs on staff members who preferred to retain the old titles of Readers, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers and Assistant Lecturers. Members considered that a bills committee should be formed to scrutinize the details of the Bill after its presentation to LegCo.

Meetings held

51. During the period between October 2008 and mid-June 2009, the Panel held a total of 16 meetings.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
19 June 2009

Panel on Education

Terms of Reference

1. To monitor and examine Government policies and issues of public concern relating to education.
2. To provide a forum for the exchange and dissemination of views on the above policy matters.
3. To receive briefings and to formulate views on any major legislative or financial proposals in respect of the above policy area prior to their formal introduction to the Council or Finance Committee.
4. To monitor and examine, to the extent it considers necessary, the above policy matters referred to it by a member of the Panel or by the House Committee.
5. To make reports to the Council or to the House Committee as required by the Rules of Procedure.

Panel on Education

Membership list for 2008-2009 session

Chairman	Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Deputy Chairman	Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun
Members	Hon LEE Cheuk-yan Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP 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 CHAN Tanya Hon WONG Sing-chi Hon WONG Yuk-man Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP (Total : 17 Members)
Clerk	Miss Odelia LEUNG
Legal Adviser	Mr Kelvin LEE