

For discussion
on 8 February 2010

LegCo Panel on Education
Review of Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme

Supplementary Note

Purpose

This note apprises Members of the latest development of Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) and the current status of the review.

Background

2. LC Paper No. CB(2)665/09-10(05) informs that a Working Group (WG) on Review of PEVS has been set up under the Education Commission (EC) in October 2009 to kick start the review. The paper has provided further information on the membership of the WG, its Terms of Reference which include collecting the views of stakeholders on the implementation of PEVS and making recommendations to the Government for the improvement of PEVS. The WG plans to submit a report to the EC by the last quarter of 2010, after which recommendations would be submitted by the EC to the Administration.

Current Status of PEVS

3. In the 2009/10 school year, 800 out of 950 of the kindergartens (KGs) have joined PEVS. A total of 114 of them were private independent KGs converted to non-profit-making (NPM) operation since the 2007/08 school year. The voucher value for fee subsidy has increased to \$12,000 per student per annum (pspa) and will progressively increase to \$14,000 pspa in the 2010/11 school year and \$16,000 pspa in the 2011/12 school year.

4. To address the concern of needy families regarding choice of affordable KGs under PEVS, the Government has reinstated an annual adjustment mechanism for the fee remission ceilings with effect from the 2009/10 school year onwards on the basis of the half-day and whole-day weighted average fees of the NPM KGs in PEVS. The fee remission ceilings including the voucher subsidy for the 2009/10 school year have been increased to \$18,000 per half-day

student per annum and \$29,300 per whole-day student per annum. This has significantly enhanced the level of financial support for the needy families and their accessibility to more choices of KGs.

5. Starting from the 2009/10 school year, all newly appointed principals are required to possess Bachelor in Education (Early Childhood Education) and completed a certification course for KG Principals. About 90% of KG teachers are either holding or pursuing the Certificate in Early Childhood Education.

6. As at September 2009, EDB has completed quality reviews (QR) for about 45% of the NPM KGs joining PEVS. Results of the post-QR questionnaire survey indicated that about 80% of the respondents agreed that QR can accurately evaluate school performance. About 90% agreed that QR is helpful for their school development planning. 87.6% agreed that the process of QR is open and transparent. We shall continue to keep QR to be improvement-oriented with a view to enhancing the professional capacity for continuous improvement and in delivering quality education programme. School-based support services for KGs in the areas of language learning, cognitive development, socio-emotional development, physical development and curriculum leadership will continue to be provided to meet the professional development of schools.

Progress of Review by WG

7. The WG is chaired by Professor Edmond KO Inq-ming and comprises EC members from different sectors of the community who are experienced in their respective fields, including Mr CHEUNG Yung-pong, Professor LEE Wing-on, Miss Gloria LEUNG Chi-kin, Ms Shirley Marie Therese LOO and Professor WONG Po-choi.

8. The WG will review the effectiveness of PEVS having regard to its background, policy objectives, implementation strategy and current operation, and will make recommendations on the way forward. It held its first meeting in November 2009, which was followed by completion of five focus group meetings with the academics from the local tertiary institutions concerned, major KG sponsoring bodies, KG principals, teachers and parents from December 2009 to the end of January 2010. Further to the views and concerns expressed earlier by the key stakeholders including LegCo Members, the WG has met the focus groups on such issues as pre-primary education outside Hong Kong, changes since the introduction of PEVS, reasons underlying these

changes, constituent elements of quality pre-primary education, and views on improvement to the operational aspects of PEVS, etc.

9. Building on this basis, the WG will consolidate the information in the next two to three months with a view to focusing further on the specific concerns raised and improvement options appropriate to the local context, having regard to the development of pre-primary education in Hong Kong, the pre-primary education landscape before and after PEVS, and the necessary conditions for provision of quality pre-primary education, and if necessary, consider further meetings with the sector. The WG will meet with the key stakeholders again at a later stage of the review to further solicit their feedback.

Advice Sought

10. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper.

Education Bureau
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