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30 June 2010

Clerk to Panel  
Panel on Public Service  
Legislative Council  
Legislative Council Building  
8 Jackson Road  
Central  
Hong Kong  
[Attn: Ms. Sarah Yuen]

Dear Ms. Yuen,

### **Submission on Teachers' Salaries**

Thank you for your letter of 22 April, referring to us a submission from the Education Employees General Union (EEGU).

We understand that the Education Bureau has been in discussion with EEGU on issues on teachers' salaries. Having examined EEGU's submission in detail, we note that the Education Bureau has adhered to the relevant rules in the determination of teachers' salaries in Government schools. As regards teachers in aided schools, the Education Bureau has confirmed that it has followed the relevant subvention rules when determining their salaries. Insofar as the Civil Service Bureau is concerned, we would like to take this opportunity to set out the rationales of adopting the normal conversion arrangement and the carry-forward arrangement which may have a bearing on teachers' salaries for Panel's information.

Under the Improved Civil Service Pay Adjustment Mechanism, starting salaries surveys (SSSs) are conducted every three years to compare the starting

salaries of civil service civilian grades with the entry pay of jobs in the private sector requiring similar academic qualifications and/or experiences for appointment. Depending on the findings of SSSs, the starting salaries for the basic ranks of civil service grades could be increased, decreased or remain unchanged.

The normal conversion arrangement is adopted as a means to apply the findings of SSSs to serving staff. Under the normal conversion arrangement, when the starting salary for a basic rank is lowered, the pay of serving staff in that rank will remain unchanged. In other words, serving staff are protected against the risk of downward adjustment in pay arising from the application of the findings of an SSS. On the other hand, when the starting salary for a basic rank is increased, affected serving staff would have their pay adjusted upwards to the new, higher starting salary if they are paid below it or brought up by one pay point if they are paid equal to or higher than the new starting salary, subject to the maximum pay point of the rank on which they serve.

The normal conversion arrangement is a balanced approach, seeking to protect serving staff from the risk of downward adjustment to starting salaries on the one hand, and provide reasonable (but not necessarily full) adjustment to their pay when starting salaries are increased. It is premised on the principle of even-handedness for the sake of preserving the credibility of the arrangement and also from the consideration of prudent use of public monies.

As teachers in aided schools are remunerated in accordance with the civil service pay scales, their starting salaries are adjusted in the same manner as their civil service counterparts, and the normal conversion arrangement is also applied to them as a matter of the Government's subvention policy towards aided schools.

In recognition of the uniqueness of the teaching profession and the need to encourage movement of talents within the public education sector, a carry-forward arrangement has been put in place since 2000. Under the carry-forward arrangement, serving teachers in the public education sector will carry their existing pay upon transfer (within the same rank or between comparable ranks) between aided schools or between aided and government schools without a break in service. The salary as determined under the carry-forward arrangement should prevail over the calculation of salary based on the new starting salaries plus incremental credits (if applicable) for relevant teaching experience to ensure even-handedness in treatment for both upward and downward revision of starting salaries.

Aside from the normal conversion arrangement and the carry-forward arrangement, we understand that teachers' salaries are also influenced by a host of factors, including the time of appointment, the salary assessment rules applicable at the time of appointment, and the service profiles of the teachers concerned. We have copied the submission from EEGU to the Education Bureau for information and follow-up actions as appropriate.

We thank the Panel for the attention on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Sun", with a large, stylized flourish above the name.

(Chris Sun)  
for Secretary for the Civil Service