

**For discussion
on 15 February 2012**

EC(2011-12)19

ITEM FOR ESTABLISHMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

**HEAD 156 – GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT :
EDUCATION BUREAU
Subhead 000 Operational expenses**

Members are invited to recommend to Finance Committee the creation of the following supernumerary post in the Education Bureau for a period of three years from 1 May 2012 to 30 April 2015 –

1 Principal Education Officer
(D1) (\$106,600 - \$116,500)

PROBLEM

We need dedicated staffing support at the directorate level in the Education Bureau (EDB) to review and oversee the implementation of enhanced services for students with special educational needs (SEN) and non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students in local mainstream schools.

PROPOSAL

2. We propose to create one supernumerary Principal Education Officer (PEO) (D1) post in the School Administration and Support (SAS) Branch of EDB for three years from 1 May 2012 to 30 April 2015.

/JUSTIFICATION

JUSTIFICATION

Need for enhanced support for SEN and NCS students

Encl. 1

3. SEN and NCS students are different manifestations of the broader issue of learner diversity. Our policy and support measures for these students have evolved over time. An overview of the education and support measures for SEN and NCS students is at Enclosure 1. Paragraphs 4 to 7 below illustrate the need to enhance support for these students.

SEN Students

4. The increasing number and types of SEN students identified in recent years¹, coupled with the encouraging development of a wide range of learning and teaching resource packages on a cross-sector/disciplinary basis for students with different SEN, has generated a demand for stronger and more effective school-based support that would integrate the specific strategies/resources for SEN students into normal classroom settings. The education reform introduced in 2000 comprised an extensive curriculum reform, with changes to the primary 1 and secondary 1 admission systems, implementation of the new senior secondary academic structure as well as changes in the assessment culture. These have resulted in a widened within-school student diversity and made the delivery of integrated education in ordinary schools, which aims to cater for student differences and enhance the effectiveness of school education as a whole, even more challenging.

5. We believe the experience of special schools in supporting SEN students is relevant to teachers in ordinary schools. It would be useful to review how best teachers with relevant expertise in special schools could share their experience with their counterparts in ordinary schools. This would not only enhance support for SEN students studying in ordinary schools, but also facilitate the work of teachers in ordinary schools. There should also be cross-disciplinary collaboration and coordination of external resources to better support SEN students in both special and ordinary schools.

/NCS

¹ From the 2006/07 school year to the 2010/11 school year, the number of SEN students identified increased from around 10 000 to some 26 000. The substantial increase, which is consistent with global trend, is largely due to improvement of assessment tools and rising awareness among parents and teachers.

NCS Students

6. With the increase of NCS students in local schools² and our progressive understanding of the more deep-rooted issues relating to education services for NCS students, it is necessary to adopt a more holistic and coordinated approach in rendering support for NCS students to facilitate their integration into the community. In its recent review, the Equal Opportunities Commission has set out areas that it finds deficient in our support for NCS students which include, amongst others, the policies on and support to designated schools (i.e. schools with a sizeable number of NCS students) as well as other schools which also admit NCS students, the promotion of an early start in education for NCS students to facilitate better adaptation to local primary schools and the Chinese Language curriculum. We consider it necessary to assess the existing measures and modes of support to schools and students to ensure they are effective in supporting the learning and teaching of NCS students in our local schools.

7. In view of the increase of NCS students in recent years, we need to expand the school network for supporting NCS students and enhance the appeal of mainstream schools to the parents of NCS students. This would help achieve a more diverse ethnic mix in mainstream schools and eventually facilitate NCS students' adaptation to the local education system. We expect that more schools, in addition to the existing designated schools, will be involved in the implementation of the Chinese Language Curriculum for NCS students. Since the circumstances of each of the individual schools admitting NCS students are unique, a more diverse mode of support to schools is necessary.

Need for the proposed PEO post

8. At present, the policy and implementation work on matters related to SEN and NCS students are spread across five divisions in three branches of EDB. The respective main areas of responsibilities of these five concerned divisions are: (a) school administration and support; (b) special schools; (c) Direct Subsidy Scheme schools; (d) curriculum development; and (e) school places allocation system. As all of these divisions are already fully occupied with the work in their major subject areas, they have no spare capacity to oversee the enhanced support measures for SEN and NCS students as well as the relevant reviews and studies on the support measures in a focused manner.

9. In view of the above, we propose that a supernumerary PEO post, designated as PEO(Support Services) (PEO(SS)), be created in the SAS Branch of EDB for three years from 1 May 2012 to 30 April 2015. The proposed PEO(SS)

/will

² The total number of NCS students in local schools increased from 7 136 in the 2006/07 school year (4 503 in primary schools and 2 633 in secondary schools) to 14 076 in the 2011/12 school year (7 703 in primary schools and 6 373 in secondary schools).

will provide strategic planning and professional steer to the development of appropriate teaching pedagogies and resource support, school-based support strategies and cross-sector/disciplinary professional support to facilitate the learning of SEN and NCS students. Where appropriate, he/she will work closely with professional staff responsible for curriculum development for SEN and NCS students. To enable EDB to chart the way forward on how best to sustain the policy and implement measures for NCS and SEN students in ordinary schools on a long-term basis, the proposed PEO(SS) will also oversee reviews and studies that evaluate the support measures for students and schools as well as the launching of suitable pilot projects.

10. The strategic planning work and service reviews involved in the formulation and conduct of pilot projects will require around three years to complete. We will redeploy existing manpower within EDB to support PEO(SS) in carrying out his/her duties. We will also review work progress and carefully consider the staffing requirement before the supernumerary PEO(SS) post lapses in 2015.

11. The specific deliverables of the supernumerary PEO(SS) post during the three-year period from 1 May 2012 to 30 April 2015 are –

- (a) completion of a study to identify support strategies that enhance the professional capacity and capability of teachers in catering for learner diversity in kindergartens; identification of possible school-based support strategies and measures; and launch of pilot project(s) to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies and measures and provide feedback for informing the way forward;
- (b) launch of pilot projects to integrate the learning and teaching resource packages on a cross-sector/disciplinary basis for students of different SEN, and development of viable mechanism of knowledge generation and management at both conceptual and practical levels;
- (c) formulation of different modalities of school-based professional support so that schools will be geared up for the implementation of the Supplementary Guide to the Teaching of Chinese Language Curriculum for NCS students; in doing so, we will have regard to the NCS student population of these schools which will affect the extent to which they can provide an environment for immersion in the Chinese language;
- (d) restructuring the platform for sharing with other schools which also admit NCS students practices and experiences on the development and adoption of appropriate teaching pedagogies, and expansion of the network of schools supporting NCS students;

/(e)

- (e) putting in place a framework for objective and evidence-based assessment of the cost-effectiveness and viability of the support measures and evaluation of the support modes for schools; and
- (f) kick-starting a longitudinal study on the modalities of school-based professional support and NCS students' performance in learning the Chinese language, with a view to evaluating the efficacy of the support for NCS students with diverse learning abilities.

Encl. 2 12. The proposed job description of the supernumerary PEO(SS) post is at Enclosure 2. The PEO(SS) post will be under the supervision of the Deputy Secretary of the SAS Branch. The organisation chart of EDB after the proposed
Encl. 3 creation of the post is at Enclosure 3.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Encl. 4 13. At present, there are nine PEOs in EDB overseeing different policy portfolios. We have critically examined the possibility of redeployment of the existing PEOs to absorb the additional duties to be handled by the PEO(SS) post. However, as EDB is working on a number of pressing issues including the implementation of the new senior secondary curriculum and introduction of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination, enhancement of administration of Direct Subsidy Scheme schools pursuant to the Public Accounts Committee Report No. 55, implementation of the textbook debundling policy, establishment of incorporated management committees in aided schools, enhanced transportation arrangement for cross-boundary students etc., the PEOs in EDB are already more than fully stretched and are operationally unable to take up additional responsibilities without affecting the quality of their work and services currently being delivered. The job descriptions of the nine PEOs in EDB are set out at Enclosure 4.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

14. The proposed creation of the supernumerary PEO(SS) post will bring about an additional notional annual salary cost at mid-point of \$1,357,200. The full annual average staff cost of the proposal, including salaries and staff on-cost, is \$1,960,000. We have included the necessary provision in the draft Estimates of 2012-13 and will reflect the necessary provision in the Estimates of subsequent financial years to meet the cost of this proposal.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

15. We consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Education on 9 January 2012. Members in general supported the creation of the supernumerary PEO(SS) post for three years to review and oversee the implementation of enhanced services for SEN and NCS students.

/ESTABLISHMENT

ESTABLISHMENT CHANGES

16. The establishment changes in EDB for the past two years are as follows –

Establishment (Note)	Number of Posts			
	Existing (As at 1 January 2012)	As at 1 April 2011	As at 1 April 2010	As at 1 April 2009
A	31 [#]	31	31+(2)	31+(2)
B	1 431	1 412	1 398	1 394
C	4 178	4 190	4 271	4 360
Total	5 640	5 633	5 700+(2)	5 785+(2)

Note:

- A - ranks in the directorate pay scale or equivalent
- B - non-directorate ranks, the maximum pay point of which is above MPS point 33 or equivalent
- C - non-directorate ranks, the maximum pay point of which is at or below MPS point 33 or equivalent
- () - number of supernumerary directorate posts created with the approval of the Finance Committee/Establishment Subcommittee
- # - as at 1 January 2012, there was no unfilled directorate post in EDB.

CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU COMMENTS

17. The Civil Service Bureau supports the proposed creation of the supernumerary PEO post for three years. The grading and ranking of the proposed post are considered appropriate having regard to the level and scope of responsibilities concerned.

ADVICE OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DIRECTORATE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

18. As the post is proposed on a supernumerary basis, its creation, if approved, will be reported to the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service in accordance with the agreed procedures.

An Overview of the Education and Support Measures for Students with Special Educational Needs and Non-Chinese Speaking Students

I. Education and Support Measures for Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Under the existing education policy, students with severe SEN are referred to special schools for intensive support services subject to the assessment and recommendation of specialists and parents' consent. Other students with SEN are placed in ordinary schools where they can learn in an ordinary study environment. Parents can apply for admission to ordinary primary schools for their children through the current school places allocation system. Schools are advised to implement the Whole School Approach to integrated education (IE)^{Note}, supported by enhancement of school-based support, to cater for student differences and enhance the effectiveness of school education as a whole.

2. In the context of Hong Kong, the Education Reform which covers, among others, the reform of the Primary One Admission (POA) System that took away public sector schools' discretion in student admission has also helped facilitate the implementation of IE where allocation of students with SEN who are apt for learning in ordinary schools can be conducted in a more objective manner based on a number of factors such as chance elements and school net as well as parental choice.

3. We currently provide various special education services for students with SEN, including educational psychologist services in either referral or school-based mode, screening and assessment tools as well as teaching resources to support students with diverse learning needs, training to school personnel on the management and education of students with SEN, advice to parents on school placement, and professional advice to ordinary schools and special schools in the public sector.

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^{Note} Whole School Approach entails three inter-connected dimensions of a school, namely school policies, culture and practices. All staff in a school acknowledge the responsibility of establishing an inclusive environment to cater for the needs of all students. Teachers work with their counterparts and specialists in collaboration and adopt diversified teaching techniques and assistive equipment to cater for students' diverse learning needs. The school curriculum and assessment methods are adapted to cater for students' different needs. Learning groups, peer tutoring and circles of friends are strategically organised.

II. Education and Support Measures for Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) Students

4. In respect of NCS students, the POA System has been reformed in 2004 giving parents of NCS students choice of schools on par with their Chinese counterparts, thus further facilitating the admission of NCS students in mainstream schools. With the policy objective of promoting the integration of NCS students into the local education system and ensuring equal opportunities to education for NCS students, our work involves the planning, development, implementation, regulation and monitoring of the support measures for NCS students. A series of school/student-centered support measures have been put in place since 2006. At the school level, we have been inviting schools which, through the school places allocation system, have admitted a sizeable number of NCS students, to become 'designated schools'. Additional resources and focused support are provided to these schools with the objective of facilitating their accumulation of experiences and development of expertise in the learning and teaching of NCS students so that they may serve as the anchor point for sharing experiences among schools which have also admitted NCS students. To cater for the diversified background, needs and aspirations of NCS students in learning Chinese language, we have developed the Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for NCS Students tailored for different contexts and environments to empower them to attain different learning targets at different stages of development leading to multiple pathways.

Job Description
Principal Education Officer (Support Services)

Rank : Principal Education Officer (D1)

Responsible to : Deputy Secretary for Education (4)

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

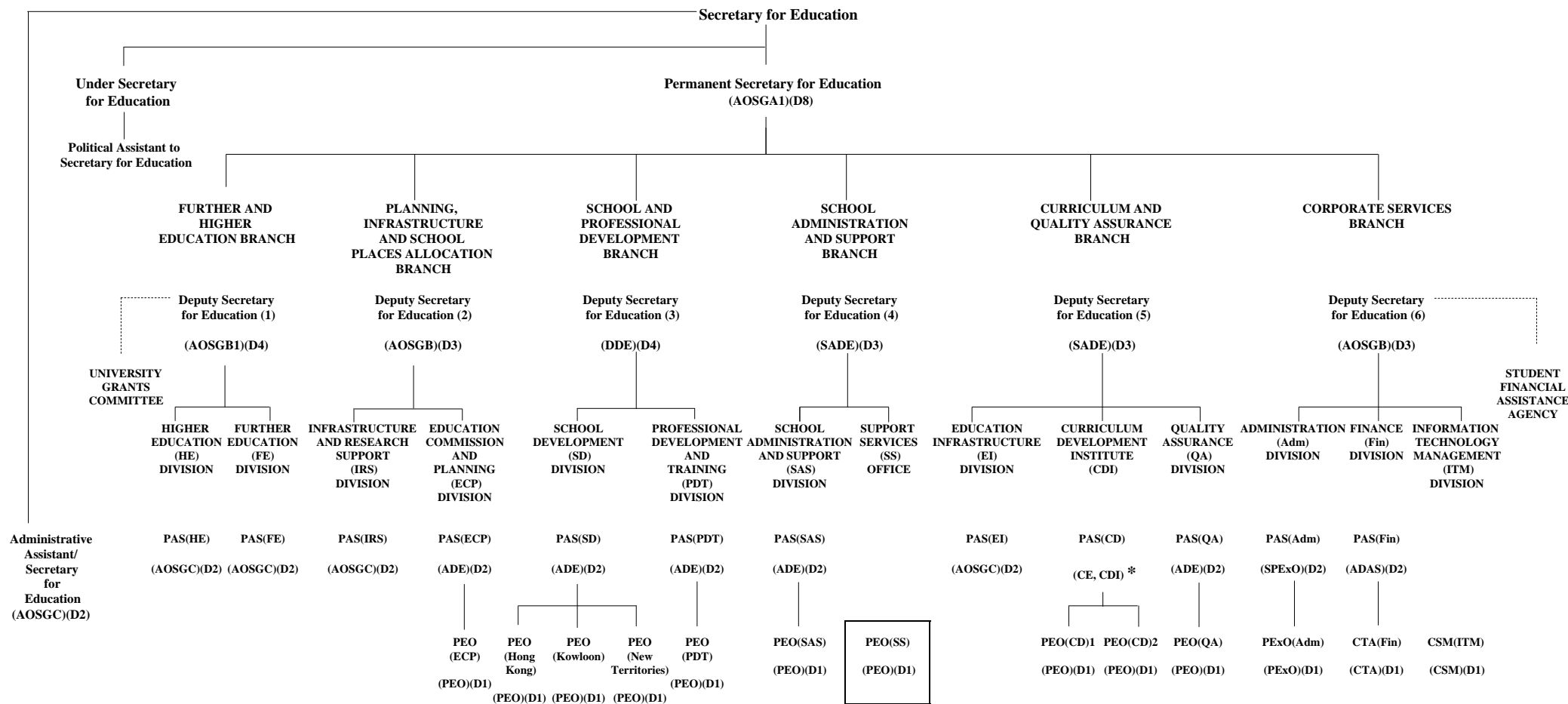
Education for students with special educational needs (SEN)

- (i) To review the services rendered by special schools in supporting ordinary schools to cater for students with SEN.
- (ii) To give professional steer to the development of appropriate teaching pedagogies and resource support.
- (iii) To plan and coordinate the improvement measures to enhance special education training for teachers.
- (iv) To plan, coordinate and deliver support strategies and measures, including cross-disciplinary collaboration, for enhancing the learning of SEN students in ordinary schools.

Education for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students

- (v) To oversee the professional support to schools admitting NCS students through different approaches and the measures being adopted and to map out new support strategies.
- (vi) To re-organise the platform for sharing of practices and experiences among schools with structured and enhanced engagement with stakeholders.
- (vii) To evaluate the effectiveness of support to NCS students including learning and teaching strategies, pedagogies, intervention approaches for tackling learner diversity, etc. to provide evidence-based professional support.

Organisation Chart of the Education Bureau
(after the proposed creation of the supernumerary post)



Legend

ADAS Assistant Director of Accounting Services
 ADE Assistant Director of Education
 AOSGA1 Administrative Officer Staff Grade A1
 AOSGB Administrative Officer Staff Grade B
 AOSGB1 Administrative Officer Staff Grade B1

AOSGC Administrative Officer Staff Grade C
 CE, CDI Chief Executive, Curriculum Development Institute
 CSM Chief Systems Manager
 CTA Chief Treasury Accountant
 DDE Deputy Director of Education

PAS Principal Assistant Secretary
 PEO Principal Education Officer
 PEXO Principal Executive Officer
 SADE Senior Assistant Director of Education
 SPEXO Senior Principal Executive Officer

* a non-civil service position equivalent to D2 level

Supernumerary directorate post proposed to be created for 36 months from 1 May 2012 to 30 April 2015

**Main Duties of the Existing Principal Education Officers (PEOs)
in the Education Bureau (EDB)**

Currently, there are nine PEOs in EDB and their main duties are as follows –

- (1) PEO(Education Commission and Planning) (i) oversees the operation of various school places allocation systems such as the Primary One Admission (POA) System and the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System which severally control the admission of primary 1 and secondary 1 students (the POA System and SSPA System were participated by some 42 000 and 56 000 students respectively in 2011); (ii) oversees the administration of the Pre-Secondary One Hong Kong Attainment Test which is administered annually to all secondary 1 entrants in Hong Kong for the purpose of facilitating secondary schools' designing of remedial and enhancement programmes for improving students' standard in English Language, Chinese Language and Mathematics as well as serving as a moderation tool for SSPA System; and (iii) monitors the development of various international educational research projects commissioned to tertiary institutions such as the Programme for International Student Assessment and the Consultancy Study on Extended Learning Activities Conducted in English in Chinese-medium Schools.

- (2) PEO(Hong Kong) (i) heads the Hong Kong Regional Education Office (REO) which provides a full range of professional support services to schools such as school administration, curriculum development as well as learning and teaching; (ii) enforces the Education Ordinance, Education Regulations and the Codes of Aid; (iii) offers advice on the strategies for implementing established education policies, including establishment of incorporated management committees (IMCs), review of the Codes of Aid and support for IMC schools and provision of support services for newly arrived children; (iv) steers on the work plans for the school sector on various administrative matters as directed by other government bureaux/departments, for instance, handling issues arising from the management and prevention of communicable diseases; and (v) oversees the planning and formulation of new initiatives and measures, including the Voluntary Optimisation of Class Structure Scheme (VOCSS) in secondary schools under which participating

/schools

schools with five or more secondary 1 classes reduce the number of secondary 1 classes on a voluntary basis, the pilot exercise on strengthening schools' internal administration management and reducing teachers' administrative workload as well as the enhancement of complaint handling mechanism in schools.

- (3) PEO(Kowloon) (i) heads the Kowloon REO which provides a full range of professional support services to schools such as school administration, curriculum development as well as learning and teaching; (ii) enforces the Education Ordinance, Education Regulations and the Codes of Aid; (iii) assists in the formulation and implementation of policies, including the initiative on home-school cooperation by encouraging the establishment of Parent-Teacher Associations and promoting positive attitude towards home-school cooperation and parent education; (iv) oversees the implementation of Business-School Partnership Programme which aims to widen students' exposure and equip them with necessary skills to meet challenges ahead and assists them in establishing the right work attitude, adapting to changes of the economy and ultimately achieving whole-person development of the students; (v) steers the provision of careers guidance services for students under the new academic structure (NAS) taking effect from the 2009/10 school year; and (vi) oversees the implementation of VOCSS in schools under his purview.
- (4) PEO(New Territories) (i) heads the New Territories East REO and New Territories West REO which provide a full range of professional support services to schools such as school administration, curriculum development as well as learning and teaching; (ii) enforces the Education Ordinance, Education Regulations and the Codes of Aid; (iii) assists in the formulation and implementation of policies in relation to transportation arrangement for cross-boundary students (estimated to increase from 12 850 students in the 2011/12 school year to 20 000 students in the 2013/14 school year), including liaison with Mainland officials and his counterparts in other bureaux/ departments; (iv) oversees REOs' information management and IT applications, including the redevelopment and enhancement of REO Repository, identification of information needs, formulation of business requirements and enhancement of application systems for REOs; and (v) oversees the implementation of VOCSS in schools under his purview.

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- (5) PEO(Professional Development and Training) (i) formulates, implements and reviews various policies conducive to the professional development of teachers and principals; (ii) oversees the policy on teacher registration, including the implementation of enhanced measures to further enhance the transparency and operation of teacher registration mechanism so as to address public's concern of sex offenders teaching in schools; (iii) devises measures to further promote teachers' professional conduct, advises on the appropriate levels of punishment for teachers with misconduct, and supervises the Council on Professional Conduct in Education to promote professional conduct in education; (iv) oversees language teachers' attainment of training and qualifications requirements; and (v) coordinates measures related to alleviating teachers' workload.
- (6) PEO(School Administration and Support) (i) plans and develops support services for students with special educational needs in ordinary and special schools through provision of additional resources, professional support and teacher training; (ii) plans, develops and reviews policies on special schools, including student placement in special schools, approving and reviewing special school class structure and manpower and resources provision, and professional support for special school teachers; (iii) formulates and implements policy proposals and handles matters related to guidance and discipline services, educational psychology services, speech and audiological services, government schools, Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools (including the implementation of improvement measures to enhance the governance and administration of DSS schools pursuant to the Public Accounts Committee Report No. 55), through-train schools, etc.; and (iv) plans, implements and reviews policies on school administration matters of aided schools.
- (7) PEO(Curriculum Development)¹ (PEO(CD)¹) (i) oversees the development and implementation of the curricula, assessment and related support strategies for various subjects at primary and secondary levels such as English Language, Chinese Language, Mathematics, Chinese History, History, Geography, Economics, Music and Moral and National Education; (ii) administers the Native-speaking English Teacher Scheme which provides professional support services to some 800 primary and secondary schools for the purpose of improving the English language standard of students in Hong Kong; and (iii) deals with matters related to the supply and quality of textbooks, including the implementation of measures to enhance the transparency of the information in the

Recommended Textbook List and the development of an electronic textbook market which enable parents to know about the changes of textbook prices and provide users with greater choice of learning and teaching materials.

- (8) PEO(CD)2 (i) oversees the development and implementation of the curricula, assessment and related support strategies for various subjects at primary and secondary levels such as Liberal Studies, Applied Learning, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Physical Education, Design and Applied Technology, Information and Communication Technology, etc.; (ii) assists in overseeing the implementation of the NAS taking effect from the 2009/10 school year, which mainly involves the preparation and implementation of the new Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination which will first be held in 2012 and will be taken by some 80 000 students in that year, amendment of Education Ordinance and requirement of civil service appointment under the NAS, etc.; and (iii) plans, manages and monitors the evaluation of the NAS upon the implementation of the first cycle of the NAS in end 2012.
- (9) PEO(Quality Assurance) (i) formulates and implements policy relating to pre-primary education, including the implementation of the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme, provision of pre-primary education support to kindergartens and child care centres as well as harmonisation of kindergartens and child care centres; (ii) monitors and reports on school performance standards through the conduct of about 150 external school reviews, 70 fine-tuned medium of instruction focus inspections, ten special reviews or comprehensive reviews for DSS schools, etc. per annum; and (iii) develops and monitors strategies for the implementation of the School Development and Accountability Framework, including the development and use of school evaluation tools in supporting school development, for achieving the target of enhancing quality assurance in school education and schools' capacity of self-improvement.
