

ITEM FOR FINANCE COMMITTEE

HEAD 156 – GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT : EDUCATION BUREAU

Subhead 700 General non-recurrent New Item “Injection into the Education Development Fund”

Members are invited to approve the creation of a new commitment of \$550 million for injection into the Education Development Fund.

PROBLEM

Schools need differentiated school-based professional support to make necessary adjustments arising from the education reform initiatives for quality enhancement of school education.

PROPOSAL

2. We propose to inject a sum of \$550 million into the Education Development Fund (EDF) to continue providing support to the school sector for five years from the 2012/13 school year for making necessary adjustments arising from the education reform initiatives through School-based Professional Support (SBPS) Programmes.

JUSTIFICATION

3. With the approval of the Finance Committee on 2 July 2004 vide FCR(2004-05)26, the EDF was set up with a capital of \$550 million to provide differentiated professional support, starting from the 2004/05 school year for an initial period of five years, to enable schools to build capacity to take forward education reform measures. As part of the annual exercise of reporting progress of

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the EDF to the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Education, we informed Members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)2036/08-09(01) in June 2009 that the duration of the EDF would be extended to the 2012/13 school year. Since its inception, the EDF has been supporting schools and teachers by way of the following five strands of SBPS Programmes, namely (a) Principal Support Network (PSN); (b) School Support Partners (Seconded Teacher) (SSP) Scheme; (c) Professional Development Schools (PDS) Scheme; (d) University-School Support Programmes (USP); and (e) Collegial Participation in External School Review (ESR). These are based on empirical evidence and feedback from schools that apart from taking courses, work-embedded support helps principals and teachers to build capacity effectively, in terms of development of a culture for learning, peer collaboration and generation of knowledge in a practical context. To provide support to the school sector in making adjustments arising from the education reform initiatives, the EDF has served to supplement the regular school-based curriculum support services through rallying flexible support to schools and gauging diverse expertise to add impetus needed for changes. Description of the SBPS Programmes is at Enclosure 1.

Encl. 1

4. The demand for the support services under the five strands of SBPS Programmes has remained high over the years. In the past seven years, the EDF has provided some 3 800 school support services¹. There is always a high demand for the SBPS services. On average, about 40% of the primary and secondary schools, 30% of the special schools and 10% of the kindergartens are able to join and benefit from these Programmes in each school year.

5. Literature on education reform has consistently shown that collaborative and work-embedded support for teachers' professional development is instrumental to the successful implementation of reforms and improved student learning. The education reform, which was introduced in 2000 in basic education and extended to the senior secondary levels in 2009, is a mammoth undertaking. It comprises an extensive curriculum reform, changes to the Primary One and Secondary One admission systems and the implementation of a new senior secondary academic structure as well as a new assessment culture. The resultant widened student diversity has necessitated a paradigm shift to cater for the diverse needs, learning approaches and aptitudes of the students. Support at the school and classroom levels is thus essential to facilitate reflective practices and internalisation by teachers of the pedagogical changes envisaged by the reform. The school sector would understandably exhibit very diverse paces and approaches in embracing the challenge. The various SBPS Programmes funded by the EDF are an apt vehicle to engender the reflective practices of teachers.

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¹ An annual call circular is issued to invite schools to apply for SBPS Programmes. Each school can only apply for at most two services among the SSP, PDS and USP projects in each school year.

6. As revealed in the two evaluation studies completed in 2009 and 2011², the SBPS Programmes supported by the EDF have contributed to a paradigm shift in teachers' pedagogical belief and practices as demanded by the education reform. A summary of the achievements of the SBPS Programmes is at Enclosure 2.

Encl. 2

7. Our experience has shown that catering for the diverse needs of students with different aptitudes and inclination, and adapting practices according to the context of different schools are the greatest challenges in the reform process. The strategic focus for the next phase of development of the SBPS Programmes will be the consolidation of various effective learning methods, teaching and assessment strategies and development of school-based curriculum to cater for the diverse needs of students. The next phase will also aim to foster leadership at schools, in particular at the middle managers' level, and support professional learning among teachers.

8. To build on what the EDF has achieved and to ensure translation of such progress into palpable quality enhancement, we propose an injection of \$550 million into the EDF for continuation of the SBPS Programmes to support the school sector in making necessary adjustments arising from the education reform initiatives. An extension of five years should allow time for the reform changes to be sunk in progressively. We expect that conceptual and policy changes will translate into quality changes at the school and classroom levels when school leadership and the teaching force have internalised the pedagogy and assessment culture envisaged by the education reform. We will continue to actively monitor the efficacy of individual programmes.

9. The accumulated expenditure for the SBPS Programmes since the inception of the EDF in the 2004/05 school year and the cash balance at the end of each school year is at Enclosure 3. As of August 2011, the EDF has a balance of some \$165.6 million. Discounting the committed expenditure, the EDF has an uncommitted balance of about \$60 million which is below the average annual expenditure of some \$76.6 million in the past five school years from 2006/07 to 2010/11. To facilitate planning of the SBPS Programmes, especially when some of the programmes would last for two to three years, we consider it necessary to make an injection now.

Encl. 3

/IMPLEMENTATION

² An external review of the SBPS Programmes was completed by Policy 21 Limited, University of Hong Kong in 2009 and an in-house review of the efficacy of the SBPS programmes was completed in 2011.

IMPLEMENTATION

10. With new funding injection into the EDF, we will continue with the five strands of SBPS Programmes and invite more experts and organisations from the relevant professional disciplines to join in order to promote greater synergy. As and when appropriate, the mode of operation of the five strands of programmes will be suitably adapted to match the latest circumstances and needs of the school sector. For instance, we plan to expand the scope of the USP by enlisting the support services of relevant non-governmental organisations with the capacity and proven record of providing quality school support programmes. Also, we intend to make use of the platform of the SSP Scheme to engage suitable teachers who are awarded the Chief Executive's Award for Teaching Excellence to play a role in the various theme-based or Key Learning Area support projects in their own schools or other schools.

11. As foreshadowed in paragraph 7 above, catering for diverse learning needs of students is one of the greatest challenges facing the school sector in the reform process, and recognition of the diverse backgrounds and needs of students is kernel of the education reform. In tandem with the advancement in knowledge about special educational needs (SEN) and similar to the experience in other parts of the world, we have identified an increasing number and types of SEN students in mainstream schools. Concomitant with this is the encouraging development of a wide range of cross-sector/disciplinary-basis learning and teaching resource packages for students with different SEN. We will provide stronger and more effective school-based support that integrate these specific strategies/resources into the normal classroom teaching. Moreover, since the implementation of the education reform (including reform to our Primary One admission system), non-Chinese speaking students are increasingly dispersed among different schools, especially at the primary level. This is an encouraging sign from the integration perspective. To support schools in making adjustments to these changes, we will enlist external sources like tertiary institutions and resource schools (i.e. schools with proven track record in addressing the needs of non-Chinese speaking students) to plan and render school-based support programmes to schools in a more coordinated manner for the support of non-Chinese speaking students. On this basis, we will further consult the Advisory Committee on the EDF³ on the implementation of the SBPS Programmes.

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³ The Advisory Committee on the EDF, comprising frontline teachers, principals, academics and community members, has been set up since August 2004 to advise on the operation of the EDF and the implementation of the SBPS Programmes. A cross-divisional working group within the Education Bureau chaired by a Deputy Secretary has also been set up to oversee and monitor the delivery of the Programmes on a regular basis.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12. Subject to Member's approval, we will inject \$550 million into the EDF in 2011-12. We have earmarked the funding required for the purpose in the Estimates for 2011-12.

13. To plan for the allocation among the five strands of SBPS Programmes, we have assessed the trend of support demand of schools in the past years and the development needs of different types of schools in the years ahead. The exact amount to be spent on each programme will depend on various factors, including the number of applications received, on-going assessment of programme effectiveness and the need to vary implementation details in the light of experience and feedback. For planning purpose, an indicative breakdown of the proposed injection of \$550 million is as follows -

Programmes	Estimated expenditure in the 2012/13 to 2016/17 school years (\$ million)
(a) Principal Support Network	86
(b) School Support Partners (Seconded Teacher) Scheme	264
(c) Professional Development Schools Scheme	76
(d) University-School Support Programmes	120
(e) Collegial Participation in External School Review	4
Total:	550

14. In respect of paragraph 13(a), the estimated cost is for the secondment/recruitment of around 40 serving/retired principals (on half-loaded equivalent basis) in a school year and for the provision of appropriate allowances for the releasing schools to appoint time-limited replacements.

15. In respect of paragraph 13(b), the estimated cost is mainly for the secondment/recruitment of around 130 teachers (on full-time equivalent basis) in a school year and for the provision of appropriate allowances for the releasing schools to appoint time-limited replacements.

16. In respect of paragraph 13(c), the estimated cost is for the provision of a cash grant to around 50 schools in a school year to support their plans to share and disseminate good practices.

17. In respect of paragraph 13(d), the estimated cost is for hiring the services of universities, other institutions and relevant non-governmental organisations. It is estimated that an average of some 100 services will be provided to schools in a school year.

18. In respect of paragraph 13(e), the estimated cost is for the provision of appropriate allowances to releasing schools of principals and teachers serving as external reviewers of the ESR team for appointing time-limited replacements. It is estimated that around 150 experienced serving principals and teachers will be invited in a school year to serve as external reviewers of the ESR team to conduct the ESR and other relevant professional inspections.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

19. We consulted the LegCo Panel on Education on 12 December 2011. Members were in support of the proposal on the injection into the EDF for the continuation of the SBPS Programmes for five years from the 2012/13 school year to help schools make necessary adjustments arising from the education reform initiatives.

BACKGROUND

20. Pursuant to FCR(2004-05)26, the EDF was set up in July 2004 with a grant of \$550 million, held in trust under the Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporated, for supporting SBPS Programmes. The EDF is managed in accordance with a trust deed, which provides the framework for the proper management and administration of the Fund. The trustee will invest the Fund in accordance with the authority set out in section 5 of the Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporation Ordinance (Cap. 1098). The income of the EDF has been applied in pursuit of the purpose for which it is established. Administrative expenses are absorbed by the Education Bureau (EDB).

21. Audited accounts of the EDF are tabled before the LegCo each year after the closing of the accounts. EDB submits annual progress report on the implementation of the SBPS Programmes to the LegCo Panel on Education by way of an information paper.

Description of the School-based Professional Support (SBPS) Programmes

The five strands of SBPS Programmes financed by the Education Development Fund are:

- (a) Principal Support Network;
- (b) School Support Partners (Seconded Teacher) Scheme;
- (c) Professional Development Schools Scheme;
- (d) University-School Support Programmes; and
- (e) Collegial Participation in External School Review.

Principal Support Network (PSN)

2 Experienced principals are invited to provide collegial support for partner principals. Network clusters are formed for interactive professional sharing among principals, with a view to enhancing their leadership skills through various modes of professional exchange activities. Other support activities are also provided under the PSN, such as workshops/talk series of the Middle Managers Learning Community and the Educational Leadership Programme, to widen participants' perspectives when evaluating their practices. Feedback revealed that the PSN had beneficial impact on both the seconded and partner principals as they actually learnt from each other in the network clusters. Positive feedback was also obtained from the participants of other activities, particularly on facilitating their self-reflection and on nurturing a professional sharing culture among them.

School Support Partners (Seconded Teacher) (SSP) Scheme

3. Experienced local teachers are seconded, by invitation, on a part-time basis to provide peer support to teachers in other schools on various theme-based or Key Learning Area projects and to establish platforms for professional sharing.

4. Under the Mainland-Hong Kong Teachers Exchange & Collaboration Programme, Mainland expert teachers are invited to work alongside local school teachers on various areas such as curriculum design and collaborative lesson planning and to share professional ideas and research outcomes so as to enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching in Hong Kong schools.

5. A Pilot Scheme on Hong Kong Teachers' Exchange Activities to the Mainland was launched in May 2010 to facilitate on-site exchange activities with schools in the Guangdong Province.

6. Evaluations on various programmes under the SSP Scheme suggest that teachers of schools receiving the services commended highly on the effectiveness of these programmes in deepening their pedagogical skills and knowledge through working closely with local/Mainland secondees in planning, observing and evaluation of the curriculum. Practical knowledge and experiences thus gained were also consolidated and disseminated in public sharing seminars.

Professional Development Schools (PDS) Scheme

7. Schools with exemplary practices in learning and teaching and a good sharing culture are invited as PDSs. Each PDS will form a network with two or three partner schools focusing on specific pedagogical themes to foster an interactive collaborative culture and enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching through various exchange activities. It has been indicated by the partner schools that the Scheme was effective in helping them to develop their own school-based curriculum or effective pedagogies, with practical and strategic suggestions as well as the curriculum resources the PDSs had offered them. The experience gained and curriculum materials developed were shared and sustained by means of dissemination activities within the schools (e.g. internal sharing on staff development day) and in a wider community (e.g. public seminars, open lessons, etc.).

University-School Support Programmes (USP)

8. Universities are commissioned to provide a diversified mode of support services to cater for the schools' development needs through connecting research-based pedagogies with classroom practices. It has been pointed out that the USP projects were able to help schools understand and implement the reform initiatives by providing them with a macro view and insights, bringing to them new ideas and teaching methods, and nurturing a collaborative and sharing professional culture. Publications and curriculum materials delivered by the projects also support schools' continual improvement and professional sharing among them.

Collegial Participation in External School Review (ESR)

9. Experienced serving principals and teachers are invited to serve as external reviewers of the ESR team. The partnership relation forged helps enhance their capacity for conducting self-evaluation for continuous improvement. It was revealed that school self-evaluation and the external review helps the development of a self-reflective culture in schools. Teachers are more used to peer observations, collaborative lesson planning and co-teaching. Some of the seconded reviewers remarked that by taking part in the ESR, they could learn from the good practices of other schools and evidence-based evaluation.

**A summary of the achievements of
the School-based Professional Support (SBPS) Programmes**

An Evaluation Study on the achievements of the SBPS Programmes was conducted in 2011 by making reference to information collected through opinion surveys (annually distributed to all participant schools with about 80% to 89% response rate), interviews/focus group discussion, the External Review report done by Policy 21 Limited of the University of Hong Kong in 2009 (including an opinion survey distributed to a stratified sample by types of SBPS Programmes and types of schools, with about 80% response rate), and observations made to the response and changes of project participants and schools in different cases. Evidence corroborated from various resources suggests that in general, the participant schools/teachers considered the SBPS Programmes effective in helping them understand and implement the education reform, and in facilitating learning in both teachers and students. The following summarises the key achievements of the SBPS Programmes.

Objective	Achievements of the SBPS Programmes
<u>School level</u>	
(a) to support and strengthen schools' understanding of the reform aims and the connection among different reform elements	✓ heightened awareness of the participating schools and teachers of the education reform ✓ improved understanding of the participating schools and teachers of various reform initiatives
(b) to help schools prioritise these elements at school level	✓ high degree of implementation/adaptation of various reform measures observed in the participating schools, e.g. school-based curriculum development, assessment for learning, effective pedagogies, etc.
(c) to bring coherence to processes and initiatives at school level to maximise the impact of the reform on learning and teaching in particular	✓ changing culture in the schools towards teacher collaboration and reflection, school-based curriculum development and the continuation/adaptation of the effective pedagogical practices developed under the programmes ✓ the artifacts being generated in the practical school context (e.g. curriculum packages) that have provided the schools with necessary knowledge and skills in continuing the project activities

Objective	Achievements of the SBPS Programmes
(d) to provide support tailored to school needs	✓ positive feedback by the participating schools and teachers on the flexibility and practicality of a wide range of expertise being drawn to provide support services tailored to their identified needs
<u>Teacher level</u>	
(e) to build professional capacity in schools to lead the reform	✓ increased subject and pedagogical knowledge and skills of the teachers
	✓ established collaborative and reflective work culture in the participating schools
	✓ changing atmosphere of classroom learning and teaching towards having a stronger focus on student learning, more teacher-student and student-student interactions, and more active student participation in class and after-class activities
<u>Student level</u>	
(f) to support student learning	✓ stronger confidence of teachers in their students' attainment of the basic competencies (in Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics)
	✓ improved learning outcomes in students (e.g. improvement in enquiry learning, communication, etc.), and an increased interest and enthusiasm in the learning

2. The achievements of the SBPS Programmes are consistent with the annual Key Learning Area surveys that showed schools' improvement in understanding and implementation of the reform at subject level. These achievements also reinforce the findings of the interim report of the curriculum reform which indicated the success of different modes of on-site support provided by the Education Bureau to facilitate school-based curriculum development, and the scaling up of the SBPS Programmes under the Education Development Fund to offer a wide range and scope of services that cultivated a culture for learning, collaboration and improvement in the school community. These reform efforts have been indicated by McKinsey and Company (2009) in their report as one of the contributing factors to Hong Kong's education system (among 20 others) being identified as having achieved significant, sustained, and widespread gains in student outcomes on international and national assessments.

3. The SBPS Programmes had also been provided to support schools in addressing evolving issues such as the learning of Chinese Language for non-Chinese speaking students at different key learning stages, catering for learning diversity and the needs of students, the implementation of Liberal Studies, small class teaching and medium of instruction under the fine-tuning policy.

Enclosure 3 to FCR(2011-12)68

**Accumulated expenditure for the
School-based Professional Support (SBPS) Programmes since the inception of
the Education Development Fund (EDF) in the 2004/05 school year**

	Accumulated Expenditure (\$ million)								
School Year (Sept - Aug)	2004/05 (Actual)	2005/06 (Actual)	2006/07 (Actual)	2007/08 (Actual)	2008/09 (Actual)	2009/10 (Actual)	2010/11 (Actual)	2011/12 (Estimate)	2012/13 and beyond (Estimate)
Principal Support Network	2.29	3.28	4.03	4.89	6.31	7.77	8.08	9.28	11.96
School Support Partners (Seconded Teacher) Scheme	1.08	10.51	32.71	58.60	90.37	113.38	141.74	178.94	228.83
Professional Development Schools Scheme	1.60	3.16	7.84	10.21	15.20	22.78	29.00	38.90	42.08
University-School Support Programmes	20.20	44.36	81.46	145.16	175.91	231.40	261.54	297.14	322.71
Collegial Participation in External School Review	0.51	1.17	1.95	2.46	2.81	3.57	4.26	4.66	5.77
External Review of SBPS Programmes	-	-	-	0.18	0.55	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92
Total	25.68	62.48	127.99	221.50	291.15	379.82	445.54	529.84	612.27

Figures are rounded to two decimal places.

Cash flow and balance of EDF at the end of each school year

	Cash flow (\$ million)								
School Year (Sept - Aug)	2004/05 (Actual)	2005/06 (Actual)	2006/07 (Actual)	2007/08 (Actual)	2008/09 (Actual)	2009/10 (Actual)	2010/11 (Actual)	2011/12 (Estimate)	2012/13 and beyond (Estimate)
Opening cash balance	-	535.45	505.63	457.05	379.61	316.40	229.49	165.63	82.62
Income									
Fund Injection	550.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interests	11.13	6.98	16.93	16.07	6.44	1.76	1.86	1.29	0.65
Expenditure									
Expenditure on SBPS Programmes	(25.68)	(36.80)	(65.51)	(93.51)	(69.65)	(88.67)	(65.72)	(84.30)	(82.43)
Cash Balance (by end of Aug)	535.45	505.63	457.05	379.61	316.40	229.49	165.63	82.62	0.84

Figures are rounded to two decimal places.
