

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2781/11-12
(The minutes have been seen by the
Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Tuesday, 10 July 2012, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 2A of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP (Chairman)
Hon Tanya CHAN (Deputy Chairman)
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 Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, GBS, JP
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, BBS, JP
Hon Paul CHAN Mo-po, MH, JP
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP
Hon WONG Yuk-man

Members absent : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP

Member attending : Hon WONG Sing-chi

**Public Officers : Agenda item III
attending**

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP
Secretary for Education

Mrs Cherry TSE, JP
Permanent Secretary for Education

Mrs Betty IP, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education (3)

Miss Hera CHUM
Principal Assistant Secretary (Special Education &
Kindergarten Education), Education Bureau

Agenda item IV

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP
Secretary for Education

Mrs Cherry TSE, JP
Permanent Secretary for Education

Dr K K CHAN
Deputy Secretary for Education (5)

Dr K W CHEUNG
Principal Assistant Secretary (Curriculum
Development), Education Bureau

Dr TONG Chong-sze
Secretary General, Hong Kong Examinations and
Assessment Authority

Mr Victor CHENG
Director - Corporate Services, Hong Kong
Examinations and Assessment Authority

Agenda item V

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP
Secretary for Education

Mrs Cherry TSE, JP
Permanent Secretary for Education

Miss Grace KWOK
Administrative Assistant to Secretary for
Education, Education Bureau

Clerk in attendance : Ms Amy YU
Chief Council Secretary (2)6

Staff in attendance : Ms Catherina YU
Senior Council Secretary (2)6

Miss Meisy KWOK
Legislative Assistant (2)6

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes

[LC Paper No. CB(2)2516/11-12]

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2012 were confirmed.

II. Information papers issued since the last meeting

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)2377/11-12(01), CB(2)2400/11-12(01) and CB(2)2542(01)]

2. Members noted the following papers issued since the last meeting –

- (a) submission from a member of the public concerning the indecent content in newspapers [LC Paper No. CB(2)2377/11-12(01)];
- (b) referral dated 18 June 2012 from the Public Complaints Office of the Legislative Council ("LegCo") Secretariat concerning the provision of subsidies for extra-curricular activities of primary and secondary schools [LC Paper No. CB(2)2400/11-12(01)]; and
- (c) submission from a member of the public concerning school places allocation for Primary One [LC Paper No. CB(2)2542/11-12(01)].

Action

3. Miss Tanya CHAN proposed swapping the order of agenda items IV and V so as to advance the briefing by the new Secretary for Education on the education portfolio. After discussion, members agreed not to further pursue the proposal in consideration that prior notice had not been given to members about the proposed change.

III. Progress of implementing integrated education in ordinary schools and the way forward

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)2518/11-12(01) to (02)]

4. Members noted the background brief entitled "Integrated education" [LC Paper No. CB(2)2518/11-12(02)] prepared by the LegCo Secretariat.

Briefing by the Administration

5. Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the progress of implementing integrated education ("IE") in ordinary schools and the way forward.

Support for students with special educational needs ("SEN") in ordinary schools

6. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed concern about the quality of IE in ordinary schools. He said that IE had been extensively implemented notwithstanding that schools were not yet ready in terms of teacher professional development, resources and supporting facilities. He pointed out that there was great disparity between special schools and ordinary schools in terms of the resources provided by the Administration for students with SEN. The average student unit cost for special schools was \$180,000, which was much more than the amount of grant provided to ordinary schools for each student with SEN. He considered that a dedicated teaching post for coordinating the provision of support to students with SEN should be created in each ordinary school with a view to enhancing the quality of IE in ordinary schools.

7. Permanent Secretary for Education ("PS(Ed)") said that compared to students with SEN studying in ordinary schools, students attending special schools generally had more severe disabilities and required more intensive support services. Ordinary schools were encouraged to adopt the Whole School Approach ("WSA") in providing support to students with SEN. The effectiveness of WSA was well-recognized by many experts. The Administration had been providing ordinary schools with additional resources to help them cater for students with SEN. Apart from the

Action

Learning Support Grant, a deputy head post had been created in ordinary primary schools in the public sector to better coordinate the support services for students with SEN. Furthermore, special schools serving as Special Schools cum Resource Centres would offer school-based support to and share effective support strategies and measures with ordinary schools. She added that according to overseas experience, having designated teachers to take care of students with SEN might overload the teachers concerned and undermine the involvement of other teachers in IE.

8. Deputy Secretary for Education (3) ("DS(Ed)3") supplemented that it was vital for schools to adopt a policy of WSA to IE. Assigning dedicated teachers to handle students with SEN might lead to polarization in schools and minimize the effectiveness of the support to students. Regarding resources to ordinary schools, she said that in addition to the basic resources, the Administration would also provide intensive individualized support for students with severe learning difficulties if necessary.

9. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong clarified that he had suggested that a teacher be dedicated to coordinating the support for students with SEN, and not to take up all relevant work. As regards the deputy head post mentioned by the Administration, he said that the post holders would likely take up various duties and he expressed doubt as to whether they could provide dedicated support to students with SEN. In his view, the implementation of IE in ordinary schools was a failure. He called on the Administration to critically review the manpower for supporting students with SEN in ordinary schools.

10. Prof Patrick LAU echoed the view that IE had not been effectively implemented. He considered that positive attitude on the part of schools, support from student peers and an appropriate teacher-to-student ratio were the keys to the successful implementation of IE. Given that schools might admit students with different types of SEN, he was concerned as to whether the design and facilities of schools could meet the different needs of these students.

11. SED responded that schools had to abide by the Disability Discrimination Ordinance ("DDO") to admit students regardless of their disabilities and should make appropriate adaptations to cater for their educational needs. To his understanding, some schools had good coordination for IE related work. The Administration would convey members' views to the Task Force on IE in Mainstream Schools for consideration.

Action

12. PS(Ed) supplemented that under DDO, the choice of schools for students with disabilities rested with parents. There had been discussions among members in the past that a school should confine student intake to not more than two types of disabilities so that more focused support could be provided to the students concerned. This was, however, a breach of the fundamental principles of DDO. To help schools support students with SEN, the Administration provided additional resources, professional support and teacher training to schools and encouraged them to adopt the WSA to IE. The Administration and the education sector were working collaboratively to cultivate an inclusive culture in schools.

13. Dr LAM Tai-fai supported the implementation of IE but expressed concern about the immense pressure faced by teachers. He considered that teachers' workload was already very heavy as many of them also had to take up administrative work. The implementation of the new academic structure, IE and national education had created additional pressure on them. He suggested that SED should pay more visits to schools and communicate with frontline teachers to better understand their difficulties.

14. The Chairman shared Dr LAM Tai-fai's view that SED should visit schools and communicate with different stakeholders to listen to their views. She also noted that many schools and teachers were resistant to implementing IE and had a lot of complaints about the inadequate support, in particular specialist support, provided by the Administration. Such complaints might not have been brought to the attention of the senior officials of the Education Bureau ("EDB"). She considered that the Administration should step up the professional and specialist support for students with SEN and improve the mechanism for handling grievances of schools.

15. SED undertook to visit more schools to listen to the views of different stakeholders. PS(Ed) said that the Administration agreed to the need to increase the resources for supporting students with SEN in the light of the development of IE. She stressed that apart from resources, willingness and devotion of schools were also integral to the successful implementation of IE.

Teacher training

16. Ms Cyd HO said that the Basic Course on catering for students with SEN for teachers in ordinary schools consisted of 30 contact hours and the Advanced Course 90 hours. She was of the view that such amount of training hours was insufficient for teachers to master the skills to handle students with SEN and considered it necessary to strengthen the training on IE for teachers.

Action

17. PS(Ed) responded that in the 2007-2008 school year, EDB put in place a five-year teacher professional development framework on IE to provide Basic, Advanced and Thematic Courses on various types of SEN with a view to enhancing teachers' professional capacity in catering for students with SEN. The Administration took note of Ms Cyd HO's view and would strive to continuously improve the training for teachers on SEN.

Early identification of students with learning difficulties

18. Noting that more than 10 000 Primary One students in the public sector primary schools were identified with learning difficulties in the 2010-2011 school year and the number of students with SEN in ordinary schools had been on the rise in recent years, Miss Tanya CHAN enquired whether the Administration would provide more manpower resources to help schools identify students with learning difficulties so that timely assistance could be provided to these students.

19. DS(Ed)3 responded that the assessment conducted on students prior to entry to Primary One by the child assessment centres under the Department of Health and the Hospital Authority would facilitate early identification of students with SEN. Subject to parental consent, students assessed to have SEN would be referred to special schools by EDB or be allocated to ordinary schools through the Primary One Admission System as appropriate and information on these students would be provided to the schools concerned to facilitate their arrangements for suitable support. For students studying in ordinary primary schools, the teachers would observe their progress and assess whether special educational services should be provided. Teachers would make use of checklists to identify students with learning difficulties and follow-up actions including consultation and intervention by relevant specialists such as educational psychologists or visits to schools by EDB officers would be taken if necessary. In addition, EDB had been extending the School-based Educational Psychology Service in recent years to enhance support to schools in catering for students with different types of SEN.

Small class teaching for students with SEN

20. While expressing support in principle for IE, Mr Abraham SHEK shared the view that its implementation was not successful as schools did not have sufficient resources and teachers were not adequately trained to implement IE. He also noted the reluctance on the part of some schools to implement IE. In his view, IE could be more effectively implemented in a small class setting. He enquired whether the Administration had any plan to formulate policies in relation to small class teaching for students with

Action

SEN. He also opined that it would be difficult for the Hong Kong Institute of Education to attract brilliant students if it was not given the status of university.

21. SED responded that a balance had to be struck between providing dedicated attention to students with SEN and helping them integrate with ordinary students at schools. He believed that schools would make flexible arrangements in terms of class size for students with SEN as necessary. He further said that the Administration had requested the teacher education institutions ("TEIs") to make "supporting students with SEN" or relevant topics a compulsory module in the pre-service education programmes so as to complement the implementation of IE. According to the feedback from TEIs, most of them had already made such an arrangement.

22. PS(Ed) supplemented that EDB had been providing ordinary schools with additional resources, professional support and teacher training to help them cater for students with SEN. EDB's expenditure on additional support and services for IE had increased from \$860 million in the 2008-2009 school year to about \$980 million in the 2011-2012 school year, representing an increase of about 14%. On small class teaching, PS(Ed) said that since the amount of additional resources required by schools would vary depending on the types of SEN, schools were allowed to adopt a flexible teaching strategy. The Administration had been providing more resources to increase the number of teachers in public primary schools in the past years, resulting in an improvement of the teacher-to-student ratio from 1:22.7 in the 1997-1998 school year to 1:14.9 in the current school year. The increased teaching manpower resources would enable schools to adjust their class size in a flexible manner.

23. Ms Audrey EU said that schools which had successfully implemented IE used different teaching strategies to cater for the different needs of ordinary students and students with SEN. Some of these schools had adopted small group or even one-on-one teaching for students with SEN. She considered that the existing policy had failed to meet the needs of schools and teachers in respect of the resources and training required for the implementation of IE. In her view, it was not possible for each and every school to have the capacity to cater for all types of SEN. The Administration should provide resources according to the specific needs of individual schools in catering for certain types of SEN students. Parents would then choose the schools which best suited the SEN of their children.

Support measures for non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") students with SEN

24. Miss Tanya CHAN sought information on the progress of the support measures provided to NCS students with SEN. SED responded

Action

that subsequent to the discussion at the Panel meeting on 12 December 2011, the Administration had provided a supplementary information paper to members in January 2012 on the support measures for NCS students SEN [Annex II to LC Paper No. CB(2)773/11-12(01)]. He invited members to refer to the paper for detailed information on the latest progress in the support measures which had been put in place for students with SEN.

Provision of up-to-standard premises for special schools

25. Ms Cyd HO expressed concern about the sub-standard premises and facilities of some special schools, such as Chi Yun School in Sham Shui Po and a special school in Shatin. She was worried about the impact of the sub-standard premises on students' learning and safety. She urged the Administration to take action expeditiously to facilitate the in-situ redevelopment of the schools or identify suitable sites for their relocation. SED undertook to visit the schools mentioned by Ms HO as and when possible.

IV. Final preparation in the run-up to the release of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination results

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)2518/11-12(03) to (04)]

26. Members noted the background brief entitled "Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination" [LC paper No. CB(2)2518/11-12(04)] prepared by the LegCo Secretariat.

Briefing by the Administration

27. SED briefed members on the final preparation in the run-up to the release of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education ("HKDSE") Examination results on 20 July 2012, including the arrangements for the release of results and application for rechecking and remarking.

(Post-meeting note: The pamphlet "Compass@720", which was provided by the Administration and tabled at the meeting, was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)2580/11-12(01) on 11 July 2012.)

Number of students meeting the general entrance requirements for local university programmes

28. Miss Tanya CHAN said that according to some newspaper reports, only around 21 000 candidates (i.e. about 30% of the total number of candidates sitting for the first HKDSE Examination) had met the general

Action

entrance requirements for local publicly-funded undergraduate programmes. She sought confirmation on whether this was the case. Noting that some 75 000 locally accredited degree and sub-degree places would be available in the 2012-2013 academic year for the double cohort of secondary school leavers in 2012, she also sought information on how the Administration would assist the articulation of students to these places.

29. SED responded that the number cited by the referred newspapers was one of the scenarios guesstimated by the Administration in relation to the candidates' examination results more than a year ago. As the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority ("HKEAA") was in the process of analyzing the data on the results of the first HKDSE Examination, it was pre-mature for the Administration to estimate the number of candidates who would meet the general entrance requirements for local undergraduate programmes.

30. PS(Ed) supplemented that the number of HKDSE candidates (i.e. 21 000) cited by some newspapers as having satisfied the general entrance requirements for local university studies was an estimation based on the past results of the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination ("HKCEE") and the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination ("HKALE") under the old academic structure. It should however be noted that a different reporting method was used for the HKDSE Examination. Unlike HKCEE and HKALE which used norm referencing, HKDSE adopted standards-referenced reporting ("SRR") to report candidates' examination results.

31. The Chairman opined that with the adoption of the new SRR, it was important for the Administration to ensure fairness in the assessment of HKDSE Examination results.

Extending Government loans to post-secondary studies outside Hong Kong

32. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong asked whether the Administration would consider allowing students to apply for loans under the Government's financial assistance schemes for pursuing further education outside Hong Kong, with a view to providing students with more opportunities and wider choices of further education and broadening their horizons. To ensure prudent use of public money, students applying for loans for overseas studies should be required to satisfy the relevant academic requirements. He called on the Administration to seriously consider the proposal.

Action

33. PS(Ed) said that the present scope of the Government's financial assistance schemes did not cover overseas studies. She pointed out that Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's suggestion entailed significant policy change in respect of portability of public benefits and involved various policy bureaux. She undertook to relay Mr CHEUNG's suggestion to relevant bureaux for consideration.

34. The Chairman considered Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's proposal of extending Government loans to cover studies outside Hong Kong worth pursuing, as it could provide more opportunities for students to pursue further studies overseas or on the Mainland. She also called on the Administration to enhance the mutual recognition of academic qualifications between local and non-local institutions to broaden students' pathways for articulation to further studies.

35. SED responded that some 140 universities worldwide recognized the new HKDSE qualification, while HKALE was recognized by some 95 universities. PS(Ed) assured members that the Administration had been working to promote mutual recognition of academic qualifications between local and non-local institutions, while recognizing the institutional autonomy and academic freedom of the institutions.

Shortage of publicly-funded undergraduate places and high tuition fees of self-financing programmes

36. Dr LAM Tai-fai stressed the importance of nurturing talents and the responsibility of EDB in this regard. He considered it important for the new term Government to resolve the problem of shortage of locally-funded undergraduate places. As a short-term measure, the Administration should consider adopting the "money follow students" concept. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's suggestion of allowing students to apply for Government loans to pursue post-secondary education outside Hong Kong was based on such a concept. Dr LAM also considered it important to enhance education collaboration between local and Mainland institutions, given the growing economic ties between the two places. As quality universities abound on the Mainland, the Administration should promote the pursuit of university education on the Mainland.

37. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung considered it necessary for the Administration to comprehensively review the post-secondary education system to meet the present needs of society and aspirations of students. The shortage of publicly-funded undergraduate places and the high fees for self-financing post-secondary programmes were of prime concern to secondary school leavers. He pointed out that the competition for

Action

self-financing sub-degree and degree places was particularly acute in the double cohort year of 2012 and HKDSE candidates were worried that they were at a disadvantage in competing with HKALE candidates for such places.

38. SED said that it was the Government's aim that by 2015, over one third of the young people in the relevant age cohort group would have the opportunity to study publicly-funded or self-financing degree programmes. For the 2012-2013 academic year, a total of around 75 000 locally accredited post-secondary places and 35 000 continuing education/vocational education training places would be available to secondary school leavers. The provision was generally sufficient to meet the demand of the 103 500 school candidates in the double cohort year of 2012. He further said that while many secondary school leavers wished to pursue university education, some had other plans for further studies or employment. The Administration had been striving to promote paradigm shift among parents and students by disseminating the message that university was not the only option and students could meet their aspirations through multiple pathways.

39. PS(Ed) supplemented that while the paradigm shift would take time, the Administration was encouraged to note the growing receptiveness of schools, including those which traditionally took in students of better academic performance, to Applied Learning ("ApL") courses in the new senior secondary curriculum. The number of ApL courses, which had stronger elements of practical learning linked to professional and vocational fields, would be increased to meet the different interests and aptitudes of students and prepare them for further studies or work. She added that a proper balance should be struck between increasing undergraduate places and ensuring the quality of university education.

40. Regarding financial assistance to post-secondary students, PS(Ed) said that over the past year, the Administration had improved the various financial assistance schemes for post-secondary students. On the whole, students from families with monthly income at around 50% to 60% of the median household income level would be eligible for full level of assistance. Needy students pursuing self-financing programmes could apply for grants and means-tested or non-means-tested loans to meet tuition fees, living expenses and academic expenses. With regard to members' concern about the high tuition fees for self-financing programmes, PS(Ed) said that the University Grants Committee ("UGC") had recently established a Financial Affairs Working Group to work with the UGC-funded institutions to help ensure their continuing good financial governance. As regards the self-financing institutions, the Administration

Action

was working on the establishment of a mechanism to enhance the transparency of their operations, which could facilitate public monitoring to prevent them from charging unreasonably high tuition fees.

V. Briefing by the Secretary for Education concerning the education portfolio

[LC Paper No. CB(2)2579/11-12(01)]

41. SED gave a briefing to members on the education portfolio.

(Post-meeting note: SED's speaking note was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)2579/11-12(01) on 11 July 2012.)

Moral and National Education ("MNE") subject

42. Mr WONG Sing-chi said that the "China Model: National Conditions Teaching Manual" ("Teaching Manual") published by the National Education Services Centre ("NESC") and subsidized by EDB had aroused grave public concern. The Teaching Manual was under severe criticisms for containing misleading and biased information. For example, it praised one-party rule as progressive, united and selfless while stating that multiparty politics could victimize people. He urged parents not to accept this kind of brainwashing national education and schools not to use the Teaching Manual. The Administration should cease to provide funding to NESC. In his view, the implementation of MNE as an independent subject should be abolished and national education should be subsumed under the subject of civic education.

43. SED responded that the curriculum of the MNE subject covered five domains i.e. personal, family, social, national and global domains. The national domain touched upon the historical, cultural, physical and contemporary aspects of China. It was clearly stated in the MNE Curriculum Guide ("the Curriculum Guide") that the MNE subject emphasized learning and teaching from multiple perspectives with the use of an array of learning materials for the subject. The Administration would not advocate the adoption of a uniform pedagogy and a single set of teaching materials for MNE. Aside from NESC, the Administration had also provided funding to other non-governmental organizations and universities to develop teaching materials for MNE. In the 2011-2012 school year, EDB's expenditure on MNE, which included development of learning and teaching materials and organization of cross-boundary learning activities, totalled around \$87 million. He added that he understood from some teachers that they had included controversial incidents such as the 4 June Incident in their MNE curriculum.

Action

44. In response to Mr WONG Sing-chi's enquiry on whether the Administration would stop providing funding to NESCC, SED said that the Administration was reviewing the services of NESCC.

45. PS(Ed) clarified that the Teaching Manual was subsidized but not published by EDB. It had been published before the MNE curriculum was finalized. While agreeing that some of its contents were biased, she considered that the coverage in some other parts of the Teaching Manual was not bad. For instance, it covered sensitive topics such as the "My father is Li-gang" incident, the contaminated milk powder incident and the compulsory resumption of land by some local governments. She further said that the Administration had subsidized different institutions to conduct academic research and develop school-based materials in the areas of arts, history and philosophy. The Administration would respect the operational autonomy of these institutions and would not seek to control the contents of their publications or demand scrutiny before their publication. Furthermore, in the broad realm of liberal arts including history and philosophy, subjectivity in the selection of materials in research and publications was not uncommon. The Administration had therefore put much emphasis on encouraging diversity in sources and approaches of learning and teaching materials on MNE to enable students to learn from multiple perspectives.

46. Miss Tanya CHAN opined that the contents of NESCC's Teaching Manual was extremely lopsided. She expressed concern that students brainwashed by such teaching materials would not be able to distinguish the right from the wrong. In her view, the existing moral and civic education subject was able to achieve the aim of nurturing the positive values and national qualities of students. She did not see the need or the urgency for implementing MNE as an independent subject. She called on the Administration to shelve the implementation of MNE and conduct further public consultation.

47. SED said that the Administration had responded quickly to the matter and had given its views on the contents of the Teaching Manual. In response to Miss Tanya CHAN's remarks on Scholarism - The Alliance Against Moral and National Education ("the Alliance")'s concern about the holding of a closed-door meeting with him, SED said that the Administration would invite some education professionals who were well-versed in MNE to join the meeting with the Alliance scheduled for 13 July 2012. He explained that the Administration had suggested holding the initial meeting with the Alliance behind closed door in order to facilitate a more in-depth discussion among the Alliance, the education professionals and the Administration. The Administration had no problem with having open meetings with the Alliance in future if necessary.

Action

48. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that the public concern about the introduction of the MNE subject and the Liberal Studies ("LS") subject stemmed from the lack of objective teaching and learning materials and their being mandatory subjects. In his view, LS should not be a core subject for university admission. He suggested that the Administration should review whether MNE and LS should be mandatory subjects.

49. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung sought information on the criteria for granting funding to NESC, whether there were any specifications for the teaching manuals produced by NESC, and how the problematic contents of the Teaching Manual could be rectified.

50. SED responded that the Administration would not vet the teaching materials produced by institutions receiving Government funding. He stressed that the first and foremost principle was to ensure diversity in teaching materials on MNE and not to rely on a single source. Teachers had the freedom to choose the teaching materials they considered most suitable for teaching the subject.

51. Regarding Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung's views on the LS subject, SED said that LS was the essence of the educational reform in the past 12 years. The subject sought to develop students' ability to analyse issues from multiple perspectives and strengthen their critical thinking. LS had been successful in changing students' learning attitude from focusing mainly on the contents of the subject to placing emphasis on the learning process.

52. Mr WONG Yuk-man expressed strong objection to the replacement of the moral and civic education subject by the MNE subject. He was of the view that Hong Kong did not need national education. Instead, improvement should be made to the curriculum of the moral and civic education subject. He said that many Hong Kong people did not identify themselves as Chinese citizens as they did not identify with the one-party autocratic rule of the Communist Party of China. He stressed that national education should aim to foster students' rational cognition of the culture and history of China, rather than brainwashing them to support the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese Government. He reiterated that People Power strongly opposed to the proposed implementation of MNE in primary and secondary schools.

53. Dr LAM Tai-fai said that in his view, national education was not a subject to be feared. The crux of the matter lay in the objectives of implementing MNE and its mode of implementation. He had raised a written question at the Council meeting of 13 June 2012 on the MNE subject asking, among other things, the actions to be taken by the

Action

Administration in respect of schools which were not able to implement the MNE subject after the three-year "initiation period". However, the Administration had not provided a concrete reply. He expressed concern about the curriculum design of the MNE subject, the availability of qualified teachers and the criteria for assessing the effectiveness of implementing the subject. He pointed out that schools were facing a lot of problems in implementing the MNE subject. There were insufficient qualified teachers to implement MNE and the curriculum design of the subject would vary from school to school as they were only provided with broad curriculum guidelines. He stressed that the MNE subject could not be effectively implemented unless the Administration assisted schools to resolve these difficulties. He considered it important for the Administration to enhance its communication with schools and their sponsoring bodies on the implementation of MNE.

54. PS(Ed) pointed out that national education was implemented in many countries. She stressed that the merits of implementing MNE should be not denied completely because of the shortcomings found in one teaching manual. Neither the Central Government nor the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administration Region had any role at all in the compilation and formulation of the Curriculum Guide. It was the fruit of the hard work of the Ad Hoc Committee chaired by Prof LEE Chack-fan. The Ad Hoc Committee had received a lot of views on the draft Curriculum Guide during the consultation exercise conducted in May 2011. As a result, substantial amendments had been made to the Curriculum Guide by the Ad Hoc Committee. The Administration respected the expertise of the Ad Hoc Committee and had only made a few minor textual amendments to the revised Curriculum Guide. She pointed out that the expressions such as "the People's Republic of China" and "the Communist Party of China" were not found in the Curriculum Guide, as the MNE subject focused on knowing more about the motherland, defined broadly from a national and cultural sense. PS(Ed) further said that the core of the MNE curriculum was cultivating students' moral character and universal core values, coupled with developing students' independent thinking in making judgments as well as how students should relate to the communities of whom they were a member – family, society, nation and the world. The contents of the MNE subject was largely the same as that of the existing moral and civic education subject, with updates on new developments included. The Administration appreciated that schools played a vital role in the implementation of the MNE subject and would provide them with the necessary support.

Action

55. The Chairman said that there were different views in the community on NESC's Teaching Manual and accommodating divergent views was most important in a democratic society. While some of the viewpoints in the Teaching Manual were one-sided, it did not mean that the contents of the entire Teaching Manual were erroneous. In respect of the contents which had aroused controversy, the Teaching Manual had cited both Chinese and foreign commentaries. She did not subscribe to the view that the Teaching Manual would brainwash students. She stressed that the Teaching Manual was only one of the many teaching materials on MNE. It would be up to schools to decide on the materials to be used and teachers could elaborate on the materials if necessary.

56. Mr WONG Yuk-man expressed strong disagreement with the Chairman's views.

57. Mr WONG Sing-chi also expressed strong dissatisfaction with the Chairman's comments on the Teaching Manual. He enquired about the reasons for awarding the tender to NESC, whether there were other organizations bidding for the tender, the amount of funding provided by the Government for the production of the Teaching Manual, the number of copies of the Teaching Manual being produced and how the Teaching Manual would be handled by the Administration.

58. PS(Ed) responded that in 2007, EDB launched an open tendering exercise for the operation of a national education service centre at Tsing Yi. More than one organization had made a bid for the tender. Following evaluation of the bids received, the then Education and Manpower Bureau awarded the tender to Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers. She clarified that NESC was not commissioned to produce teaching materials on specific topics. Instead, EDB sponsored the operation of national education projects by NESC in the form of a service agreement, under which flexibility was given to NESC to propose different national education activities. Under such a framework, NESC had made proposals for producing teaching materials on national education including, for example, a teaching manual on the National Twelfth Five-year Plan. She added that the Administration had also engaged other organizations and education professionals to produce teaching materials on national education. Parties who were interested in developing teaching materials on national education could apply for funding under the Quality Education Fund.

59. At the request of Mr WONG Sing-chi, the Administration agreed to provide written information on the award of the tender to NESC and the Government funding granted to NESC.

Action

(Post meeting note: The Administration's response was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)2661/11-12(01) on 6 August 2012)

VI. Any other business

60. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:43 pm

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
14 September 2012