

立法會
Legislative Council

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Panel on Education

**Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council
Secretariat for the meeting on 11 June 2012**

Use and disposal of vacant school premises

Purpose

1. This paper summarizes the concerns raised by Members about the use and disposal of vacant school premises.

Background

2. According to the 2001-based Projected Population Distribution by District Council districts in 2001-2011, the total projected school age population aged 6-11 was estimated to decrease from 493 200 in 2002 to 410 600 in 2010, representing a 17% drop of 82 600 over eight years. As a result, there was a sharp decrease in the demand for primary schools as a whole. The declining population in the 6-11 age group had led to a reduction of classes in schools in many districts. In March 2003, the Administration informed Members of its intention to consolidate high cost and under-utilized primary schools to ensure effective use of public funds.

3. The policy on consolidation of under-utilized primary schools ("the Consolidation Policy") was implemented in government and aided primary schools since the 2003-2004 school year. Schools which fail to attract 23 students in the Primary One Admission exercise will not be allocated Primary One ("P1") class. The threshold for operating P1 class has been adjusted to 21 students in the 2008-2009 school year and further reduced to 16 students in the 2009-2010 school year. The year in which the school will be closed is determined by the existing enrolment or the number of operating classes.

4. According to information provided by the Administration in May 2012, it is anticipated that one aided primary school will cease operation under the Consolidation Policy in each of the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school year. There is no consolidation policy for government and aided secondary schools. Based on notification received from the school sponsoring bodies concerned, the Education Bureau ("EDB") anticipates that one aided secondary school will cease operation in each of the 2012-2013, 2015-2016, 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school year after phasing out its classes by level. Separately, two secondary schools will merge with other schools in the 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 school years.

Issues of concern

5. The Panel on Education ("the Panel") discussed the subject of disposal and use of vacant school premises at its meeting on 14 May 2007. Members also expressed views on the subject matter during the discussions of the Administration's proposal of the provision of joint student hostel and the provision of international school places at its meeting on 13 February 2012. Questions in this respect were also raised at Council meetings. The following provides a gist of the issues raised.

Number of vacant school premises

6. In response to a Member's question raised at the Council meeting of 23 May 2012 regarding vacant school premises, the Administration advised that from the 2003-2004 to 2011-2012 school years, a total of 86 primary schools had ceased operation as a result of under-enrolment of P1 students under the Consolidation Policy. The Consolidation Policy did not apply to government and aided secondary schools. A total of nine government and aided secondary schools had ceased operation during the same period. Details on the number of vacant school premises are set out in **Appendices I and II**.

Use of vacant school premises

7. In view of the large number of vacant school premises and noting requests made by different sectors of the community for early identification and disposal of vacant school premises to meet educational and other community needs, Members urged the Administration to take measures to increase the use of vacant school premises.

8. According to the Administration, it had stepped up the existing mechanism with a view to planning well ahead on the use of to-be-vacated premises so that they might be recycled as soon as possible after the school had ceased operation. Steps had also been taken to increase the use of vacant school premises which included allocating vacant school premises for the provision of international school places; providing information on vacant primary and secondary school premises to University Grants Committee-funded institutions for consideration and application; and leasing of vacant school premises at nominal rent to non-profit-making institutions under the Land Grant Scheme for the operation of full-time locally-accredited self-financing post-secondary programmes. Members noted that nine international schools had applied for using vacant school premises as temporary campuses between 2009 and 2011 and seven applications had been approved. As at May 2012, five vacant school premises had been granted for the development of self-financing post-secondary institutions.

9. Given the inadequate provision of student hostel places, some members had suggested that vacant school premises could be converted into student hostels to increase the supply of hostel places. The Administration explained that most of the vacant school premises were relatively small in size and located in remote areas in the New Territories and hence not suitable for conversion into student hostels. Nevertheless, the Administration undertook to give careful consideration to members' suggestion.

10. Members pointed out that many school sponsoring bodies and non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") in the welfare sector had not been allocated suitable premises for the operation and provision of services. Members suggested that the Administration should coordinate with the relevant bureaux to establish an open and transparent system to facilitate dissemination of information on vacant school premises which could be made available for use of various purposes. Information on vacant school premises should also be made available to the District Offices and District Councils so that local communities could apply to use the facilities in these school premises.

11. The Administration advised that EDB had established a mechanism for handling vacant school premises. It would consider if the size, location and physical conditions of the premises would render it suitable for re-allocation for school or other educational uses such as whole-day primary schooling, non-profit-making international school reprovisioning and decanting, etc. The demand for premises to support other educational purposes such as vocational training and post-secondary education would also be considered. EDB had been sharing with the Home Affairs Department information on the

availability of school premises for use by local communities and would consider circulating the list of vacant school premises not suitable for further educational purposes to bureaux/departments on a regular basis to enable them to identify suitable premises to implement their policy initiatives and/or to share the information with NGOs/local communities.

12. In response to a question raised by a member at the Council meeting of 15 February 2012 on whether EDB would re-open closed schools in response to the increase in the number of school-age children a few years later as a result of the rising birth rate due to the Year of the Dragon effect, the Administration advised that for the long-term planning for education services, EDB would make reference to the projections of school-age population which were compiled based on the population projections released by the Census and Statistics Department, actual numbers of students studying at various levels at present and the latest demographic changes to estimate the future demand for school places and related resources. The Administration would monitor the changes of the supply and demand for school places in different districts and take timely measures to meet the relevant demand.

13. In its reply to an oral question raised by a Member regarding vacant school premises at the Council meeting of 23 May 2012, the Administration had provided latest information on the usage of the vacant school premises. Among the 95 primary and secondary school premises that had become vacant during the period from the 2003-2004 to 2011-2012 school years, 31 of them had already been deployed/reallocated for further educational uses. Another 15 premises had been earmarked for further school use or other educational uses. As for the remaining 49 premises, they were considered not suitable for further educational uses given their limited size and remote locations and had already been or would be returned to the relevant government departments for disposal in accordance with the relevant lease conditions and established Government policy for other uses where appropriate. Details on the usage of the vacant school premises are set out in **Appendices III and IV**.

Referral from the meeting-cum-luncheon between Members and Tai Po District Council members

14. At the meeting between Members and Tai Po District Council members on 3 June 2010, Members agreed to refer issues relating to the use and disposal of vacant school premises to the Panel as well as the Panel on Home Affairs for follow up. Members attending the meeting made some suggestions concerning the use of vacant school premises including using vacant school premises for community leisure and recreation purposes,

simplifying the application procedures for use of vacant school premises and allocating vacant school premises to a number of groups for joint use. Members also urged the Administration to formulate long-term and macro policies on revitalizing vacant school premises.

Latest developments

15. The Administration will brief the Panel at the meeting on 11 June 2012 on the latest situation regarding the use and disposal of vacant school premises.

Relevant papers

16. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in **Appendix V**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
7 June 2012

Appendix I

Number of Government and Aided Primary Schools Closed Under Consolidation Policy in the School Years from 2003/04 to 2011/12

District	School Year								
	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Central and Western	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eastern	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
Islands	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	0
Southern	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1
Wan Chai	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Kowloon City	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0
Kwun Tong	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
Sai Kung	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	0
Sham Shui Po	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
Wong Tai Sin	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Yau Tsim Mong	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
North	0	1	2	5	1	1	0	0	0
Sha Tin	0	0	0	1	1	2	4	0	0
Tai Po	0	3	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
Tsuen Wan	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Kwai Tsing	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0
Tuen Mun	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	2	0
Yuen Long	0	0	3	8	3	2	0	0	0
Total	0	5	8	26	14	17	7	7	2

Source: Extracted from EDB's reply to Legislative Council Member's written question on vacant school premises raised at the Council meeting of 23 May 2012

Appendix II

Number of Government and Aided Secondary Schools Closed In the School Years from 2003/04 to 2011/12

District	School Year								
	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Central and Western	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eastern	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Islands	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Southern	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Wan Chai	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Kowloon City	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kwun Tong	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sai Kung	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sham Shui Po	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wong Tai Sin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yau Tsim Mong	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Sha Tin	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Tai Po	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tsuen Wan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kwai Tsing	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Tuen Mun	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yuen Long	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	1	4	1	3	0	0

Source: Extracted from EDB's reply to Legislative Council Member's written question on vacant school premises raised at the Council meeting of 23 May 2012

Appendix III

Uses of 31 Vacant School Premises Already Been Deployed/Re-allocated for Further Educational Uses

District	Use of Premises		
	School Uses (Note 1)	Decanting (i.e. occupation by schools undergoing in- situ redevelopment or awaiting availability of permanent premises)	Other Educational Uses (Note 2)
Central and Western	0	0	0
Eastern	1	0	1
Islands	3	0	0
Kowloon City	0	1	1
Kwai Tsing	1	0	3
Kwun Tong	0	0	0
North	1	0	0
Sai Kung	0	0	3
Sham Shui Po	1	1	0
Sha Tin	6	0	2
Southern	1	0	1
Tai Po	0	0	0
Tsuen Wan	0	0	0
Tuen Mun	0	0	0
Wan Chai	1	1	0
Wong Tai Sin	0	0	0
Yau Tsim Mong	1	0	1
Yuen Long	0	0	0
Total :	16	3	12

Note 1: "School Uses" include whole-day primary schooling, physical extension of nearby schools and other uses.

Note 2: "Other Educational Uses" include onscreen marking centre of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, offices of the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications and the Employees Retraining Board, vocational training centres, post-secondary education use and other uses.

Source: Extracted from EDB's reply to Legislative Council Member's written question on vacant school premises raised at the Council meeting of 23 May 2012

Appendix IV

Uses of 15 Vacant School Premises Earmarked for Further Educational Uses

District	Use of Premises		
	School Uses (Note 1)	Decanting (i.e. occupation by schools undergoing in-situ redevelopment or awaiting availability of permanent premises)	Other Educational Uses (Note 2)
Central and Western	0	0	0
Eastern	0	2	0
Islands	0	0	0
Kowloon City	2	0	1
Kwai Tsing	0	0	0
Kwun Tong	1	1	0
North	0	0	0
Sai Kung	0	0	0
Sham Shui Po	0	0	1
Sha Tin	0	0	1
Southern	2	0	0
Tai Po	0	0	0
Tsuen Wan	1	0	0
Tuen Mun	1	0	1
Wan Chai	0	0	0
Wong Tai Sin	0	0	0
Yau Tsim Mong	0	0	1
Yuen Long	0	0	0
Total :	7	3	5

Note 1: "School Uses" include primary school, international school and other uses.

Note 2: "Other Educational Uses" include onscreen marking centre of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, post-secondary education use and other uses.

Source: Extracted from EDB's reply to Legislative Council Member's written question on vacant school premises raised at the Council meeting of 23 May 2012

Appendix V

Relevant papers on disposal and use of vacant school premises

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Education	17.3.2003 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Education	26.5.2003 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Education	19.4.2004 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	18.5.2005	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 88 - 89 (Question)
Finance Committee	--	Administration's replies to Members initial written questions (Reply Serial Nos. EMB064 and EMB065)
Legislative Council	22.3.2006	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 18 - 20 (Question)
Panel on Education	27.3.2006 (Item IV)	Minutes Information paper provided by the Administration in response to members' questions raised at the meeting (Item (d))
Legislative Council	21.6.2006	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 83 - 92 (Question)

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper
Finance Committee	--	Administration's replies to Members initial written questions (Reply Serial Nos. EMB054, EMB055 and EMB061)
Panel on Education	14.5.2007 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Education	--	Paper provided by the Administration on revitalizing vacant school premises (LC Paper No. CB(2)2494/10-11(01))
Legislative Council	13.1.2010	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 121 - 126 (Question)
Legislative Council	30.11.2011	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 83 - 88 (Question)
Panel on Education	13.2.2012 (Items IV and V)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	15.2.2012	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 135 - 137 (Question)
Legislative Council	23.5.2012	Administration's reply to Member's written question (LCQ19)

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