

立法會
Legislative Council

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Finance Committee of the Legislative Council

**Minutes of the 6th meeting
held at Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex
on Friday, 10 January 2014, at 5:10 pm**

Members present:

Hon NG Leung-sing, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Hon Vincent FANG Kang, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP, PhD, RN
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, SBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP
Hon CHAN Kin-por, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP

Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon YIU Si-wing
Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP
Hon Charles Peter MOK
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon CHAN Han-pan
Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
Hon Kenneth LEUNG
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon KWOK Wai-keung
Hon Dennis KWOK
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Hon IP Kin-yuen
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Hon TANG Ka-piu
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, BBS, MH, JP
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen

Members absent:

Dr Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau

Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon Claudia MO
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, JP
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP

Public officers attending:

Professor K C CHAN, GBS, JP	Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury
Ms Elizabeth TSE Man-yee, JP	Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)
Ms Esther LEUNG, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) 1
Mr Alfred ZHI Jian-hong	Principal Executive Officer (General), Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (The Treasury Branch)
Dr KO Wing-man, BBS, JP	Secretary for Food and Health
Mr Christopher WONG Kwok-bun, JP	Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Food)
Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP	Deputy Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation
Dr SO Ping-man	Assistant Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation (Fisheries)
Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP	Secretary for Education
Dr K K CHAN	Deputy Secretary for Education (5)
Ms Jenny CHAN	Principal Assistant Secretary for Education (Education Infrastructure)
Mr FOK Kam-hung	Chief Systems Manager (Information Technology Management), Education Bureau
Mr SHE Mang	Chief Curriculum Development Officer (Information Technology in Education), Education Bureau
Mr YAU Shing-mu, JP	Under Secretary for Transport and Housing
Mrs Sharon YIP LEE Hang-yee, JP	Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) 4
Ms Julina CHAN Woon-yee, JP	Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) 5

Mr WONG Sai-fat	Acting Assistant Director of Marine (Shipping)
Mr WONG Kam-sing, JP	Secretary for the Environment
Mr Andrew LAI Chi-wah, JP	Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (3)
Mr FONG Kin-wa	Acting Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Mobile Source), Environmental Protection Department
Dr MAK Shing-tat	Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Mobile Source) 6, Environmental Protection Department
Ms Christine PANG Yin-hing	Chief Executive Officer (Licensing), Transport Department

Clerk in attendance:

Mr Andy LAU	Assistant Secretary General 1
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Staff in attendance:

Mr Derek LO	Chief Council Secretary (1)5
Mr Daniel SIN	Senior Council Secretary (1)7
Mr Ken WOO	Senior Council Secretary (1)5
Mr Frankie WOO	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)3
Ms Christy YAU	Legislative Assistant (1)7

Action

Item No. 3 – FCR(2013-14)44
HEAD 22 – AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT
Subhead 700 – General non-recurrent
New Item "Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund"

The meeting continued the deliberation on item FCR(2013-14)44 relating to the funding proposal on the setting up of the Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund ("SFDF").

Effectiveness of SFDF

2. Mr SIN Chung-kai commented that the types of projects that might be funded under SFDF, such as developing new technology for aquaculture

fisheries, would demand a quite high level of professional input from applicants. Mr SIN doubted if many members of the fisheries community were able to benefit from the fund.

3. Mr SIN Chung-kai also commented that the Administration should have clear objectives, strategy and operation plans in helping the fisheries sector. Quantifiable benchmarks and indicators should be developed to evaluate the effectiveness of SFDF. He said that the Administration should take the initiatives to implement practical and concrete measures to steer the development of the industry rather than rely on the fishermen to come up with project proposals.

4. Secretary for Food and Health ("SFH") said that given Hong Kong's unique circumstances, it was difficult to model on other places' experience in developing the local fisheries industry. He added that the Administration had developed performance indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of the projects to be funded under SFDF. However, it was difficult to predict, quantitatively, what levels of achievement the fisheries industry would attain in the long term. Meanwhile, the Administration would take active steps to promote co-operation between the fisheries industry and various sectors and encourage the application of latest technologies to foster the development of the fisheries industry.

Objectives and targets of SFDF

5. Mr Michael TIEN said that Members belonging to the New People's Party would only support the funding proposal if resources under SFDF could be used to support efforts to restructure the fisheries industry towards high value-added, high quality and high technology mode of production. Mr TIEN asked whether the outcome of research projects to be funded under SFDF would be open and available for use by all interested parties. He also queried whether the funding support would need to be repaid by the applicants.

6. SFH said that one of the key objectives of SFDF was to encourage restructuring of the fisheries industry towards high value-added, high technology and high quality mode of production. The Administration could provide regular progress reports to Members on funded projects. Deputy Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation added that funding under SFDF would be provided in the form of grants and, in general, beneficiaries were not required to pay back the Government.

Prospects of fisheries industry in Hong Kong

7. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung expressed concern that, with the rapid degradation of the marine ecology as a result of extensive urbanization and infrastructural development, prospects for viable and sustained growth in the fisheries industry in Hong Kong were limited. SFH acknowledged maintaining a balance between development and nature conservation remained a real challenge. The Administration had made conscious efforts in improving water quality in the harbour, and significant progress had been achieved. The Administration could now issue new licences for marine fish culture operations. The implementation of trawl ban would help recovery of Hong Kong's marine resources. When the marine environment had improved, the local fisheries industry could further develop using more sustainable methods.

8. The Chairman directed that the speaking time for the second round of question from members would be shortened to not more than three minutes, including the Administration's reply.

Regular reports on the progress of SFDF

9. Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked if the Administration would undertake to report in one year's time to Members the progress in implementing SFDF, including the number of fishermen benefited from the Fund, and the achievements made through the various funded projects. Mr WONG also requested SFH to seek the support from other heads of Bureau and Department in the implementation of various support measures to promote the development of the fisheries industry, and to remove any unnecessary administrative hurdles.

10. SFH agreed that the Administration could report to Members on the progress in implementing SFDF. SFH also assured members that he would secure support and co-operation from other Bureaux and Departments as appropriate. However, where fundamental policies or statutory requirements were involved, such as maritime safety regulations, SFH said that SFDF might be used to help fishermen to comply with the requirements while implementing projects that facilitate the restructuring of their operations.

11. In the light of SFH's response, Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that he supported the funding proposal.

12. There being no further question from members, the Chairman put the item to vote. At the request of Mr Tommy CHEUNG, the Chairman ordered a division. Of the 52 members present and participated in voting, 29 members

voted for and 23 members voted against the item. Individual voting results were as follows –

For:

Mr CHAN Kam-lam
Mr Abraham SHEK Lai-him
Mr Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung
Mr WONG Ting-kwong
Mr CHAN Hak-kan
Dr Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun
Mr IP Kwok-him
Mr Michael TIEN Puk-sun
Mr YIU Si-wing
Mr CHAN Han-pan
Miss Alice MAK Mei-kuen
Dr Elizabeth QUAT
Mr POON Siu-ping
Dr CHIANG Lai-wan
Mr Tony TSE Wai-chuen
(29 members)

Mr TAM Yiu-chung
Mr WONG Kwok-hing
Mr Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen
Ms Starry LEE Wai-king
Mr CHAN Kin-por
Mr WONG Kwok-kin
Mr WONG Yuk-man
Mr Steven HO Chun-yin
Mr MA Fung-kwok
Miss CHAN Yuen-han
Mr KWOK Wai-keung
Mr Martin LIAO Cheung-kong
Mr TANG Ka-piu
Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok

Against:

Mr Albert HO Chun-yan
Mr James TO Kun-sun
Ms Emily LAU Wai-hing
Mr Frederick FUNG Kin-kee
Prof Joseph LEE Kok-long
Dr LAM Tai-fai
Mr Alan LEONG Kah-kit
Mr Frankie YICK Chi-ming
Mr Charles Peter MOK
Mr Kenneth LEUNG
Mr SIN Chung-kai
Mr CHUNG Kwok-pan
(23 members)

Mr LEE Cheuk-yan
Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung
Mr Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan
Mr Vincent FANG Kang
Ms Cyd HO Sau-lan
Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che
Mr James TIEN Pei-chun
Mr WU Chi-wai
Dr Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok
Dr Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Mr IP Kin-yuen

13. The Chairman declared that the Committee approved the item.

Item No. 4 – FCR(2013-14)49
HEAD 156 – GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT :
EDUCATION BUREAU
Subhead 700 General non-recurrent
New Item "Grant to the Language Fund"

14. The Chairman advised that the item sought the Committee's approval of the creation of a commitment of \$5 billion for injection into the Language Fund.

15. The Chairman directed that members' speaking time for this item should not exceed three minutes, including the Administration's response.

16. Dr LAM Tai-fai, Chairman of the Panel on Education, reported that the proposal was discussed at the Panel meeting held on 9 December 2013. Panel members agreed that there was a need to implement the various proposed measures to improve the language proficiency of students and the public. Some members had reservations on the proposal as the injection arrangement would weaken the Legislative Council's ability to monitor the use of public resources on individual projects.

17. Dr LAM Tai-fai said that Panel members had also expressed concern about the possible workload that might be generated for teachers and they urged the Administration to provide sufficient teaching staff and resources to schools, such as extra language teachers. The Panel was advised that, subject to the Finance Committee's approval of the proposed injection, part of the available funding each year under the Language Fund could be used for providing support to schools and to teachers. Some Panel members had suggested that the Administration should further consult stakeholders on the concerns raised by Panel members.

Use and effectiveness of the Language Fund

18. Mr WONG Kwok-hing supported the funding proposal. He asked whether the Administration would undertake to report to the Panel on Education each year on the impact and achievements of the Language Fund. Mr WU Chi-wai requested the Administration to illustrate in the review report, using suitable performance indicators, the effectiveness of the Language Fund in meeting its objectives.

19. Secretary for Education ("SED") confirmed that the Administration would be ready to report to members on the progress of projects funded under

the Language Fund. He pointed out, however, that projects might need longer time to demonstrate effects.

20. Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked how the Administration would handle the amount of the Language Fund that was not yet allocated. SED explained that the proposed injection would be used as seed money to earn investment return to finance new projects and to cover the administrative expenditure involved.

21. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung queried whether the estimated \$250 million return per year from investment of the proposed \$5 billion injection into the Language Fund was sufficient to achieve the objectives of improving language proficiency in schools as well as in the workplace as highlighted in the discussion paper (FCR(2013-14)49). Mr IP Kin-yuen made a similar comment. Mr IP suggested that projects funded under the Language Fund should be incorporated into the regular services of the Government and funded with recurrent resources if they were demonstrated to be effective.

22. SED said that recurrent resources were available to support language training on an on-going basis. The proposed injection into the Language Fund was intended to provide additional resources to improve the language environment in schools through, among other means, development or acquisition of learning and teaching resources, etc. SED considered that the funding sought should be sufficient for the intended purposes.

Support for teachers

23. Mr IP Kin-yuen supported the funding proposal. Mr IP said that all along schools lacked resources for providing support to teachers. He asked the Administration to undertake to provide sufficient manpower support to schools and to teachers in implementing initiatives funded under the Language Fund. Mr WU Chi-wai raised a similar view. He said that language training should begin in kindergarten. The Administration should provide more recurrent funding to schools to provide more support for language teachers.

24. SED agreed that it was important that sufficient support was to be provided to schools to facilitate the implementation of the initiatives funded under the Language Fund. In developing the funding proposal, the Administration had taken into account the additional workload on teachers that might arise. If the Language Fund achieved an annual return of 5% or \$250 million on investment, 55% of this amount would be allocated as support to schools and teachers.

25. Ms Emily LAU said that members had suggested for many years that English speaking teachers should be provided in primary schools and kindergartens. However, the Administration decided to deploy these teachers to secondary schools only. She criticized the Administration for the lost opportunities in enhancing students' English proficiency.

26. Ms Emily LAU noted the Administration's intention to strengthen language teaching support to kindergartens. She said that many kindergarten teachers had been complaining about their remuneration and conditions of service. Ms LAU asked how the Administration would attract high quality and high calibre Chinese and English language teachers to serve in kindergartens.

27. SED and Deputy Secretary for Education (5) ("DS(Ed)5") responded that the Language Fund could be used to improve the pedagogy of languages and teachers' skills. SED added that the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education would also look into the development of kindergarten teachers and their conditions of service.

Study on students' interest and motivation to learn languages

28. Mr Michael TIEN requested the Administration to conduct regular longitudinal studies to examine the interest and motivation of students (such as Primary Three or Primary Six students) in learning languages and how students' interest in learning languages could be stimulated.

29. Mr Michael TIEN suggested that the Administration could organize focus groups or interviews with students to ascertain their preference and interest (or lack of interest) in learning languages. Mr TIEN further suggested that non-curricular courses should be introduced for students to practise English or Putonghua under a stress-free environment. In this connection, Mr TIEN asked if the Administration would undertake to enhance the development of teaching and learning resources for the non-curricular language courses, and whether the Administration would reduce the number of class sessions of English language teachers to enable them to conduct these non-curricular language courses.

30. SED agreed that it was important to understand how to cultivate students' interest in language learning. Tertiary or research institutions could be invited to conduct focus groups in every district each year, with Primary Three or Primary Six students, to ascertain students' interest in, motivation and reasons for learning languages. Longitudinal studies could then be carried out to track how the pattern changed in time.

31. SED also agreed that more multimedia language learning and teaching resources could be acquired and provided centrally to reduce teachers' workload in developing their own teaching aids. The Administration encouraged regular activities to be carried out to promote language learning. As regards reducing the number of classes taught by language teachers, SED said that more data were needed to be collected for detailed evaluation on the feasibility of this proposal.

Work of SCOLAR and curriculum development on language education

32. Mr WU Chi-wai queried whether there was connection between the work of the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research ("SCOLAR") and curriculum development on language education. SED said the Administration would evaluate the progress of language training not only in schools, but also in the use of English in the workplace. DS(Ed)5 supplemented that SCOLAR worked closely with the Curriculum Development Council whose members also sat in SCOLAR. Where appropriate, the Committee on Chinese Language Education and the Committee of the English Language Education of the Curriculum Development Council would follow up the suggestions made by SCOLAR for improving the language curricula.

Building a suitable language environment in schools

33. Ms Starry LEE said that building a suitable language environment was important in improving students' language proficiency. She asked if SCOLAR had studied the feasibility of requiring students to communicate in English at school. Mr WU Chi-wai expressed a similar concern, and asked what measures the Administration would adopt to improve the language environment in schools. DS(Ed)5 said that subsidies were available to support schools in building an English language environment in the campus. Some schools had organized activities such as "English Days" to promote the use of English in communication.

Teaching Chinese language using Putonghua

34. Ms Starry LEE asked if the Administration would formulate a timetable for implementing the teaching of Chinese language in Putonghua. She requested the Administration to report progress of implementing teaching Chinese language in Putonghua in one year's time.

35. DS(Ed)5 commented that not all schools could offer Chinese language classes using Putonghua because the ability of some Chinese language teachers might not yet have reached the standard as required by the Education

Bureau for teaching Chinese in Putonghua. Besides, teachers of higher forms in particular lacked the spare capacity to teach in Putonghua as they often faced heavy workload in preparing students for examinations. Notwithstanding these, the Education Bureau would continue to promote the use of Putonghua in general in school.

36. Mr WONG Yuk-man commented that requiring young children to learn English, Cantonese and Putonghua at the same time was detrimental to their development. He queried the merits of teaching Chinese language in Putonghua. SED said that in 2012, about 60% of the population had attained basic bilingual proficiency, indicating a continued improvement in the population's language skills. He said that the Administration would continue to promote bi-literate and tri-lingual ability among students and the workforce.

37. The Chairman directed that the speaking time for second round of questions should not exceed two minutes, including the Administration's response.

38. Mr IP Kin-yuen said that extra care must be exercised in promoting the teaching of Chinese using Putonghua in schools. Quoting findings from leading academics, Mr IP said that such approach might risk reducing students' interest in Chinese language. Mr IP suggested that young students should be encouraged to learn Chinese language and Putonghua as separate subjects: Chinese language should first be taught in Cantonese. Only those who had demonstrated the aptitude of mastering the language should receive Putonghua instructions. Mr IP Kin-yuen queried the Administration's policy in implementing the teaching of Chinese language using Putonghua.

39. DS(Ed)5 explained that there were stringent requirements that must be satisfied before a school could offer to teach Chinese language in Putonghua. First, teachers must have obtained the required professional qualifications and competence in teaching Putonghua. Secondly, the conditions of school and the acceptance of parents and teachers must be taken into consideration.

40. Ms Starry LEE commented that parents welcomed schools to teach Chinese language using Putonghua. She said that stimulating students' interest in Putonghua should not only be restricted to activities in extra-curricular activities. The teaching of Putonghua should be strengthened through the formal curriculum.

41. Mr Albert HO commented that the Chinese language was already difficult to learn and it would be even more difficult if students in Hong Kong were to learn it in Putonghua which they were not familiar with. Mr Kenneth

LEUNG made a similar comment and added that primary school students should first learn to master Chinese language in their mother tongue or otherwise they would lose interest in the language.

42. There being no further question from members, the Chairman put the item to vote. The Chairman declared that the Committee approved the item.

Item No. 5 – FCR(2013-14)50

**Head 156 – GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT :
EDUCATION BUREAU**

Subhead 700 General non-recurrent

New Item "Supporting Schools to Adopt E-textbooks"

CAPITAL WORKS RESERVE FUND

HEAD 710 – COMPUTERISATION

Government Secretariat : Education Bureau

New Subhead "Upgrading the Web-based School Administration and Management System"

43. The Chairman advised that the item sought the Committee's approval of a commitment of \$50 million for supporting schools in adopting e-textbooks, and \$67 million for upgrading the Web-based School Administration and Management System ("WebSAMS").

44. The Chairman said that Mr Charles MOK had submitted a motion to be moved under the item. He ruled that the motion was directly related to the current agenda item. The Chairman said that he would first invite Mr MOK to give a brief introduction of his motion and then he would seek members' views whether or not the motion should be proceeded forthwith.

45. Mr Charles MOK briefed members on the contents of his motion, and his intention in moving it. The Chairman asked whether members agreed that Mr MOK's motion should be proceeded forthwith.

46. Dr LAM Tai-fai raised a point of order. He queried whether it was appropriate for the Committee to consider whether a motion moved under paragraph 37A of the Finance Committee Procedure should be proceeded forthwith, before he, as Chairman of the Panel on Education, had delivered his verbal report of the Panel's deliberation on the funding proposal.

47. Mr WONG Kwok-hing concurred with Dr LAM Tai-fai's views.

48. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Clerk said that the Finance Committee Procedure was silent on whether a report of the Panel Chairman should always precede the handling of a member's motion expressing a view on an agenda item. The Committee could determine how to handle the matter by reference to any established practice and the ruling of the Chairman.

49. The Chairman ruled that Dr LAM Tai-fai should first proceed to report on the deliberation of the Panel on Education on the funding proposal.

50. Dr LAM Tai-fai said that the Panel on Education discussed the funding proposal at the meeting held on 9 December 2013. Panel members supported the proposal of upgrading the Web-based School Administration and Management System.

51. As regards the proposed support for schools in adopting e-textbook, members noted that the Administration intended to launch a pilot scheme, which would provide one-off grants to about 100 public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme ("DSS") schools to enhance or top up their information technology ("IT") infrastructure. Panel members considered that the one-off grants should be provided for schools that lacked resources or whose IT facilities were not well established. Members also requested the Administration to provide the list of schools selected and the selection criteria adopted. At the Panel meeting, members passed two motions urging the Administration to provide more support to schools and teachers, and to improve the IT infrastructure of all schools within three years.

52. The Chairman then put the question, i.e. whether the Committee agreed that Mr Charles MOK's motion be proceeded forthwith, to vote. The Chairman said that of the members present and voting, seven members voted in favour of the question and ten members voted against. The Chairman declared that the majority of members did not agree that Mr MOK's motion should be proceeded forthwith.

53. The Chairman then invited members to speak on the funding proposal. He directed that members' speaking time on the item should not exceed three minutes, including the Administration's response.

54. Mr Charles MOK said that his motion more or less recapitulated what was discussed and agreed at the Panel on Education. He was therefore disappointed that members did not agree to, at least, discuss the issues at the current meeting and press the Administration to take on board members' views.

55. Dr LO Wai-kwok said that he did not agree that Mr Charles MOK's motion should be proceeded forthwith, not because he did not agree with the

views and suggestions raised but because the issues which involved policy matters should have been discussed at the Panel on Education. The Finance Committee should focus on the financial aspects of the proposal. Dr Elizabeth QUAT echoed Dr LO's comments.

Web-based School Administration and Management System

56. Mr Charles MOK agreed that there was a need to upgrade the WebSAMS as the existing system was out-dated. He criticized the Administration for not having improved the system earlier and for failing to take advantage of the latest cloud technology in the present exercise.

57. Dr Elizabeth QUAT commented that the Administration should have upgraded the system much earlier. She asked the Administration to consider how the system should be further enhanced to improve management in schools.

58. Chief Systems Manager (Information Technology Management) ("CSM(ITM)") said that the Administration had considered whether cloud technology should be adopted for the next generation of WebSAMS during the review last year. CSM(ITM) added that more time would be needed to evaluate the operation and data security requirements if cloud technology was to be adopted. He said that the Administration would consider the way forward in the evaluation of the long term development of WebSAMS.

59. Mrs Regina IP agreed with members of the Panel on Education that all schools (especially those that lacked the resources and the technical support) should as far as possible be given support to upgrade their IT infrastructure and to adopt e-textbooks in class. Mrs IP said that many parents were concerned that students might abuse the campus WiFi for non-learning purposes. Proper management of IT resources was necessary. She asked whether the Administration had any policy or guidelines that required schools to regulate or monitor the use of IT resources by students.

60. SED replied that under the service subscription mode for enhancement of IT infrastructure, suitable software could be installed to monitor and control access of students to various websites.

Supporting schools in adopting e-textbooks

61. Mr IP Kin-yuen asked the Administration to respond to the three suggestions mentioned in Mr Charles MOK's motion. Mr IP also said that the Administration's approach in encouraging public sector and DSS schools to adopt e-textbooks differed widely from the education sector's expectation.

Mr IP said that according to a survey by the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union on the Administration's proposal to support schools to adopt e-textbooks in classroom teaching, the vast majority of the respondent schools indicated that their WiFi connectivity was not adequate to support the use of e-textbook in classrooms; that they disagreed with the selection of only 100 schools in the pilot scheme; and that resources should be provided for schools to employ an IT co-ordinator to implement the initiative.

62. SED responded that the Administration encouraged all schools to adopt e-textbooks in the classroom. The actual pace and timing of implementation might be different among schools, depending on their technical readiness. The Administration would select schools with scarce IT resources but were interested in adopting e-textbooks, to participate in the pilot scheme.

63. Dr Elizabeth QUAT supported the funding proposal. She commented provision of WiFi in the campus was fundamental, and all schools should be provided resources to install the necessary facilities within three years. Dr QUAT said that promoting e-learning involved more than the provision of hardware. She asked how the Administration would prepare school personnel and parents to participate in the process.

64. SED replied that the Administration would shortly launch the Fourth Strategy on Information Technology in Education which would address the various opinions from members. He agreed that the preparedness and support of school principals and teachers were important in ensuring success in promoting e-learning and application of IT in schools.

Vetting of new e-textbooks

65. Mr MA Fung-kwok supported the funding proposal but he expressed concern whether the resources sought were sufficient to meet the intended objectives. Mr MA said that e-textbook publishers had expressed concern about the Administration's vetting process of new e-textbooks, and he suggested that the Administration should work with the sector to address the concerns. DS(Ed)5 assured members that the Administration would take into consideration the e-textbook publishers' views when vetting e-textbooks.

66. Mr WONG Kwok-hing supported the funding proposal. Mr WONG expressed concern on whether the price of e-textbooks could even be more expensive than the printed version, which would become a burden for parents.

Sharing of mobile devices for using e-textbooks

67. Mr MA Fung-kwok noted that in adopting e-textbooks for teaching in class, groups of two to three students would need to share a mobile computing device. He queried whether sufficient resources could be provided to allow each student to use his/her own device. Mr WONG Kwok-hing and Mr Frankie YICK expressed a similar view. Mr MA explained that the Administration could encourage students to bring their own device to class and resources could be focused to help students who could not afford their own equipment.

68. DS(Ed)5 said that the Administration intended to encourage more interactive activities in class. A group of two or three students could participate in activities using one computing device. The Administration would review the resource support requirements in the light of the outcome of the proposed pilot scheme.

Pilot scheme on adopting e-textbooks in teaching

69. Ms Cyd HO queried why the Administration only provided resources to 100 selected schools to adopt e-textbooks in teaching when it could afford to support more schools to participate in the pilot scheme. Ms HO noted the Administration's explanation that some schools were not technically ready to implement e-learning and queried whether this was the result of the chronic lack of resources from the Government to promote e-learning. Ms HO also commented that the Administration should ride on the e-textbook technology and encourage schools to tailor-made learning resources for students with different degrees of aptitude and ability.

70. SED responded that in implementing e-learning through the use of e-textbook, it was useful for participating schools to support each other and share experience and knowledge during the process. The pilot scheme would allow certain schools to explore the new approach in teaching. Their experience could provide practical guidance to other schools.

71. Mr Frankie YICK supported the Administration's approach of selecting a smaller number of schools to participate in the pilot scheme to promote the use of e-textbooks in class. He said that the organization he worked for had recently provided resources to 14 schools to build up their IT infrastructure. Not all of these schools were ready to implement e-learning or e-teaching at the beginning of the project, and some of them were not very successful in implementing the approach. From this experience, Mr YICK commented that it was more prudent for the Administration to conduct trials on

selected schools so that the experience, successful or otherwise, could be consolidated and evaluated before the adoption of e-textbooks in class could be fully implemented.

72. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed concern that since only those schools with well-developed IT facilities would be selected for participating in the pilot scheme, schools which lacked the resources and the know-how in IT would fall behind. Dr CHEUNG commented that this would aggravate the digital divide among students. Dr CHEUNG asked if the Administration would include schools that were not well supported in IT in the pilot scheme.

73. SED responded that it was the Administration's objective for all schools to be able to adopt e-textbooks for learning. The current pilot scheme was formulated following consultation with the education sector. Schools that were not technically ready but were interested in adopting e-textbooks in class would also be included in the pilot scheme.

Admin 74. Dr Fernando CHEUNG requested the Administration to provide information on the number of the 100 public and DSS schools selected for the pilot scheme that were at disadvantaged position and lacked resources, so that consideration could be given to according priority in allocating more resources to them.

75. Given the heavy agenda for the meeting, the Chairman asked those members who wished to ask questions for more than once to confine their speaking time to one minute, including the Administration's response.

76. Ms Cyd HO queried why some schools were still not ready to adopt e-textbooks in class. SED explained that the effectiveness of using IT in schools depended very much on the commitment and support of school leaders. Teachers who lacked the technical knowledge in IT hardware were often made responsible for the acquisition of the IT equipment. There were instances where components purchased were incompatible with each other, and the pace of implementing IT in those schools suffered a setback. Ms Cyd HO commented that the Administration should have provided central technical IT support to schools to help them get over the hurdles.

77. There being no further questions from members, the Chairman put the item to vote. The Chairman declared that the Committee approved the item.

78. As there were two more items on the agenda to be deliberated, the Chairman announced that the meeting would be extended by 15 minutes if the

Committee had not completed deliberation of all the items by the scheduled end time of the meeting.

Item No. 6 – FCR(2013-14)51

HEAD 158 – GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT :

TRANSPORT AND HOUSING BUREAU (TRANSPORT BRANCH)

Subhead 700 General Non-recurrent

New Item "Maritime and Aviation Training Fund"

HEAD 100 – MARINE DEPARTMENT

Subhead 700 General Non-recurrent

Item 429 Sea-going Training Incentive Scheme

79. The Chairman advised that the item sought the Committee's approved of \$100 million for establishing the Maritime and Aviation Training Fund ("MATF"), and to increase the monthly subsidy level of the Sea-going Training Incentive Scheme from \$5,000 to \$6,000.

80. The Chairman directed that members' speaking time on this item should not exceed three minutes, including the Administration's reply.

81. Mr Frankie YICK declared that he was a member of the Tripartite Taskforce on Manpower Training under the Hong Kong Maritime Industry Council. Mr YICK supported the funding proposal. He said that the Government had incorporated many suggestions from the trades and had included measures to attract more young people to join the aviation and maritime industries. Mr YICK noted that the proposals would address the training needs of young people, graduates, and even professionals with different levels of skills and qualifications.

82. Dr LO Wai-kwok supported the funding proposal. He said that representatives from the aircraft engineering sector had reflected to him about the serious manpower shortage situation in the aircraft maintenance industry. Dr LO said that Hong Kong's aircraft maintenance industry enjoyed a high reputation in the region and the career prospects were promising. He hoped that MATF would help attract more young people to join the aviation and maritime industries. Dr LO commented that the proposed amount of funding sought might not be sufficient for the intended purpose and he suggested the Administration should step up efforts in support of the two industries. Mr Tony TSE expressed a similar concern.

83. Under Secretary for Transport and Housing ("USTH") said that if the response to the proposed fund was positive, the Administration would be prepared to review in due course whether further injection should be made.

84. Mrs Regina IP said that Members belonging to the New People's Party supported the funding proposal. Mrs IP urged the Administration to step up publicity efforts so as to encourage more young people to join the aviation and maritime industries.

85. Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that Members belonging to the Federation of Trade Unions supported the funding proposal as it would help address the serious manpower shortage and aging workforce in the aviation and the maritime sectors. Mr WONG asked if the Administration could provide career information about the aviation and maritime industries to secondary school students to raise their awareness and to attract them to join the industries.

86. USTH advised that around \$7 million of the proposed MATF would be used for sustaining the industries' effort to reach out to the younger generations and the community at large. Promotion initiatives such as career week and summer tours with maritime or aviation elements, would be launched. Through these activities, young people could gain a better understanding of the aviation and maritime industries and their career prospects, so that they could make informed career choices.

87. Mr IP Kin-yuen supported the funding proposal, as MATF would provide a wider range of career options for young people. He said that such training support should be a long-term commitment of the Government and should be provided on a recurrent basis rather than being supported through a fund. Regarding Mr IP's enquiry about whether the Administration would provide subsidies or scholarships to those schools that organized maritime-related training, the Chairman suggested Mr IP to provide details of these schools to the Administration for follow-up as appropriate.

88. Mr Tony TSE expressed concern about the turnover rates of cadets who benefited from MATF. He suggested that the Administration should introduce measures to encourage cadets and students who had received scholarships or other incentives under MATF to remain in the industry.

89. There being no further questions from members, the Chairman put the item to vote. The Chairman declared that the Committee approved the item.

Item No. 7 – FCR(2013-14)52

HEAD 44 – ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT

Subhead 700 General non-recurrent

New Item "Ex-gratia payment for phasing out pre-Euro IV diesel commercial vehicles"

90. The Chairman advised that the item sought the Committee's approval of \$11,444 million for providing ex-gratia payment to registered owners of some 82 000 pre-Euro IV diesel commercial vehicles to phase out their vehicles.

91. Ms Cyd HO, Chairman of the Panel on Environmental Affairs, reported that the Panel had discussed the funding proposal at its special meeting held on 2 October 2013. Panel members did not object to the Administration's submitting the funding proposal to this Committee for consideration. Panel members generally considered that the proposed ex-gratia payment scheme had suitably addressed the concerns of the transport sector. Panel members urged the Administration to expedite the implementation of the programme to phase out pre-Euro IV diesel commercial vehicles. Some Panel members had expressed concern that the phasing-out programme would have a significant impact on different transport operators, and, in particular, owners of "single vehicles" who were also drivers. They urged the Administration to maintain close liaison with the transport trades and provide necessary assistance. The Administration should also explain clearly all the details of the proposal to the transport trades, in particular, the calculation of the ex-gratia payment. Some Panel members considered that there was a need to open up vehicle maintenance information in order that the vehicle servicing industry would not be monopolized by a few major vehicle manufacturers and agents.

92. As the meeting was drawing to a close, the Chairman directed that members' speaking time on this item should not exceed one-and-a-half-minute, including the Administration's response.

93. Mr WONG Kwok-hing supported the funding proposal. He expressed concern that the livelihood of the vehicle maintenance workers would be affected following the phasing-out of the old diesel commercial vehicles. Mr WONG requested the Administration to undertake measures to assist and encourage these workers to upgrade their skills.

94. Secretary for the Environment ("SEN") said that the Administration would follow up with the vehicle maintenance trade on measures that would help vehicle mechanics to upgrade their skills for repairing diesel commercial vehicles of the latest design.

95. Dr Kenneth CHAN commented that the Administration should not defer the deadlines of retiring Euro I, II and III diesel commercial vehicles as the transport trade was now offered ex-gratia payment to phase out these vehicles. Dr CHAN said that the objective of the funding proposal was to retire old and polluting vehicles so as to improve air quality and promote public health. He said that the Administration should care more about public health rather than slanting policies in favour of the transport trade. Dr CHAN suggested that the Administration should report progress of the diesel vehicle retirement programme every six months rather than annually, and should measure the effectiveness of the retirement programme in terms of the improvement in air quality using the benchmarks of the newly introduced air quality objectives.

96. Mr CHAN Kam-lam commended the Administration for having taken on board the views of the transport trade in formulating the funding proposal and the programme of retiring polluting diesel commercial vehicles. Mr Frankie YICK expressed a similar view. Mr CHAN said that some single-vehicle owners were not able to afford new Euro V diesel commercial vehicles. These vehicle owners had expressed concern about the shortage in the supply of second-hand Euro IV or Euro V diesel commercial vehicles when their pre-Euro IV vehicles were due for retirement. Mr CHAN asked what measures the Administration would introduce to ensure adequate supply of second-hand vehicles to meet the demands of these drivers. SEN said that the Administration would closely monitor the situation in consultation with the transport trades.

97. Mr Frankie YICK noted that owners of diesel commercial vehicles to be retired, when applying for ex-gratia payment, must produce the scrapping certificates issued by the vehicle scrapping companies registered with the Environmental Protection Department ("EPD"). Mr YICK asked about the process of registering vehicle scrapping companies and through what channels vehicle owners could obtain the list of registered vehicle scrapping companies.

98. Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (3) said that up to 9 January 2014, about 49 vehicle scrapping companies had applied for registration with EPD and that the Administration would continue to accept registration of vehicle scrapping companies. The Administration would remind the transport trade of the scrapping arrangements and published information about the vehicle scrapping companies on EPD's website.

99. There being no further questions from members, the Chairman put the item to vote. The Chairman declared that the Committee approved the item.

100. The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat

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