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Panel on Education

**Subcommittee to Study the Implementation of
Free Kindergarten Education**

Meeting on 9 November 2015

Further work plan

Purpose

This paper invites members to consider the further work plan for the Subcommittee to Study the Implementation of Free Kindergarten Education ("the Subcommittee").

Progress of work

2. For the purpose of its study, the Subcommittee has identified 11 major subject areas as listed in **Annex I**. Since commencing work on 27 October 2014, the Subcommittee has held a total of 10 meetings in the 2014-2015 session and examined all the 11 subjects with the Administration and the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education ("the KG Committee") headed by Dr Moses CHENG¹.

3. Two of the meetings held by the Subcommittee were prolonged meetings on 17 January and 4 July 2015 to receive views from a large number of deputations on a wide range of issues related to the policy and implementation of free kindergarten ("KG") education. To facilitate reference by members and with the concurrence of the Subcommittee Chairman, the Secretariat has prepared summaries of views/concerns raised at each of the aforesaid meetings [LC Paper Nos. CB(4)469/14-15(01) and CB(4)1432/14-15(01)]. The Administration has provided its

¹ The KG Committee was appointed by the Education Bureau in April 2013 to study and make recommendations on how to practicably implement free KG education. Upon completion of its study, the KG Committee published a report on 28 May 2015.

written response to the views/concerns raised at the meetings of 17 January and 4 July 2015 [LC Paper Nos. CB(4)538/14-15(01) and CB(4)163/15-16(01) respectively].

4. The Subcommittee would need to examine the views submitted by the public and major stakeholders, as well as to deliberate on the findings and recommendations of the KG Committee with a view to formulating its own views on the way forward. Members also consider it necessary to follow up the measures which will be promulgated or introduced by the Government for implementing free KG education. At its meeting on 4 July 2015, the Subcommittee agreed that the permission of the House Committee should be sought to extend its period of work *for six more months until 30 April 2016 in order to conclude its study and prepare its report*. The Subcommittee's proposal was endorsed by the Panel on Education on 15 July 2015.

5. At its meeting held on 9 October 2015, the House Committee gave permission for the Subcommittee to extend its period of work *for three more months (i.e. up to 26 January 2016) in the first instance, after which it will, if necessary, be placed on the waiting list for re-activation of work for the remainder of the proposed extension period*. Details of the relevant arrangements are explained in LC Paper No. CB(2)2188/14-15 issued for the said meeting.

The work ahead

6. While the Subcommittee has deliberated on all the major subject areas, some members have indicated that the following items as listed in **Annex I** should be further pursued –

- item (b) the operating needs of and services provided by half-day, whole-day and long whole-day KGs and how they should be supported under the provision of free KG education;
- item (d) issues related to manpower requirement (e.g. the teacher-to-student ratio, the requirements for additional teaching and non-teaching staff etc.), teacher professionalism (e.g. the development of a qualification and salary framework for KG teachers, training, a proper career and advancement path etc.); and

- item (g) support for non-Chinese speaking students and students with special educational needs.

7. Arising from the decision of the House Committee to extend the Subcommittee's period of work for three months only until 26 January 2016 (paragraph 5 above), members may consider whether to hold further meetings in November, December 2015 and January 2016 to follow up the above issues with the Administration. Subsequently, at the end of January 2016, the Subcommittee will need to vacate its slot to another subcommittee and be placed on the waiting list for re-activation of work. In this connection, members are reminded that the 2015-2016 session is the last session of the Fifth Legislative Council. The Council will stand prorogued on a date to be specified by the Chief Executive in due course.

8. Having regard to the position of subcommittees on policy issues currently in operation/to be activated and those on the waiting list as set out in Appendix VIII and Appendix IX of LC Paper No. CB(2)2188/14-15 respectively (reproduced at **Annex II**), it is likely that the Subcommittee will be able to re-activate its work in early May 2016 under the existing broad principles for activation, operation and extension of period of work of policy subcommittees; and subject to no new policy subcommittee being appointed in the coming months.

Advice sought

9. Members are invited to note the latest position regarding the work of the Subcommittee and to consider the proposed way forward as set out in paragraphs 7 and 8 above.

List of major subjects

- (a) The policy and proposed scope of free kindergarten ("KG") education (e.g. the objectives of free KG education, the types of KGs to be covered under free KG education, the scope of services to be covered by the subsidy, the allocation of resources for taking forward free KG education etc.);
- (b) the operating needs of and services provided by half-day, whole-day and long whole-day KGs and how they should be supported under the provision of free KG education;
- (c) premises-related issues (e.g. rental subsidy, provision of premises and facilities etc.);
- (d) issues related to manpower requirement (e.g. the teacher-to-student ratio, the requirements for additional teaching and non-teaching staff etc.), teacher professionalism (e.g. the development of a qualification and salary framework for KG teachers, training, a proper career and advancement path etc.);
- (e) planning for the provision of KG places, in particular whole-day KG places, and the admission arrangements for KGs;
- (f) transition from KG to primary education;
- (g) support for non-Chinese speaking students and students with special educational needs;
- (h) quality assurance mechanism, regulation and longer-term development of the KG sector;
- (i) research on early childhood education;
- (j) issues related to parents' participation; and
- (k) Tuition fees and miscellaneous fees charged by kindergartens, the Government's monitoring, the financial assistance available to children from needy families.

Extracted from LC Paper No. CB(2)2188/14-15
for the House Committee meeting on 9 October 2015

Position of subcommittees on policy issues currently in operation/to be activated
(as at 7 October 2015)

Subcommittees	Date of first meeting	End date of approved period of work
1. Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways under the Panel on Transport	30 November 2012	30 September 2015 ^{*#}
2. Subcommittee on Health Protection Scheme under the Panel on Health Services	12 December 2012	30 September 2015 ^{*#}
3. Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project under the Panel on Home Affairs and the Panel on Development	29 January 2013	30 September 2015 ^{*#}
4. Subcommittee on Retirement Protection under the Panel on Welfare Services	25 February 2014	30 September 2015 ^{*#}
5. Subcommittee to Study the Implementation of Free Kindergarten Education under the Panel on Education	27 October 2014	26 October 2015 [*]
6. Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Development of Chinese Medicine under the Panel on Health Services	5 November 2014	4 November 2015 [*]
7. Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence under the Panel on Welfare Services	3 December 2014	2 December 2015 [*]
8. Subcommittee on Poverty under the House Committee	5 November 2012	31 January 2016 [#]
9. Subcommittee to Follow up Issues Relating to the Three-runway System at the Hong Kong International Airport under the House Committee	16 October 2015	mid July 2016
10. Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to Mainland-HKSAR Families under the House Committee	To be scheduled	mid July 2016

* Approval of the House Committee is being sought by these seven subcommittees for extending the period of their work beyond the approved period of work.

These subcommittees have previously obtained the permission of the House Committee to extend the period of their work beyond 12 months.

Subcommittees on policy issues on the waiting list^{Note}
(as at 7 October 2015)

Subcommittees	Date of appointment
1. Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to Standard Working Hours under the Panel on Manpower	10 February 2015
2. Joint Subcommittee to Study the Arrangement of Offsetting Severance Payments and Long Service Payments against Mandatory Provident Fund Accrued Benefits under the Panel on Financial Affairs and the Panel on Manpower	2 March 2015
3. Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Future Development of Elderly Services Schemes under the Panel on Welfare Services	8 June 2015

Note: The Panel on Development agreed in principle at its meeting on 22 July 2015 for the appointment of a subcommittee under the Panel to study issues relating to redevelopment of buildings developed under the Civil Servants' Cooperative Building Society Scheme. It is anticipated that a new subcommittee will be formed in late October 2015 and put on the waiting list.