

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)367/15-16
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 9 November 2015, at 4:30 pm
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, SBS, JP(Chairman)
Hon IP Kin-yuen (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, GBS, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon NG Leung-sing, SBS, JP
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai
Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok
Hon Dennis KWOK

Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, SBS, JP
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP

Members absent : Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Yuk-man

Public Officers attending : Agenda item IV

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP
Secretary for Education

Mr Brian LO, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education (1)

Mr LEUNG Yam-shing
Deputy Executive Director (B)
Vocational Training Council

Dr Lawrence CHAN Wan-ching
Deputy Executive Director (C)
Vocational Training Council

Agenda item V

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Ms Jenny CHAN
Acting Deputy Secretary for Education (5)

Mr LAU Yuen-tan
Chief Curriculum Development Officer
(Information Technology in Education)
Education Bureau

Agenda item VI

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Miss Sharon KO
Principal Assistant Secretary (Higher Education)
Education Bureau

Clerk in attendance : Miss Polly YEUNG
Chief Council Secretary (4)4

Staff in attendance : Mr KWONG Kam-fai
Senior Council Secretary (4)4

Miss Mandy NG
Council Secretary (4)4

Ms Sandy HAU
Legislative Assistant (4)4

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I. Confirmation of minutes

(LC Paper No. CB(4)139/15-16 -- Minutes of meeting on
15 October 2015)

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2015 were confirmed.

II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(4)1331/14-15(01) -- Submission from a
member of the public concerning the statutory
power to suspend classes

LC Paper No. CB(4)1331/14-15(02) -- Administration's written
response dated 14 July

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2015 to the submission from a member of the public concerning the statutory power to suspend classes

LC Paper No.CB(4)1335/14-15(01) -- Information paper entitled "Injection into the Language Fund – Planning and Implementation of Initiatives" provided by the Education Bureau

LC Paper No.CB(4)1368/14-15(01) -- Letter dated 14 July 2015 from Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan concerning the issues relating to enhancing the professional capability of teachers to implement life planning education

LC Paper No.CB(4)1368/14-15(02) -- Administration's written response dated 24 July 2015 to the letter dated 14 July 2015 from Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan concerning the issues relating to enhancing the professional capability of teachers to implement life planning education)

2. Members noted the above paper issued since the last meeting.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(Appendix I to LC Paper No. CB(4)158/15-16 -- List of outstanding items for discussion

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Appendix II to LC Paper No. -- List of follow-up actions)
CB(4)158/15-16

3. The Chairman said that as the Panel comprised as many as 32 members in the current session and a considerable number of items had been proposed by members for discussion (details of which were set out in the Panel's "List of outstanding items for discussion"), he would, where necessary, extend the duration of regular meetings to three hours, i.e. from 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm so as to allow sufficient time for discussion. Additional meetings would be arranged if necessary. Members noted and raised no objection.

4. The Chairman informed members that the Administration had proposed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting to be held on 14 December 2015 at 4:30 pm –

(a) Promotion of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education; and

(b) Review on the curricula of Chinese History and History (S1-3).

5. Dr Helena WONG urged for early discussion of issues related to the incidents of excessive lead found in the drinking water of certain schools (i.e. item 23 on the Panel's "List of outstanding items for discussion"). She said that the Education Bureau ("EDB") should provide detailed findings on the water sampling tests conducted for schools and the follow-up actions, in particular those relating to students with special educational needs. The Chairman said that he would finalize with the Deputy Chairman the items to be discussed at the next regular meeting with reference to members' views and the Panel's "List of outstanding items for discussion". Members would be notified of the arrangements in due course.

(Post-meeting note: Upon finalization by the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, the agenda for the meeting to be held on 14 December 2015 was issued to members vide LC Paper CB(4)236/15-16 on 19 November 2015.)

6. Before proceeding to the discussion items, the Chairman drew members' attention to Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure which provided that a Member shall not move any motion or amendment relating to a matter in which he had a pecuniary interest, whether direct or indirect, or speak on any such matter, except where he disclosed the nature of that interest. He reminded members to declare interests, if any, in the matter under discussion.

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IV. Progress of implementation of initiatives to strengthen vocational education

(LC Paper No. CB(4)158/15-16(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)158/15-16(02) -- Background brief entitled "Issues related to the promotion of vocational education" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat)

7. Before commencing discussion, the Chairman said that according to the information provided by the Administration last week, the Secretary for Education ("SED") would attend the discussion of both agenda items IV and V at this meeting. However, the Administration notified the Secretariat by e-mail this morning that SED would attend the discussion of agenda item IV only. The Chairman enquired about the reasons for this last-minute change to the attendance. In reply, SED said that he was unable to attend for the other agenda items due to other official engagement. In this connection, the Chairman advised that should there be any change in the attendance of officials, the Administration should inform the Panel of such change well in advance of the meeting.

8. Members noted the background brief prepared by the Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(4)158/15-16(02)].

Briefing by the Administration

9. At the invitation of the Chairman, SED briefed members on the progress of implementation of initiatives to strengthen vocational education, as set out in the Administration's paper [No. CB(4)158/15-16(01)].

Discussion

Collaboration between the business sector and schools

10. Sharing her observation from the Panel's overseas duty visit to Germany and Switzerland, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan noted that students in Germany had the opportunity to join various placement programmes during their secondary education, which could help them make an informed occupational choice in future. She said that over 60% of German students had undertaken vocational education and training ("VET") prior to pursuing

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university education. However, it was difficult and uncommon for secondary schools in Hong Kong to arrange similar placement programmes for their students. To enable young people to better understand their aptitudes and the working world, Dr CHIANG considered that the Administration should take steps to encourage the business sector to collaborate with local secondary schools to provide more placement opportunities.

11. Mr NG Leung-sing declared that he was the Chairman of the Banking Industry Training Advisory Committee ("ITAC") set up under the Qualifications Framework ("QF"). He recognized the Administration's effort to assist 21 industries/sectors to establish 20 ITACs under QF, covering 53% of the total workforce in Hong Kong. He noted from the Administration's paper that in the 2014-2015 school year, more than 120 business firms had collaborated with EDB in organizing over 750 Business-School Partnership Programmes ("BSPP") benefitting some 250 000 students. In his view, this demonstrated the corporate social responsibility of the business sector. Mr NG also enquired whether the Administration would consider setting up an award scheme to encourage greater participation from the business sector.

12. Regarding the target number of business partners under BSPP, SED advised that it would increase significantly to 135 this year. The Administration would continue to encourage closer collaboration among relevant stakeholders to arrange more career-related learning activities and taster programmes for secondary school students. He informed members that EDB would organize a large-scale event on 3 December 2015 in the hope that more business entities and community organizations would be mobilized to offer their support for VET. EDB would also invite Panel members to attend this event.

(Post-meeting note: The invitation from EDB to attend the "Life Planning for a Bright Future cum Business-School Partnership Programme Celebration Ceremony" was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)224/15-16 on 16 November 2015.)

Promotion of vocational education

13. Mr TAM Yiu-chung recalled that during the Panel's overseas duty visit to Germany and Switzerland, members had found that VET was well accepted as an attractive option with clear progression pathways. On the contrary, VET in Hong Kong was often associated with low-level skill training and perceived as a second-choice option for students with low

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academic performance. He considered that the Administration should make reference to successful overseas experience in promoting VET in Hong Kong.

14. Ms Starry LEE shared the view that there was an entrenched bias in the community in favour of academic pursuits and university education while VET was only a second choice. She considered that there had not been adequate effort to promote the wider acceptance and recognition of VET. As a result, parents were reluctant to encourage their children to pursue VET. This had also given rise to the prevailing manpower mismatch in the labour market. Ms LEE enquired about the measures contemplated by the Administration to change the perception of parents and students, and whether the Administration would formulate any target to track the effectiveness of its effort in promoting VET.

15. SED advised that the Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education ("Task Force") had been set up with a view to mapping out the strategy and concrete proposals to raise public awareness of vocational education and recognition of its value. One of the Task Force's recommendations was to rebrand VET in Hong Kong as vocational and professional education and training ("VPET"). VPET should cover programmes up to degree level with a high percentage of curriculum consisting of specialized contents in vocational skills or professional knowledge. The Administration would also enhance communication with parents and students to strengthen the professional image of VPET.

16. Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that Members of the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions welcomed the report published by the Task Force and enquired about how the Administration would follow up the relevant recommendations. SED advised that the Government was considering the said report and its recommendations and would formally respond to the report in due course.

Vocational education at senior secondary level

17. Dr Helena WONG declared that she was a former teacher at the CCC Kung Lee College. She sought information on the number of senior secondary schools and the difficulties faced by them. She said that these schools offered flexibility as students could choose to pursue work-based study programmes or the general academic stream. In reply, SED advised that currently, there were a few senior secondary schools in Hong Kong. He added that the general public might not be aware of the VET-related education provided by these schools and more promotion would be useful.

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18. The Deputy Chairman declared that he was the former principal of the HKICC Lee Shau Kee School of Creativity. He pointed out that senior secondary schools played an important role in VET but no mention was made of them in the Administration's paper. The Deputy Chairman said that these schools had been facing difficulties in student recruitment and were operating under resources constraints. However, it appeared that there was no designated staff in EDB to oversee senior secondary schools and offer assistance.

19. In response, SED advised that responsibilities over senior secondary schools were currently taken up by three different teams in EDB. He further said that the Administration's paper aimed to provide an account on plans and strategies to strengthen VET and therefore had not made reference to particular types of schools. Deputy Secretary for Education (1) ("DS(Ed)1") supplemented that currently, three such senior secondary schools were in operation.

20. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che pointed out that the three senior secondary schools admitted different types of students: Caritas Charles Vath College and CCC Kung Lee College usually admitted students who had difficulty in studying in traditional grammar schools; while the HKICC Lee Shau Kee School of Creativity admitted students with different edges in their academic performance. Mr CHEUNG observed that very often, education at senior secondary schools was vocationally oriented. However, in the view of the Administration, senior secondary schools were tantamount to Direct Subsidy Scheme schools. In this regard, SED said that the Administration would keep in view the mode of operation of senior secondary schools and their student enrolment.

21. Mr Martin LIAO noted that 12 out of 40 Applied Learning ("ApL") courses had been registered in the Qualifications Register as certificate programmes at QF Level 3 as at November 2015 under a pilot exercise on accreditation of ApL courses. He urged the Administration to provide for the accreditation of more ApL courses under QF in the next three school years. DS(Ed)1 advised that the Administration would continue the pilot exercise to further explore linking more ApL courses to QF.

22. Mr Martin LIAO pointed out that under the current arrangement, schools with students taking ApL courses had to contribute 25% of the total course fees. He drew the Administration's attention to the concerns of some schools about the expenses incurred from offering these courses. Due to financial constraints, some schools had set enrolment quota for ApL courses. Mr LIAO was concerned that this might deprive students of the

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opportunities to take ApL courses, and enquired whether the Administration would provide more resources to support the implementation of ApL.

23. In this connection, DS(Ed)1 referred to one of the recommendations of the Task Force that the Government should consider providing 100% grant subsidies to schools for ApL course fees and encourage more schools to offer ApL courses based on their student profiles. SED reiterated that the Administration would give due consideration to all the recommendations put forward by the Task Force.

Pilot Training and Support Scheme

24. Mr TAM Yiu-chung noted that the Vocational Training Council ("VTC") had implemented the Pilot Training and Support Scheme ("Pilot Scheme") which could benefit a total of 2 000 students. However, as at September 2015, there were only 930 trainees participating in the Pilot Scheme. In view of the low take-up rate, he enquired whether the Administration would conduct a review and invite more organizations to implement the Pilot Scheme.

25. Mr WONG Kwok-hing suggested that the Administration should expand the scope of the Pilot Scheme to cover more industries such as airport and aircraft engineering, railway, maritime services and port cargo transport. He also considered it important to put in place a clear progression pathway for articulation to university education and to ensure that trainees were reasonably remunerated under the Pilot Scheme.

26. Mr Michael TIEN expressed support for the Pilot Scheme, and urged for its expansion to cover more industries, such as film-making, digital games, creative media, mobile application development, mega data, beauty services and hair styling. Mr TIEN sought the Administration's assurance to include vocational education on the policy agenda of the Policy Address in 2016.

27. Noting members' views, SED explained that the Pilot Scheme was implemented starting from the 2014-2015 academic year to attract and retain talent for specific industries with a keen demand for labour, by integrating structured apprenticeship training programmes and clear career progression pathways. Trainees were provided with a guaranteed level of salary and incentive allowance. With further promotion of VET, the Administration expected that the number of participants of the Pilot Scheme would rise in due course. SED advised that vocational education was one of EDB's major policy initiatives and he was hopeful that it would be featured in the coming Policy Address.

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Support for students with disabilities

28. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed concern about the difficulties encountered by students with disabilities when they enrolled for VET programmes. He said that many VET course providers under the Employees Retraining Board ("ERB") had rejected the request of students with hearing impairment to be accompanied by sign language interpreters engaged by the students themselves, unless the interpreters also paid a tuition fee for attending the classes. Dr CHEUNG was concerned whether this would amount to a breach of the Code of Practice on Education under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance.

29. Deputy Executive Director (B), VTC advised that as far as VTC was concerned, it had acceded to the request of a student with hearing impairment to be accompanied by a sign language interpreter. He said that VTC was prepared to offer assistance to student with disabilities where practicable. Since ERB was under the purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB"), DS(Ed)1 undertook to relay the case referred to by Dr CHEUNG to LWB.

V. Progress on implementation of the Fourth Strategy on Information Technology in Education

(LC Paper No. CB(4)158/15-16(03) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)158/15-16(04) -- Background brief entitled "Issues related to the Fourth Strategy on Information Technology in Education" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat)

30. Members noted the background brief prepared by the Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(4)158/15-16(04)].

Briefing by the Administration

31. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the latest progress on the implementation of various actions under the Fourth Strategy on Information Technology in Education ("ITE4") which was formally launched at the commencement of

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the 2015-2016 school year. Details were set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)158/15-16(03)].

Discussion

Upgrading the IT facilities of schools

32. The Chairman enquired about the progress of the "WiFi 900" Scheme to enhance the WiFi infrastructure in about 900 public sector schools in Hong Kong, as well as the provision of training to better equip teachers to implement e-learning.

33. Acting Deputy Secretary for Education (5) ("Acting DS(Ed)5") replied that the implementation of the "WiFi 900" Scheme had been in good progress with some 400 schools opting for enhancement of their WiFi infrastructure in the 2015-2016 school year and the rest, in the next two school years in general. According to the results of a survey conducted in October 2015, most of these 400 schools had already completed the enhancement of their WiFi infrastructure at the commencement of the 2015-2016 school year and the majority of them were satisfied with the WiFi services provided by the contractors. As regards teacher training, EDB had been providing ongoing professional development programmes ("PDPs") to teachers on e-learning, which would be strengthened under the ITE4 to cater for different target groups including school leadership and teachers, and also to cover subject-specific knowledge and skills.

34. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen enquired whether the implementation of the "WiFi 900" Scheme could be expedited. US(Ed) explained that in response to EDB's invitation for Expression of Interest ("EoI"), schools opted for the enhancement of WiFi infrastructure in the coming three school years starting from 2015-2016 according to their own circumstances. As regards some 40 remaining schools which had not yet submitted the EoI forms, EDB would continue liaison with them to assist them in finalizing the WiFi infrastructure enhancement plan as soon as practicable.

Curriculum and pedagogical practice

35. Ms Starry LEE enquired whether the Administration would enhance the curriculum of the Information and Communication Technology ("ICT") subject and strengthen the elements of computer programming in the curriculum. Noting the decline in the number of students taking ICT as elective subject under the New Senior Secondary curriculum, she considered it necessary to take measures to stimulate students' interest in computer subjects.

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36. US(Ed) advised that the percentage of students taking the ICT subject at senior secondary level had been stable in recent years, even though there was an increasing trend that students tended to choose a few common subjects as their elective subjects. The Administration was updating the Secondary Education Curriculum Guide as one of the actions under the ITE4 with a view to stimulating students' interest in computer-related subjects early, at junior secondary level.

37. Mr Michael TIEN was of the view that schools should consider adopting innovative and interactive modes of teaching, such as the Flipped Classroom approach, after upgrading their IT infrastructure. He considered that the Flipped Classroom approach would provide more opportunities for students to express themselves in English during class discussions, which was conducive to improving the English proficiency of students.

38. US(Ed) replied that the Administration and the school sector were still exploring how various innovative modes of e-learning could be put into practice at subject level; and the Flipped Classroom was one of the modes being tried out in some schools.

Development of e-textbooks

39. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung enquired about the latest progress in the development of e-textbooks and adoption of e-textbooks by schools. In response, US(Ed) advised that under the e-Textbook Market Development Scheme ("EMADS"), there were currently 26 sets of e-textbooks covering various subjects included on the Recommended e-Textbook List ("eRTL") for use by schools in the 2015-2016 school year; and a further eight sets of e-textbooks were expected to be available in the 2016-2017 school year. In addition, the Administration aimed to open up the e-textbook review for all subjects by 2016. US(Ed) further said that schools were free to use e-textbooks and implement e-learning at their own pace having regard to their readiness and circumstances. The Administration had not specified a timetable or target for adoption of e-textbooks by schools.

40. Regarding Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung's enquiry about the price of e-textbooks, Acting DS(Ed)5 said that in the 2015-2016 school year, the price of e-textbooks developed under EMADS was on average more than 20% lower than that of their printed counterparts, with the maximum difference being over 50%. In general, about 90% of e-textbooks had not raised their prices in the 2015-2016 school year.

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Support for schools, teachers and students under ITE4

41. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung noted that under the "WiFi 900" Scheme, on average, each participating school would be provided with a one-off funding of \$100,000 for acquisition of mobile computing devices. He considered that recurrent subsidy should also be provided to schools to support e-learning. US(Ed) responded that in addition to the one-off funding, each school would also be provided with an extra recurrent grant of \$70,000 on average on top of the current Composite Information Technology Grant for payment of WiFi services and maintenance fees for mobile computing devices.

42. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung was concerned about the increase in teachers' workload arising from changes in pedagogical practices as a result of e-learning. Ms Starry LEE enquired whether various ITE4-related initiatives could help alleviate teachers' heavy workload.

43. On support for teachers, US(Ed) advised that in addition to the experience sharing by Centre of Excellence ("CoEs"), EDB had been providing teachers with a wide range of PDPs to enhance their professional capacity, as well as working with the school sector to keep under constant review the workload of teachers in the practice of e-learning.

44. The Deputy Chairman referred to a motion moved by Hon Charles MOK and passed by the Panel at the meeting on 9 December 2013 urging the Government to, amongst others, increase the staff establishment in schools by creating the posts of "IT Coordinator" and "Technical Support Services Officer". He enquired about the progress of follow-up actions on the part of the Administration.

45. US(Ed) advised that EDB had been reviewing the issue constantly in the light of operational experience, and current analysis indicated that outsourcing of technical support services was a better approach to enable schools to obtain more professional, up-to-date and reliable services.

46. Dr Fernando CHEUNG was concerned whether ITE4 had included specific strategies to support students with special educational needs ("SEN students") and non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") students. Noting that there had been an IT Application Development and Sharing Group for Special Education set up by the Administration in the past, Dr CHEUNG enquired whether a similar sharing platform would be put in place under ITE4 to facilitate communication among various stakeholders to address the needs of SEN students and NCS students.

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47. In this regard, US(Ed) said that while ITE4 was targeted at the student population in general, some e-features of e-textbooks and e-pedagogies such as audio clips, adjustable font size and Flipped Classroom could benefit SEN students and NCS students in particular. Regarding the platform for sharing experience, Acting DS(Ed)5 further advised that the 20 CoEs included special schools to provide tailor-made support services for SEN students while the on-going PDPs for teachers also covered content to address the educational needs of SEN students.

VI. Issues related to the appointment of Chancellor and the composition of the governing bodies of University Grants Committee-funded institutions

(LC Paper No. CB(4)158/15-16(05) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

48. Noting that the Administration was represented by US(Ed) and a Principal Assistant Secretary, Mr Albert HO said that since the subject matter was of great importance and concern, the discussion of this item should be attended by SED himself. He considered that SED should make a better judgment regarding his attendance for individual items at Panel meetings. The Deputy Chairman shared similar view and stressed that SED's attendance for this item was essential to facilitate discussion on high-level policy issues. He remarked that SED should provide reasons prior to the meeting if he could not join the discussion of this item. The Deputy Chairman and Dr Helena WONG expressed their regret at the non-attendance of SED for this agenda item.

49. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that SED was accountable to the legislature. As SED had already been notified of the Panel's schedule of regular meetings, he should make every effort to attend its meetings. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen and Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung stressed that given the serious nature of this item, SED should have exercised his judgement and attended on his own accord, rather than in response to any request from members. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung further said that the Chairman was in a position to consider the importance of the agenda item(s) and on behalf of the Panel, request/invite SED to attend the meeting.

50. On the reasons for SED's non-attendance, US(Ed) said that SED was unable to participate in this part of the meeting due to prior official commitment to meet some university students at an official function.

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US(Ed) explained that upon receipt of the agenda of a Panel meeting, SED and his colleagues would consider the attendance of public officers for various agenda items. In line with the current practice, it was a matter for the Administration to decide on its attending representatives for various agenda items, having regard to all relevant factors such as the nature of the items and members' views, if any. Regarding some members' query about his capacity to represent EDB for discussion of this item, US(Ed) said that as the deputy to SED and a politically appointed official, he was prepared to answer members' questions on policy issues.

51. Noting US(Ed)'s explanation, the Chairman sought members' views on whether the Panel should continue to proceed with this item.

52. Mr TAM Yiu-chung was of the view that it might not be appropriate to insist on SED's attendance at this juncture, as members had not made known their requests for SED's attendance prior to the meeting. He considered that the Panel should proceed to discuss the item as scheduled. Ms Starry LEE agreed that the Panel should proceed with this agenda item as US(Ed) was in a position to answer members' questions in the absence of SED. She said that if Panel members considered SED's personal attendance necessary for certain items, they should convey their view to the Chairman to facilitate him in determining the arrangement for attendance of public officers.

53. Noting some members' query about the non-attendance of SED, Mr Michael TIEN cautioned that the Panel should not come to any conclusion that SED should be required to attend for the discussion of each and every item. Mr TIEN and Mr MA Fung-kwok considered that as US(Ed) was present, the Panel should proceed to discuss the agenda item rather than continuing to criticize the non-attendance of SED.

54. Dr Kenneth CHAN suggested to defer the discussion of this item to another meeting that could be attended by SED. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen, Dr Helena WONG and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung concurred that SED's attendance was required for discussion of this item. Dr WONG further suggested that the Panel should hold a public hearing for stakeholders to give views. The Deputy Chairman, Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung supported Dr WONG's suggestion.

55. Summing up, the Chairman took note of members' views. He said that when he learned about SED's non-attendance, he did not find it in order. He expressed his apology for not having stated his objection, nor having strongly requested the attendance of SED at that time. Nevertheless,

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the Chairman said that in future, he would make the best endeavour to ensure the attendance of SED for important agenda items of wide public concern, and to seek an explanation if SED was unable to attend personally. As insufficient time was left for discussion of this item, the Chairman decided to defer this item to a future meeting. He undertook to convey members' views to SED within this week and follow up the matter.

(Post-meeting note: Subsequent to the meeting, the Chairman wrote to SED inviting him to confirm his availability if this item was to be discussed at one of the coming regular Panel meetings in the next three months. SED replied that 11 January 2016 (i.e. the regular meeting in January 2016) would be a preferred date for discussing the agenda item. After considering SED's reply and the timing for discussing the item, the Chairman had directed that the agenda item would be included on the agenda of the Panel meeting to be held on 11 January 2016. Members had been notified accordingly vide LC Paper No. CB(4)223/15-16 on 16 November 2015.)

VII. Any other business

Draft Hong Kong Institute of Education (Amendment) Bill 2015

(LC Paper No. CB(4)183/15-16(01) -- Draft Bill provided by
Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai)

56. The Chairman recalled that the Panel had paid a visit to The Hong Kong Institute of Education ("HKIEd") in May 2015 during which members had been informed about the legislative proposal to retitle HKIEd as an education university. The text of the draft Hong Kong Institute of Education (Amendment) Bill 2015 had been circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)183/15-16(01) for information. The Chairman advised that after the Executive Council had given approval to the relevant bill, he would invite representatives from HKIEd to brief members on the proposed amendments.

57. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:28 pm.