

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(4)887/15-16  
(These minutes have been seen by  
the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

**Panel on Education**

**Minutes of policy briefing  
held on Friday, 15 January 2016, at 8:30 am  
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 LEUNG Yiu-chung
  - Hon TAM Yiu-chung, 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 IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
  - Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, 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 CHAN Chi-chuen
  - Hon Dennis KWOK
  - Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
  - Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, SBS, JP
  - Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP
- Member attending** :
- Hon WU Chi-wai, MH

**Members absent** : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP  
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP  
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che  
Hon WONG Yuk-man  
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP  
Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok  
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan  
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP

**Public Officers attending** : Agenda item I

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP  
Secretary for Education

Mrs Marion LAI, JP  
Permanent Secretary for Education

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP  
Under Secretary for Education

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

Ms Jessie WONG, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Education (2)

Mrs Michelle WONG  
Deputy Secretary for Education (3)

Mrs HONG CHAN Tsui-wah  
Deputy Secretary for Education (4)

Dr K K CHAN  
Deputy Secretary for Education (5)

Mrs Angelina CHEUNG, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Education (6)

**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. Briefing by the Secretary for Education on the Chief Executive's 2016 Policy Address**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)480/15-16(01) -- Paper entitled "2016 Policy Address: Education Bureau's Policy Initiatives" provided by the Administration)

*Other relevant documents*

Address by the Chief Executive at the Legislative Council meeting on 13 January 2016 -- "Innovate for the Economy, Improve Livelihood, Foster Harmony, Share Prosperity

The 2016 Policy Agenda booklet

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the initiatives on education in the 2016 Policy Address, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)480/15-16(01)).

*(Post-meeting note: The speaking note of SED tabled at the meeting was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)497/15-16(01) on 15 January 2016.)*

Implementation of free kindergarten education

2. Mr WONG Kwok-hing noted that the Government would implement the free quality kindergarten ("KG") education policy starting from the 2017-2018 school year by providing a basic subsidy for half-day ("HD") service in local non-profit-making ("NPM") KGs for all eligible children. He was concerned about the level of subsidy to be provided for

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KGs operating whole-day ("WD")/long whole-day ("LWD") services, and whether there were sufficient WD/LWD KG places to meet the needs of working parents.

3. The Deputy Chairman was concerned that under the new policy, quality KG education was not entirely free as parents would have to pay tuition fees to share the cost if they enrolled their children in WD or LWD KGs.

4. SED advised that under the new policy, the Government would provide an additional subsidy to eligible WD and LWD KGs on top of the basic subsidy for HD service. It was estimated that in the case of a LWD KG with 90 students, the subsidy would increase from about \$2 million under the current Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme to about \$4.9 million when the new policy was implemented in the 2017-2018 school year. For the 2016-2017 school year, the Government would invite the Community Care Fund ("CCF") to consider providing a one-off grant for KG students from needy families to defray their school-related expenses. SED further informed members that the planning standards for provision of KG places would be reviewed and revised as necessary from the present 250 WD and 730 HD places to 500 WD and 500 HD places respectively for every 1 000 children aged between three and six.

5. The Deputy Chairman referred to the submission from the Council of Non-profit Making Organizations for Pre-primary Education ("CNOPE") (subsequently issued vide LC Paper No. CB(4)496/15-16(02)) tabled at the meeting. He said that as highlighted by CNOPE, small KGs might be disadvantaged under the new KG education policy as government subsidy would be calculated on a per student unit cost basis. The Permanent Secretary for Education said that if KGs with a small number of students encountered difficulties, the Administration would consider rendering appropriate assistance to them.

6. Mr Tommy CHEUNG noted that only local NPM KGs would be eligible to join the new KG policy and receive government subsidy. He considered that excluding profit-making or private independent KGs from the scope of free KG education would restrict parents' choice. Furthermore, without government subsidy, these KGs might not be able to compete with their NPM counterpart in offering attractive salaries to their teachers. Mr CHEUNG said that he would not support the arrangements under the new KG education policy.

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7. Dr Fernando CHEUNG noted with concern that unlike the primary and secondary school sectors where a promulgated policy on integrated education prevailed, there was currently no policy on implementing integrated education in KGs. He considered that the Government's plan to improve the teacher-pupil ratio to 1:11 under the new KG education policy would not suffice in supporting students with special educational needs ("SEN"), as a better ratio of 1:8 already prevailed in some KGs. Noting that a pilot scheme funded by CCF would be launched to deploy a teacher to coordinate support for SEN students (i.e. SENCO post) in some schools, he asked whether similar arrangements could be introduced in KGs. Dr CHEUNG was also concerned that children often had to wait for a long time for assessment of SEN.

8. In response, the Deputy Secretary for Education (3) ("DS(Ed)3") advised that the Social Welfare Department had launched a pilot scheme through the Lotteries Fund to provide on-site rehabilitation services for KG students diagnosed with special needs. The Education Bureau ("EDB") would offer more structured in-service training programmes for KG teachers to enhance their capacity to cater for students' diverse learning needs and to facilitate early identification of children with special needs. With an improved teacher-pupil ratio from the existing 1:15 to 1:11, it was anticipated that teachers could have more capacity to cater for the diverse needs of children with special needs. KGs with fewer students might have a better teacher-pupil ratio.

9. Regarding Mr NG Leung-sing's enquiry about the recommended teacher-pupil ratio of 1:11, SED pointed out that the ratio of 1:11 was more favourable than the ratio of 1:12 as proposed by the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education.

10. To enhance the professional capacity of serving KG teachers, Mr Dennis KWOK said that The Hong Kong Institute of Education could consider offering specialized training programmes on supporting SEN students. He also enquired on the feasibility of providing assistance to middle-class families, which were not eligible for existing forms of financial support, to enable them to procure occupational therapist and speech therapist services for their children with SEN.

11. DS(Ed)3 said that the Administration had maintained close communication with teacher education institutions ("TEIs") on the provision of professional training. TEIs had included special education or catering for SEN students in the curriculum of their teacher training programmes. They had also strengthened collaboration with

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non-government organizations ("NGOs") in the provision of practical training. DS(Ed)3 further informed members that the pilot scheme to provide on-site rehabilitation services would benefit KG students with special needs regardless of the financial situation of their families. Apart from providing on-site services to children with special needs, the service provider would also render professional support and assistance to KG teachers to enhance their relevant knowledge and skills.

The "Belt and Road" initiative

*Supporting the "Belt and Road" initiative through education*

12. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen was concerned that the Administration would revive the implementation of national education by encouraging schools to incorporate contents about the "Belt and Road" countries and regions in relevant subject curricula. The Deputy Chairman considered that resources should be better deployed to assist non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") students to learn Chinese language rather than encouraging secondary students to study other languages such as Hindi or Urdu as one of the senior secondary elective subjects, for the reason that they were relevant to the "Belt and Road" initiative.

13. Ms Cyd HO said that she would support local students' learning of foreign languages to facilitate communication with NCS ethnic minorities ("EMs") in Hong Kong. She observed that due to the shortage of interpreters, EMs in Hong Kong had encountered many difficulties in their daily life and when using public services. Ms HO further said that the Administration should consider providing support to institutions such as the Hong Kong Baptist University which offered programmes to train interpreters conversant with the languages of EMs. She also enquired about the measures, if any, to support the school sector in learning about the "Belt and Road" countries including their languages.

14. SED explained that Hong Kong could contribute to and benefit from the "Belt and road" initiative in various ways through education. To help strengthen Hong Kong's relations with countries and regions along the "Belt and Road", the Administration would encourage schools to offer more opportunities for students to learn and understand the languages and cultures of "Belt and Road" countries. The Deputy Secretary for Education (5) supplemented that secondary schools could apply for Diversity Learning Grant for Other Languages to subsidize students to learn other languages. The Quality Education Fund would consider setting up priority themes to support projects for students to learn more about the "Belt and Road" countries and regions.

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*Hong Kong Scholarship for "Belt and Road" Students*

15. Mr TAM Yiu-chung enquired about details of the Hong Kong Scholarship for "Belt and Road" Students ("B&R Scholarship"). In reply, SED advised that the Administration had proposed to introduce, starting from the 2016-2017 academic year, the B&R Scholarship by expanding the Targeted Scholarship Scheme under the HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund ("GSF") from the present 10 offers per year to cover 100 additional offers per year by phases. The Administration had announced the launch of the B&R Scholarship (Indonesia) in December 2015, under which up to 10 scholarships would be offered each year to first-year Indonesian students who were enrolled in publicly-funded full-time undergraduate programmes in Hong Kong. After expansion of the Scheme to provide 100 offers per year by phases, students from other countries and regions along the "Belt and Road" could also benefit. SED highlighted that the Government proposed to inject \$1 billion into GSF, and the investment return derived from it would be used to finance the B&R Scholarship. All awardees would receive a scholarship up to \$120,000 per annum to cover tuition fees. In addition, a bursary of \$50,000 per student per annum would be provided from private donation to financially needy students.

16. Mr Andrew LEUNG said that "Belt and Road" initiative was a long-term development initiative which would benefit different sectors of Hong Kong. He recalled that when the Chief Executive conducted consultation for his Policy Address, Members of the Business and Professionals Alliance for Hong Kong had proposed the setting up of a dedicated fund for local students to take part in exchange programmes in "Belt and Road" countries. Mr LEUNG considered that apart from providing the B&R Scholarship to foreign students, the Administration should also consider providing financial support for local students to participate in exchange programmes in "Belt and Road" countries.

17. SED said that there were existing schemes providing financial support for local students to pursue study or take part in exchange programmes outside Hong Kong. Over the years, AIESEC had been arranging two-way exchanges between students from Hong Kong and other places.

18. The Deputy Chairman said that according to his understanding, the balance of GSF was as high as \$2.4 billion. He questioned the justification for further injection of \$1 billion into GSF to launch the B&R Scholarship, instead of deploying public money to provide more subsidized higher education opportunities for local students. Dr Fernando CHEUNG shared

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the Deputy Chairman's concern and remarked that at present, only about 20% of young people of the relevant cohort had access to University Grants Committee("UGC")-funded undergraduate programmes due to insufficient UGC-funded first-year-first-degree ("FYFD") places.

19. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen criticized the 2016 Policy Address for placing excessive emphasis on the "Belt and Road" initiative, at the expense of other policy initiatives. He was concerned that the launch of the B&R Scholarship might diminish the resources for other education-related initiatives for local students. He questioned whether the Administration had conducted in-depth study into the "Belt and Road" countries and their students before deciding to launch the B&R Scholarship.

20. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung doubted whether it would be in the best interest of Hong Kong to subsidize students from "Belt and Road" countries to study in local universities as they would likely return to their home countries after graduation. Instead, he opined that the Administration should consider offering scholarships to local students to study in "Belt and Road" countries.

21. SED advised that the participation of non-local students, including those from countries along the "Belt and Road", in post-secondary programmes in Hong Kong would facilitate cultural exchange and broaden the horizon of local students. Equipped with a better understanding of the cultures and languages of other countries, local students would be better prepared to participate in and benefit from the implementation of the "Belt and Road" initiative. The recipients of the B&R Scholarship, upon completion of their study in Hong Kong, could become a network of ambassadors of Hong Kong in their home countries. To this end, the Administration had announced, in December 2015, the launch of the B&R Scholarship (Indonesia) starting from the 2016-2017 academic year. Up to 10 scholarships would be offered each year to outstanding Indonesian students to pursue undergraduate study in Hong Kong, which would help strengthen educational ties and exchanges between Hong Kong and Indonesia.

22. On whether the launch of the B&R Scholarship would compete with other initiatives for resources, SED advised that a range of initiatives had been introduced in the past few years to broaden the opportunities for local students to receive subsidized higher education. Examples included the provision of about 1 000 FYFD places per cohort under the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors since the 2015-2016 academic year, and increasing the number of senior year undergraduate annual intake



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places in UGC-funded institutions by phases from 4 000 in the 2015-2016 academic year to 5 000 in the 2018-2019 academic year. In addition, the Government launched the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme ("HKSES") in November 2014 to subsidize up to 100 outstanding local students per year to pursue further studies in renowned universities outside Hong Kong.

23. The Deputy Secretary for Education (1) ("DS(Ed)1") supplemented that in 2015, the total value of scholarships and awards offered under GSF to local students amounted to about \$170 million. The B&R Scholarship (Indonesia), which would offer up to 10 scholarships to Indonesian students subject to a ceiling of \$120,000 per student per annum, would incur an expenditure of \$1.2 million for the 2016-2017 academic year.

Vocational and professional education and training

24. Mr IP Kwok-him sought information on how the Administration would strengthen its promotion of vocational education and training ("VET"). He also enquired whether more diversified VET opportunities would be available for young people after the establishment of the Innovation and Technology Bureau.

25. SED advised that the Administration had accepted all the recommendations of the Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education, and would consider ways to implement them, including the rebranding of VET as vocational and professional education and training ("VPET") and promoting its recognition in the community. As regards ongoing initiatives, five industries had joined the Pilot Training and Support Scheme which integrated structured apprenticeship training programmes and clear career progression. Under the Qualifications Framework ("QF"), 20 Industry Training Advisory Committees covering 21 industries had been established for stakeholders to exchange views on manpower development and promote QF. DS(Ed)1 informed members that to encourage more schools to offer Applied Learning courses to senior secondary students, the Administration would provide full subsidy to schools for the course fees starting from the 2016-2017 school year through the Diversity Learning Grant.

26. Mr IP Kwok-him and the Chairman sought further information regarding the Government's plans to earmark a site in the urban district for developing a Vocational Training Council ("VTC") campus. In response, DS(Ed)1 said that discussion between EDB, the Development Bureau and the Planning Department was underway and some prospective sites had

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been identified for consideration. The future site would be used for reprovisioning one or more existing Institutes of Vocational Education of VTC to accommodate about 5 000 to 6 000 students.

Post-secondary education

*Financial support for post-secondary students*

27. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung expressed concern about the financial difficulty faced by post-secondary students from needy families and the financial burden of student loan borrowers. He referred to the case of a student who had to pursue a part-time post-secondary programme instead of a full-time one so as to take up a part-time job to finance his study and living expenses. He said that consideration should be given to providing interest-free loans to post-secondary students, freezing the tuition fees, and providing free university education to local students in the long run.

28. SED recapitulated that in recent years, the Government had implemented a number of measures to increase the opportunities of subsidized higher education for local students. At present, the recurrent expenditure on post-secondary education amounted to over \$19 billion per annum and about 46% of students in the relevant cohort had access to degree-level education. About 70% of students of the relevant cohort had access to post-secondary education if sub-degree programmes were also included. SED stressed that under the existing policy, no student would be denied access to education due to the lack of means. Post-secondary students with financial hardship could apply for assistance under various means-tested and non-means-tested student financial assistance and loan schemes.

29. Mr WONG Kwok-hing recalled that at a Council meeting held last year, he had raised a question about the collection and refund arrangements for enrolment deposits and tuition fees by self-financing post-secondary institutions. He enquired about the follow-up actions, if any, taken by the Administration to address his concerns.

30. In this regard, DS(Ed)1 advised that the Administration had been liaising with the self-financing post-secondary education sector to consider how the prevailing application and admission arrangements might be improved to avoid students having to forfeit large amount of tuition fees due to different admission timelines among institutions.

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31. Noting the launch of scholarship schemes such as the B&R Scholarship and HKSES, Mr WU Chi-wai was concerned that the vast majority of local students could not benefit from these initiatives as their target recipients were either top local students or foreign students. He was of the view that the Government should also provide financial support to local students meeting the general university admission requirements to pursue studies outside Hong Kong. For instance, consideration should be given to expanding the scope of the B&R Scholarship to subsidize local students to study in "Belt and Road" countries.

32. SED said that each year, about 5% to 7% secondary school leavers would pursue further study outside Hong Kong. The suggestion to provide financial assistance to these students generally would require very careful consideration due to its implications on public resources.

*Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme*

33. Noting that the Administration would advance its review of the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme ("MUSSS") launched in July 2014, Mr WONG Kwok-hing enquired whether consideration would be given to allowing sub-degree graduates with financial needs to pursue further studies in the Mainland under MUSSS.

34. SED highlighted that at present, MUSSS aimed to provide financial assistance to needy secondary school leavers who had been admitted to the first year of undergraduate study of Mainland institutions under the Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions ("Admission Scheme"). The feasibility of extending MUSSS to provide Hong Kong students with more opportunity to articulate to undergraduate studies and benefit more Hong Kong students studying in the Mainland would be explored.

35. Mr MA Fung-kwok was pleased to note that the Administration would advance its review on MUSSS. He noted that over 3 000 Hong Kong students were admitted to the first year of undergraduate study in the Mainland every year; while in the 2014-2015 academic year, subsidy was provided to 263 students under MUSSS and 336 applications were received for the 2015-2016 academic year. He considered that too few students had benefitted under MUSSS. Mr MA enquired on the number of students admitted to Mainland institutions through channels other than the Admission Scheme and whether MUSSS would be extended to cover other Mainland institutions not participating in the Admission Scheme. He also sought further information about the adjustment of the amount of subsidy under MUSSS.

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36. DS(Ed)1 advised that at present, students who passed a means test would receive either a full-rate subsidy of \$15,000 or a half-rate subsidy of \$7,500 per year per student to cover tuition fees and other study-related expenses under MUSSS. The amount of subsidy would be reviewed and adjusted as appropriate with reference to the level of tuition fees of Mainland institutions. In reviewing MUSSS, the Administration would consider the feasibility of expanding its scope to benefit more students, such as Hong Kong students already pursuing undergraduate programmes in Mainland institutions. DS(Ed)1 indicated that the Administration did not have detailed information on the number of Hong Kong students admitted to Mainland higher education institutions through different channels.

Other concerns

37. Regarding the retention period of surplus teachers arising from reduced Secondary One classes in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years, Mr NG Leung-sing noted that aided secondary schools might apply to further extend the retention period of these surplus teachers up to the 2017-2018 school year. He enquired on the arrangements, if any, for these surplus teachers after the 2017-2018 school year. In this regard, SED advised that the further extension of the retention period of surplus teachers was one of the measures to stabilize the teaching force. The Government would continue to consider targeted relief measures to address the temporary decline in secondary student population.

**II. Any other business**

38. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:11 am.

Council Business Division 4  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
18 April 2016