

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)1224/15-16
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 11 April 2016, 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 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 Gary FAN Kwok-wai
Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok
Hon Dennis KWOK
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, SBS, JP
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP

Member attending : Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP

Members absent
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP

Public Officers attending : Agenda item III

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Education

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

Ms Teresa CHAN
Principal Education Officer (School Administration)
Education Bureau

Mr Godwin LAI
Principal Education Officer
(Professional Development and Training)
Education Bureau

Agenda item IV

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Education

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

Agenda item V

Education Bureau

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Mrs Elina CHAN
Principal Assistant Secretary
(Infrastructure & Research Support)

Architectural Services Department

Mr CHAN Fat-yau
Chief Project Manager

Mr WONG Chi-leung
Senior Project Manager

Agenda item VI

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP
Secretary for Education

Mrs Marion LAI, JP
Permanent Secretary for Education

Ms S Y CHING
Principal Education Officer
(Curriculum Development)²
Education Bureau

Attendance by Invitation : Agenda item III

Hong Kong Aided Primary School Heads
Association

Mr LAI Tsz-man
Chairman

Subsidized Primary School Council

Mr SIN Kim-wai
Chairman

Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union

Ms FUNG Pik-yee
Vice-President

Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers

Ms Christine CHOI
Vice Chairman

Agenda item VI

Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education

Professor NG Tai-kai
Executive Director

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

Action

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

(LC Paper No. CB(4)809/15-16(01) -- Referral from the Public Complaints Office of the Legislative Council Secretariat regarding issues related to life planning education, vocational education and training system, Student Financial Assistance Schemes and post-secondary education places)

Members noted the above paper issued since the last meeting.

Action

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(Appendix I to LC Paper No. CB(4)812/15-16 -- List of outstanding items for discussion

Appendix II to LC Paper No. CB(4)812/15-16 -- List of follow-up actions)

2. The Chairman informed members that the Administration had proposed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting to be held on 9 May 2016 at 4:30 pm –

(a) Subsidising Students of Professional Part-time Programmes

(b) Capital works projects for schools –

(i) 3353EP - A 30-classroom primary school at Site KT2b, Development at Anderson Road, Kwun Tong; and

(ii) 3109ET - A school for social development for boys in Area 2B, Tuen Mun.

3. The Chairman said that some members had requested an early discussion on the University Grants Committee("UGC")'s report on the governance of UGC-funded institutions which was released in late March 2016. In this connection, he would include an item on issues related to the UGC-funded sector in respect of the policy on research funding and the report on governance in UGC-funded institutions on the agenda of the next regular meeting.

4. Dr Helena WONG suggested to invite stakeholders to attend this item at the next meeting. The Chairman advised that he would finalize with the Deputy Chairman the list of deputations to be invited and members might inform him in writing if they had any suggestion.

5. The Chairman said that he might consider extending the meeting time of the regular meetings in the coming months so as to deal with the items proposed by members and those on the Panel's "List of outstanding items for discussion".

6. The Chairman recapped that at the last meeting held on 22 March 2016, the Panel agreed that a visit to some schools operating in matchbox-style sub-standard premises would be arranged. He said that after consulting the

Action

Deputy Chairman and the Administration, he had tentatively scheduled the visit in the afternoon of 26 April 2016. Details of the visit were being finalized and members would be notified in due course.

(Post-meeting note: A visit to three primary schools, namely E.L.C.H.K. Kwai Shing Lutheran Primary School, S.R.B.C.E.P.S.A. Lee Yat Ngok Memorial School and C.N.E.C. Ta Tung School, had been conducted on 26 April 2016.)

III. Staff establishment and salary structure in primary schools

(LC Paper No. CB(4)812/15-16(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

7. The Chairman recalled that issues related to teacher establishment in public sector primary schools were last discussed by the Panel in February 2015. However, the concerns raised by the primary school sector still remained unaddressed. Hence, he considered it necessary to re-visit the subject. The Chairman was disappointed to note from the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)812/15-16(01)] that the Education Bureau ("EDB") had no plan to review the pay levels of primary school principals and teachers at this stage. He was of the view that the Administration should give priority to addressing the concerns of the primary school sector.

8. Members noted a submission from the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union ("HKPTU") [LC Paper No. CB(4)829/15-16(01)]. They also noted a submission from the Subsidized Primary School Council ("SPSC") tabled at the meeting [subsequently issued vide LC Paper No. CB(4)852/15-16(01)].

Briefing by the Administration

9. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the existing policy on the establishment and salary structure for teaching staff in public sector primary schools, as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)812/15-16(01)].

Oral presentation by deputations

10. A total of four deputations presented their views. Their major concerns were summarized in the **Appendix I**.

Action

Discussion

Ratio of graduate teacher posts in primary schools

11. Mr Martin LIAO said that according to his understanding, in the 2014-2015 school year, over 95% of primary school teachers were degree-holders but the ratio of graduate teacher posts in primary schools was 50%. He was concerned that a large number of primary school teachers with degree qualification could only be employed on the terms and conditions of Certificated Master/Mistress ("CM"). Dr Helena WONG opined that resources should be made available to offer graduate teacher posts to all primary school teachers with degree qualifications, rather than setting up scholarships to benefit students from the Belt and Road countries. The Deputy Chairman was of the view that the ratio of graduate teacher posts should be improved without delay.

12. In this connection, US(Ed) advised that the ratio of graduate teacher posts would be progressively improved to 65% in the 2017-2018 school year. Subject to availability of resources, it was the Government's target to raise the ratio to 100% in the long run. However, a firm timetable could not be provided at this juncture.

13. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung considered it necessary for the Administration to conduct a review and formulate a timetable for improving the ratio of graduate teacher posts in public sector primary schools to 100%. The Chairman said that he was disappointed to note that the Administration could not provide a timetable on improving the ratio of primary school graduate teacher posts to 100%.

14. US(Ed) reiterated that it was the Administration's target to enhance the ratio of graduate teacher posts in primary schools to 100% in the long run. Meanwhile, the Administration had been in communication with the primary education sector in exploring the feasibility of raising the ratio of graduate teacher posts in primary schools at a faster pace.

15. Ms Christine CHOI of Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers said that some primary schools had not filled all the approved graduate teacher posts on their staff establishment. The Chairman requested the Administration to inform the Panel of the measures, if any, to ensure that all these approved posts would be filled so as to improve the quality of primary education.

Admin

Action

Employment of teachers on contract terms

16. Mr Martin LIAO noted that quite a number of schools had employed additional teachers on time-limited contracts using various cash grants disbursed by EDB. He was concerned about the lack of job security for these teachers and whether they were less favourably remunerated than regular teachers performing similar duties. Dr Kenneth CHAN considered that the arrangement of employing teachers and teaching assistants on short-term contracts instead of on the regular establishment was not conducive to enhancing the quality of education. He urged the Administration to conduct a review on the existing arrangements.

17. US(Ed) advised that the provision of cash grants to schools instead of regular teaching posts was to allow schools greater flexibility in deploying resources to implement specific policy initiatives. In certain circumstances, such as in supporting students with special educational needs, as the number of such students admitted by schools might vary across years, the Administration considered that the provision of cash grant was more appropriate than providing regular teaching posts. Besides, many cash grants were calculated according to the salary of teacher posts and on a recurrent basis. Hence, schools could employ the contract teachers for a longer period at a reasonable salary. The Administration would turn the cash grants into regular teaching posts should it consider it appropriate. As announced in the 2016 Policy Address, starting from the 2016-2017 school year, schools might turn the Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant and the Career and Life Planning Grant into regular teaching posts. This would help reduce the number of contract teachers.

Teacher establishment and salary structure in primary schools

18. Members noted from the deputations that while the requisite qualifications and level of responsibilities for primary school teachers and principals were comparable to those of secondary school teachers and principals, there was a wide difference in their salary scales giving rise to unfairness. For example, the salary scale of the school head of a primary school with 36 classes (at the rank of Head Master I) was the same as that applicable to the deputy head of a secondary school with 15 classes (at the rank of Principal Graduate Master/Mistress). The salary scale of a primary school head (at the rank of Head Master II) was the same as that of a secondary school teacher at the rank of Senior Graduate Master/Mistress. The Deputy Chairman, Mr Albert HO and Mr WONG Kwok-hing urged the Administration to conduct a comprehensive review to address concerns about

Action

the disparity in salary structure and staff establishment between primary school teachers and their secondary school counterparts.

19. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung referred to his experience and said that it was a much more demanding task to attend to the needs of students at junior levels than those at senior levels. He expressed support for the primary school sector's request to improve the teacher-to-class ratio and urged the Administration to review the staff establishment and salary structure in primary schools. He cautioned that the existing staff establishment and salary structure in primary schools could hardly attract new entrants to the teaching profession.

20. US(Ed) explained that in the past decade or so, the Administration had provided additional resources to support the primary school sector. However, due to the differences between primary and secondary schools in terms of their curricula, operation, needs of students and examination systems, it was not appropriate to make a direct comparison of the work nature, duties and pay levels between primary and secondary school principals and teachers. The pay levels of the grades and ranks of primary and secondary school teachers had been determined with due regard to a number of objective factors, including entry requirements, academic qualifications, pay levels of comparable civil service grades/ranks and recruitment situation etc. Having considered all relevant factors and balanced the demands and concerns of different stakeholders prudently, EDB had no plan to review the pay levels of primary school principals and teachers at this stage. US(Ed) further said that in the course of ongoing dialogue, the Administration had explained its views to the primary school sector. Nevertheless, the Administration would take note of the deputations' views for consideration.

21. The Chairman reiterated his concern that the quality of education and the morale of the primary school sector would be adversely affected if the Administration maintained its stance against conducting a review on the staff establishment and salary structure in primary schools.

22. The Chairman invited further comment, if any, from the deputations. Mr LAI Tsz-man of SPSC reiterated that the level of responsibilities and workload of teachers and heads of primary schools were comparable to those of teachers and heads of secondary schools. However, the establishment for teaching and supporting staff and the salary structure of primary school teachers and principals were much less favourable. Mr SIN Kim-wai of Hong Kong Aided Primary School Heads Association recapitulated that although teachers employed as Assistant Primary School Masters/Mistresses

Action

("APSMs") in primary schools and those employed as Graduate Masters/Mistresses ("GMs") in secondary schools were required to possess degree qualifications, the salary levels of APSMs compared less favourably than those of their GM counterparts. Moreover, there were insufficient graduate teacher posts in primary schools and many teachers holding degree qualifications could only be employed on the terms and conditions of CM. Ms FUNG Pik-yee of HKPTU expressed concern about the disparity in salary structure between primary and secondary school teachers and urged the Administration to critically review the matter.

Admin

23. In this connection, the Chairman requested the Administration to explain in writing the reasons for the wide difference in resources support provided to the primary and secondary school sectors in terms of their respective staff establishment and salary structure for teaching staff.

Non-teaching manpower in primary schools

24. Mr LAI Tsz-man of SPSC and Ms FUNG Pik-yee of HKPTU expressed concern about the rigid requirements in the provision of clerical staff to primary schools. They pointed out that a primary school with 12 classes or more was entitled to one assistant clerical officer and one clerical assistant. However, a primary school with less than 12 classes was entitled to only one clerical assistant, which was hardly sufficient. Mr Albert HO shared the deputations' concern about the rigidity of the existing two-tier approach, and considered that some flexibility should be provided, such as by providing primary schools operating 11 classes with the manpower capacity of 1.5 clerical assistant. Dr Helena WONG shared her concern about insufficient clerical support in primary schools and urged for allocation of additional resources to primary education.

25. In this regard, the Principal Education Officer (School Administration) advised that the Administration had provided additional resources to primary schools for handling administrative duties arising from the implementation of education-related initiatives. For example, starting from the 2014-2015 school year, the Administration provided all public sector primary schools with an additional recurrent cash grant, namely the Administration Grant for Additional Clerical Assistant, for employment of clerical staff. In the 2015-2016 school year, all primary schools received a one-off Strengthening School Administration Management Grant for improving administration management and unleashing teachers' capacity to enhance teaching and to cater for the needs of students.

Action

26. The Chairman drew the Administration's attention to the views raised by deputations that the provision of cash grants alone could not resolve the problem of manpower shortage. He considered it necessary for the Administration to critically re-examine the matter and conduct a thorough review.

Motion

27. The Chairman concluded the discussion, and said that he would proceed to deal with the motion jointly moved by Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, Dr Kenneth CHAN and Dr Helena WONG without further debate as the Panel had thoroughly discussed the matters concerned. Members agreed.

28. Speaking on the motion, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung urged the Administration to expeditiously review the staff establishment and salary structure in primary schools. He also considered that the existing arrangements should be reformed.

29. At the invitation of the Chairman, US(Ed) said that if the motion was passed by the Panel, the Administration would deliberate the issues raised in the motion and provide its response in due course. He also reiterated that the Administration would give careful consideration to the views and concerns raised by members and deputations at the meeting.

30. The Chairman put the motion to vote. Twelve members voted for the motion. No members voted against the motion and no members abstained. The Chairman declared that the motion was passed (wording of the motion at **Appendix II**).

(Post-meeting note: The Administration was requested to provide written response to the motion passed at the meeting. The Chairman had subsequently written to the Administration on 15 April 2016 requesting it to respond to the motion and confirm further details early. The Chairman's letter was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)891/15-16(01) on 18 April 2016. The Administration's written response to the motion and the Panel Chairman's letter dated 5 May 2016 addressed to the Secretary for Education setting out his view on the Administration's response were issued to members vide LC Paper Nos. CB(4)951/15-16(01) and (02) on 6 May 2016.)

Action

IV. Enhancement of the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme

(LC Paper No. CB(4)812/15-16(02) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)812/15-16(03) -- Background brief entitled "Issues related to the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat)

31. Members noted the background brief prepared by the Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(4)812/15-16(03)].

Briefing by the Administration

32. At the invitation of the Chairman, US(Ed) briefed members on the results of the review of the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme ("MUSSS") and the enhancements to be introduced to MUSSS starting from the 2016-2017 academic year, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)812/15-16(02)].

Discussion

Scope and eligibility criteria

33. Members noted that the enhanced MUSSS would cover 155 Mainland institutions which had admitted about 95% of Hong Kong students pursuing the first year of undergraduate studies in the Mainland. In this connection, Mr MA Fung-kwok questioned why the enhanced MUSSS would not cover those institutions attended by the remaining 5% of Hong Kong students. He was also concerned that notwithstanding the expansion in scope, the enhanced MUSSS would not cover Hong Kong students admitted to Mainland higher education institutions through the Joint Entrance Examination for Universities in the Mainland for Overseas Chinese, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan Students, as well as through the admission exercises conducted by individual institutions.

34. The Chairman expressed support for MUSSS and the proposed enhancements. He suggested that consideration should be given to further expanding the scope of MUSSS to include those Mainland institutions offering disciplines/programmes which were not available in Hong Kong, as

Action

well as those institutions located in provinces/municipalities with a close connection with Hong Kong, such as the renowned Zhongyuan University of Technology located in Henan Province.

35. US(Ed) advised that the Administration was fully aware of the importance of providing greater choices for Hong Kong students pursuing further studies in the Mainland. Starting from the 2016-2017 academic year, the enhanced MUSSS would benefit financially needy Hong Kong students entering the 84 Mainland institutions participating in the Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions ("Admission Scheme") and 71 Mainland institutions under "Project 985" and/or "Project 211" not having participated in Admission Scheme, irrespective of the channels of their admission to those Mainland institutions. Mainland institutions falling under "Project 985" and/or "Project 211" were widely regarded as the first tier of quality universities in the Mainland. The reason for confining the scope of the enhanced MUSSS was to ensure the quality of the undergraduate programmes undertaken by its recipients. EDB would maintain liaison with the Mainland Ministry of Education to explore the feasibility of expanding the list of participating Mainland institutions under the Admission Scheme.

36. Noting that many Hong Kong students also pursued post-secondary education in Taiwan and Macao, the Deputy Chairman said that the Administration should consider broadening the target recipients under MUSSS to include students studying in Taiwan and Macao. In this regard, Dr Kenneth CHAN remarked that due to political consideration, it was unlikely that the Administration would consider extending the scheme to cover higher education institutions in Taiwan.

37. Dr Kenneth CHAN noted from the Administration's paper that there were 263 and 236 new recipients under MUSSS in its first two years of operation respectively. He considered that MUSSS could only benefit a small number of local students. Noting that many local students who had attained the minimum university entrance requirement could not gain admission to University Grants Committee-funded institutions due to insufficient subsidized undergraduate places, Dr CHAN said that MUSSS might have been introduced to encourage local students to pursue further studies outside Hong Kong, thereby easing the pressure on the Government to increase publicly-funded undergraduate places.

38. In response, US(Ed) reiterated that MUSSS was an initiative to support needy Hong Kong students to pursue undergraduate studies in the Mainland as an alternative study pathway. He highlighted that the Mainland

Action

Government and the HKSAR Government had signed a Memorandum of Understanding on mutual recognition of academic qualification for the purpose of further studies. At present, this Memorandum of Understanding was the only agreement at the government level which facilitated local students to pursue further studies outside Hong Kong. For the time being, the Government had no plan to enter into similar government-to-government arrangements with other overseas jurisdictions.

39. Mr WONG Kwok-hing relayed the concerns expressed by the principal of the Caritas Tuen Mun Marden Foundation Secondary School about the financial support available to needy non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") students, who were not holders of the Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Residents, aspiring to pursue higher education in the Mainland. US(Ed) confirmed that under the enhanced MUSSS, eligibility would no longer be restricted to students who were holders of the Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Residents. NCS students would also be eligible to apply for the means-tested subsidy. All local students, including NCS students, who passed the means test would receive either a full-rate subsidy of HK\$15,000 or a half-rate subsidy of HK\$7,500 per student per year, depending on their needs.

40. Regarding the enquiry of the Deputy Chairman about the eligibility criterion of "the right to land in Hong Kong" under the enhanced MUSSS, US(Ed) undertook to provide further information in writing after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's written response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)911/15-16(01) on 22 April 2016.)

Financial assistance under MUSSS

41. Dr Helena WONG noted that the means test under MUSSS was conducted only at the time of first application. However, local post-secondary students receiving assistance under means-tested student financial schemes had to undergo means test annually. She queried the reasons for the different requirements.

42. US(Ed) clarified that both MUSSS applicants and local post-secondary students were subject to the means test conducted by the Student Finance Office of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency. In view of the relatively small amount of subsidy

Action

involved, the Administration had streamlined the assessment procedures for the means test under MUSSS. Although the means test for MUSSS was conducted only once, the subsidy recipients were required to declare any significant changes in their family financial circumstances upon annual renewal of the subsidy. Re-assessment would be carried out where warranted. The Administration would also conduct random checks on the financial information submitted by MUSSS recipients.

43. Mr MA Fung-kwok was concerned that the existing levels of subsidy under MUSSS might only be sufficient for paying tuition fees but not for defraying living expenses in the Mainland. He enquired whether the Administration would consider allowing recipients of MUSSS to also apply for loans under the existing loan schemes for local post-secondary students. In response, US(Ed) said that in determining the current levels of subsidy under MUSSS, the Administration had taken into account the amount of study-related expenses for studying in Mainland higher education institutions, including tuition fee, hostel fee, insurance, communications and travel. The current subsidy levels were considered adequate in meeting the needs of individual students in general in the 2016-2017 academic year, but would be subject to review and adjustment taking into account price adjustment of the study-related expenses thereafter.

44. In anticipation of a significant increase in the number of eligible recipients under the enhanced MUSSS, the Deputy Chairman enquired whether the Administration would need to seek approval for additional funding from the Finance Committee. US(Ed) responded that sufficient recurrent provision for MUSSS had been reserved for the 2016-2017 to 2018-2019 academic years.

Recognition of qualifications

45. Dr Helena WONG expressed concern about the recognition of the academic qualifications awarded by Mainland institutions which were covered under the enhanced MUSSS, and the employment prospect of Hong Kong graduates from these Mainland institutions. She sought further information on the recognition of Mainland qualifications by the Government when recruiting civil servants.

46. The Deputy Secretary for Education(1) advised that academic qualification entry requirements for civil service grades at degree level were normally set with reference to qualifications awarded by local academic institutions. For applicants holding non-local degree qualifications, their

Action

appointment would be subject to assessment of their academic qualifications as being comparable in standard to the entry requirements of the vacancy being applied for. All non-local degree qualifications would be referred by the recruiting bureaux/departments to the Civil Service Bureau ("CSB") for assessment, in consultation with the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications, if necessary, on a case-by-case basis.

47. Dr Helena WONG enquired whether the Government would exempt the qualifications awarded by Mainland institutions covered by MUSSS from assessment. US(Ed) advised that as the curriculum of non-local undergraduate programmes might differ among institutions, it was necessary for CSB to assess the non-local qualifications on a case-by-case basis.

48. The Chairman said that with the vibrant economy in the Mainland, there was an increasing demand for local talent with a good understanding of the Mainland. He called on the Administration to actively promote the recognition of Mainland academic qualifications in the business community in order to enhance the employment opportunities of Hong Kong graduates from Mainland higher education institutions. US(Ed) took note of the Chairman's views.

V. Capital Works Projects for Schools

- (a) 8027EA – Extension and conversion to St. Paul's Primary Catholic School at Wong Nai Chung Road, Happy Valley

(LC Paper No. CB(4)812/15-16(04) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

- (b) 3271ES – A 30-classroom secondary school at Site 1A-2, Kai Tak Development

(LC Paper No. CB(4)812/15-16(05) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

49. Due to time constraint, the meeting agreed that it would not be necessary for the Administration to give a briefing on the two capital works projects. Members noted that the Administration planned to submit the funding proposal of the extension and conversion to St. Paul's Primary Catholic School and that for the construction of a secondary school premises in Kai Tak Development of Kowloon City to the Public Works Subcommittee

Action

("PWSC") and then the Finance Committee ("FC") for approval in May and June 2016 respectively.

Discussion

St. Paul's Primary Catholic School at Wong Nai Chung Road, Happy Valley

50. Members noted a submission from a member of the public expressing concerns about the extension and conversion to St. Paul's Primary Catholic School ("the School") [issued vide LC Paper No. CB(4)839/15-16(01) by email on 8 April 2016].

51. The Deputy Chairman noted and relayed the concerns expressed by a parent about the School's conversion into whole-day schooling and the feasibility of using the former Wanchai School as decanting premises for the School. He also enquired on the number of classes to be operated by the School upon completion of its extension and conversion.

52. In response, US(Ed) advised that it was the Government's policy to implement whole-day schooling for all primary school students studying at the public sector primary schools. Upon the School's conversion into whole-day operation, there would remain only one public sector primary school operating bi-sessional classes. The new extension of the School would provide 24 classrooms for whole-day classes; while the existing classrooms would be converted into special rooms for different teaching and learning purposes. During construction, the School would be temporarily accommodated at the vacant school premises of the former Chai Wan Star of The Sea Catholic Primary School in Chai Wan. On the feasibility of using the former Wanchai School as decanting premises, US(Ed) informed members that the premises was being used by another school.

53. Mr Paul TSE declared that he was a member of the Wan Chai District Council. He supported the proposed school project, as the existing premises of the School was constructed over 100 years ago and had not benefitted from the School Improvement Programme in the past due to technical constraints. However, he was concerned about the inconvenience and nuisance, if any, brought to the neighbourhood of the School during construction. US(Ed) assured members that the Administration would carry out mitigation measures to control noise, sewage and dust emission so as to minimize the impact on the neighbouring environment.

Action

54. The Deputy Chairman pointed out that according to the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279), no part of any school premises could be situated at a height of more than 24 metres above ground level without the approval of the Director of Fire Services. Referring to the site plan at Enclosure 1 of the Administration's paper, he was concerned that the height of the new extension of the School had exceeded the statutory height limit. The Deputy Chairman further said that as he was aware, schools in overseas countries were usually accommodated in low-rise blocks with ample open space for student activities. He opined that that it was not desirable to accommodate primary schools in high-rise buildings. Mr Paul TSE was concerned that the new extension might obstruct the view of buildings in the vicinity of the School.

55. US(Ed) explained that owing to the need to retain the School's existing premises, which had been accorded with a Grade 2 historic building status, and the relatively small site area of the School, the new extension of the School would comprise nine storeys so as to accommodate all students after combining the existing bi-sessional classes. Approval of the Director of Fire Services had been obtained for the construction of the new extension at 27.3 metres in height. Nevertheless, teaching and learning activities would mainly take place at lower floors of the new extension as the top floor would be used for non-teaching purposes, such as storage and staff rooms.

56. Mr Paul TSE and Dr Kenneth CHAN were of the view that it was important to carry out heritage conservation works for the School's existing premises, especially the stone wall facing Wong Nai Chung Road. Dr CHAN asked whether the structure of the stone wall would be affected by the construction of the proposed car park for the School. US(Ed) advised that around HK\$50 million had been earmarked for carrying out heritage and maintenance works under the project. During the construction of the carpark, measures would be taken in order that most part of the stone wall would remain intact. In this regard, Dr CHAN requested the Administration to provide more information on the heritage works for this project in its submission to PWSC.

(Post-meeting note: As advised by the Administration, the requested information had been included in the Administration's paper (PWSC(2016-17)16 issued on 26 April 2016) to the PWSC.)

57. Ms Cyd HO recalled that about two years ago, the school sponsoring body ("SSB") of St. Paul's Secondary School had proposed to join the Direct Subsidy Scheme ("DSS"). The proposal was shelved due to strong objection

Action

from parents and alumni. As the School was run by the same SSB, Ms HO enquired whether there was any intention on the part of the School to convert into a DSS school. US(Ed) advised that so far, the School had not indicated to EDB any intention to join DSS. Nevertheless, the Administration would maintain liaison with the School to understand its future development, including any plan to join DSS.

Cognitio College and other issues

58. Noting that the construction of a secondary school premises in Kai Tak Development of Kowloon City was for the purpose of reprovisioning Cognitio College, Ms Cyd HO requested the Administration to provide information on the disposal/use of the existing school premises of the College in its paper to be submitted to PWSC.

(Post-meeting note: As advised by the Administration, the requested information had been included in the Administration's paper (PWSC(2016-17)27 issued on 25 May 2016) to the PWSC.)

59. Mr Abraham SHEK expressed support for the two school projects. As Chairman of the English Schools Foundation ("ESF"), he enquired about the progress of redevelopment of the ESF Island School as its premises and facilities were outdated and might pose safety hazards. He urged the Administration to take into account the safety factor when prioritizing the redevelopment and reprovisioning of existing schools.

60. US(Ed) advised that the Administration would not compromise on safety at schools. While ESF was responsible for the maintenance works of the schools under its purview, the Administration would keep in view these maintenance projects. In taking forward projects for the redevelopment and reprovisioning of existing schools, as well as for construction of new schools, the Administration would follow the established procedures. The implementation of these school projects would also be subject to factors including funding approval and the progress of advance works, such as planning and design.

Summing up

61. Concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that the Panel supported the Administration's submission of the relevant funding proposal to PWSC.

Action

VI. Gifted Education Fund

(LC Paper No. CB(4)812/15-16(06) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

Briefing by the Administration

62. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the key features of gifted education in Hong Kong and the proposed Gifted Education Fund ("GE Fund"), as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)812/15-16(06)]. He highlighted that the Administration proposed to create a new commitment of \$800 million for setting up the GE Fund and make appropriate investment arrangements so as to provide a regular revenue source to support the operation of the Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education ("HKAGE") as well as new initiatives on gifted education in schools. Subject to Members' views, the Administration would seek funding approval from FC for creating a new commitment for setting up the GE Fund.

Discussion

Attendance of SED at Panel meetings

63. The Deputy Chairman queried why SED was only attending the discussion of the present item but not other important items such as "Staff establishment and salary structure in primary schools". SED said that all discussion items were important. He had not been able to attend the earlier part of this meeting because he had to attend two other important meetings. SED assured members that the explanation given by US(Ed) on earlier items represented the official stance of the Education Bureau on the matters concerned.

64. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung did not subscribe to SED's explanation and pointed out that under the Basic Law, the executive government was accountable to the legislature. He was of the view that SED should attend meetings of the Panel, which were mostly scheduled and held on a monthly basis. In this regard, SED said that he had reviewed the discussion items with colleagues and assigned relevant officers to attend the meeting to answer members' questions.

Action

Funding arrangements

65. The Deputy Chairman enquired about the rationale for making a one-off injection of \$800 million to set up the GE Fund, instead of providing recurrent subvention to HKAGE to support its operation. In response, the Permanent Secretary for Education ("PS(Ed)") advised that the GE Fund, together with its expected investment return based on 3% to 4% per annum, would provide a stable source of funding to support the operation of HKAGE as well as new school-based gifted education-related initiatives. The Advisory Committee on Gifted Education to be set up would advise SED on the custody and use of the GE Fund.

66. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung considered it unfair that the Administration would set aside \$1 billion to expand the Hong Kong Scholarship for "Belt and Road" Students to enable students from other countries and regions along the "Belt and Road" to pursue higher education in Hong Kong but not subsidizing Hong Kong students to study in these countries. Noting the proposed creation of a new commitment of \$800 million and recalling the discussion of the earlier agenda item, Mr LEUNG urged the Administration to allocate additional resources to address the disparity in staff establishment and salary structure between primary and secondary school teachers and principals.

67. On resources support for the primary school sector, SED recapitulated that the annual financial provision for primary education had been increased from \$13.4 billion a few years ago to \$16.9 billion in 2016-2017. Regarding concerns about the scholarship to be offered under the "Belt and Road" initiative, SED said that having considered public views, the Administration was working out the scheme arrangement to enable Hong Kong students to benefit under the scholarship scheme as well.

Provision of gifted education

68. Dr Kenneth CHAN considered that the implementation of gifted education and the work of HKAGE appeared to place heavy emphasis on preparing students for prestigious competitions. He was concerned whether this competition-driven approach was consistent with the intended objective of gifted education.

69. Ms Cyd HO cautioned that students who often won in competitions might lack the capacity to cope with failures and adversity. She also recalled that during a motion debate moved by Mrs Regina IP in 2013 regarding international mathematics competitions such as the International

Action

Mathematics Olympiad, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung had deplored the intensive drilling of young students in order to achieve good performance in these competitions.

70. SED said that participation in competition would enable gifted students to maximize their potentials and gain satisfaction in achievement; but it was only part of the three-tier framework for implementing gifted education. PS(Ed) further advised that information on students' achievements in competitions could serve as quantifiable indicators for the implementation of gifted education. In addition to academic programmes in different domains to cater for the cognitive development of gifted students, HKAGE also offered non-academic programmes such as affective education and service programmes to nurture students' affective development.

71. On the future development of HKAGE, Prof NG Tai-kai, Executive Director of HKAGE, advised that HKAGE planned to provide new programmes which would include advanced career development courses, mentorship programmes and elite international student activities for exceptionally gifted students. It would also scale up the provision of programmes to cater for the affective needs of exceptionally gifted students.

72. Ms Cyd HO enquired about other performance indicators, apart from students' achievements in competitions, to assess the effectiveness of the work of HKAGE. Noting that students who graduated from secondary schools would no longer be members of HKAGE, Ms HO considered it useful to follow up the performance of these gifted students in their higher education and careers.

Teacher training

73. Ms Cyd HO stressed the importance of early identification of gifted students at the primary level, and sought information on the training programmes provided to teachers to enable them to identify gifted students in class at an early age. Prof NG Tai-kai informed members that currently, HKAGE organized training programmes and public lectures which could be participated by teachers (both primary and secondary) on a voluntary basis.

74. In this connection, Ms Cyd HO requested the Administration to provide, in its paper to FC, more detailed information on the training available to teachers to enable them to identify gifted students at an early age.

Action

(Post-meeting note: As advised by the Administration, the requested information had been included in the Administration's paper (FCR(2016-17)48 issued on 10 June 2016) to the Finance Committee.)

Summing up

75. The Chairman noted that members did not object to the submission of the relevant financial proposal to FC. He said that members were at liberty to follow up their questions at the relevant FC meeting.

VII. Any other business

76. The Chairman said that issues related to UGC-funded sector in respect of the policy on research funding and the report on governance of UGC-funded institutions would be discussed at the next regular meeting of the Panel to be held on 9 May 2016. Given the importance of this subject, he requested SED to attend the discussion of this item.

77. In response, SED said that he would attend the discussion of the item as referred to by the Chairman. He reiterated that for every Panel meeting, he would review the discussion items with colleagues and assigned relevant officers to attend the meeting to answer members' questions.

78. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 7:20 pm.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
7 July 2016

Panel on Education
Meeting on Monday, 11 April 2016, at 4:30 pm

Agenda item III: Staff establishment and salary structure in primary Schools

Summary of views and concerns expressed by deputations

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
1.	Hong Kong Aided Primary School Heads Association	According to the deputation, the levels of responsibilities and workload of teachers and school heads of primary schools and secondary schools were comparable. It was very unfair that the establishment for teaching and supporting staff and the salary structure of primary school teachers and heads were much less favourable than those for secondary schools.
2.	Subsidized Primary School Council	Presentation of views as detailed in the submission [LC Paper No. CB(4)852/15-16(01)]
3.	Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union	Presentation of views as detailed in the submission [LC Paper No. CB(4)829/15-16(01)]
4.	Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers	Presentation of views as detailed in the submission [LC Paper No. CB(4)853/15-16(01)]

教育事務委員會
Panel on Education

在 2016 年 4 月 11 日會議上
就議程項目"小學人事編制和薪酬架構"通過的議案
Motion passed under the agenda item
"Staff establishment and salary structure in primary schools"
at the meeting on 11 April 2016

議案措辭

本委員會要求教育局盡快就小學人事編制和薪酬架構進行檢討，並向本委員會報告有關檢討結果，並作出改善建議。

(梁耀忠議員、陳家洛議員和黃碧雲議員動議)

Wording of the Motion

(Translation)

That this Panel requests the Education Bureau to expeditiously review the staff establishment and salary structure in primary schools, report to this Panel the outcome of the review and make recommendations for improvement.

(Moved by Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung, Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok and Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan)