

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)1306/15-16
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by the Administration)

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Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Saturday, 2 July 2016, at 9:30 am
in Conference Room 3 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, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, GBS, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon NG Leung-sing, SBS, JP
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok
Hon Dennis KWOK
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, SBS, JP
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP

Members absent : Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS
Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan

Public Officers : Agenda item II
attending

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Mrs Michelle WONG, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education (3)

Mr C S WOO
Principal Assistant Secretary
(Special Education and Kindergarten Education)
Education Bureau

Agenda item III

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP
Secretary for Education

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Dr K K CHAN
Deputy Secretary for Education (5)

Ms Jenny CHAN
Principal Assistant Secretary (Education Infrastructure)
Education Bureau

Agenda item IV

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP
Secretary for Education

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Education

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

Mrs Michelle WONG, JP
Acting Permanent Secretary for Education/
Deputy Secretary for Education (3)

Attendance by invitation : Agenda item II

幼師薪酬關注組

Ms CHOI Yuk-lin
Convenor

The Alliance on the Fight for 15-Year Free Education

Ms WONG Siu-fung
Member

Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union

Dr FUNG Wai-wah
President

Hong Kong Early Childhood Educators Association

Ms CHOW Wai-chun
Chairperson

Council of Non-profit Making Organization for
Pre-primary Education

Ms LAU Yin-king
Vice-chairman

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

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

(LC Paper No. CB(4)1103/15-16(01) -- Joint letter dated 6 May 2016 from Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung and Hon Kenneth LEUNG concerning the request for information regarding the financial activities of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

LC Paper No. CB(4)1103/15-16(02) -- Administration's written response dated 8 June 2016 to the joint letter dated 6 May 2016 from Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung and Hon Kenneth LEUNG concerning the request for information regarding the financial activities of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

LC Paper No. CB(4)1197/15-16(01) -- Information paper entitled "Injection into the Language Fund – Implementation of Initiatives" provided by the Education Bureau)

Members noted the above papers issued since the last meeting.

2. The Chairman reported that the Panel had held a closed tripartite meeting on 16 May 2016 to enable the primary school sector and the Administration to exchange views directly on ways to improve the learning and teaching environment of those primary schools operating in matchbox-style premises and that good progress was made at that meeting. He reminded members that another closed tripartite meeting would be held at 9:30 am on 13 July 2016 to follow up the progress made since the last meeting and consider the way forward. Notice of meeting had been issued to members on 29 June 2016.

II. Review on the salary structure of kindergarten teachers

(LC Paper No. CB(4)1181/15-16(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

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3. Members noted two papers prepared by the Deputy Chairman [subsequently issued vide LC Paper Nos. CB(4)1212/15-16(01)-(02)] tabled at the meeting.

Briefing by the Administration

4. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the salary structure of kindergarten ("KG") teachers under the free quality KG education policy, as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)1181/15-16(01)].

5. US(Ed) informed members that the Establishment Subcommittee had endorsed the staffing proposal to create new directorate posts in the Education Bureau ("EDB") for steering and overseeing the implementation of the free quality KG education policy, and recommended the proposal to the Finance Committee. EDB would issue a circular to promulgate the arrangements for implementing the new policy in the 2017-2018 school year to all KGs in July 2016.

Oral presentation by deputations

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

Initial response by the Administration

7. US(Ed) explained that the salary-related practices under the funding mode for aided schools could not be applied to KGs in isolation. In the aided school sector, the funding mode was tied with several inter-connected components such as EDB's annual approval for the number of operating classes which in turn determined the staff establishment, and was subject to a basket of control measures under the Government's prudent and balanced planning of school places operated through school place allocation systems. If the aided school funding mode was adopted in the KG sector, it might result in packing of classes and teacher redundancy in KGs in times of enrolment drop. The approach of adopting a recommended salary range for KG teaching staff was considered more appropriate under the new policy as it could ensure competitiveness while allowing flexibility for KGs.

8. In addition, US(Ed) highlighted that under the free quality KG education policy, KGs would be encouraged to establish a career ladder for teachers and required to pay teaching staff salaries within the recommended salary range. This was already a significant improvement over the existing practice under which salaries for KG teachers were determined entirely by individual KGs. Besides, a specific portion of the government subsidy would be regarded as the salary portion for teaching staff and could only be used exclusively on teaching staff salaries.

Discussion*Establishment of a mandatory salary scale*

9. Mr TAM Yiu-chung and Dr CHIANG Lai-wan referred to the strong calls of the KG sector for a mandatory salary scale similar to that applicable to aided primary and secondary school teachers. Mr TAM shared the views of the deputations that a mandatory salary scale could give due recognition to the experience of KG teachers, in particular when they changed employment from one KG to another. Dr CHIANG sought further explanation on the implementation of the recommended salary range for KG teachers under the free quality KG education policy.

10. The Deputy Chairman was disappointed that the Administration would not introduce a mandatory salary scale to ensure that salaries of KG teachers would be commensurate with their years of service and qualifications. He considered that a mandatory salary scale was vital for maintaining a stable teaching force, which could enhance the quality of KG education. He asked the Administration to take into account members' and stakeholders' views in its future review. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung also enquired about ways to retain experienced teachers in the absence of a mandatory salary scale for the KG sector.

11. In response, US(Ed) advised that a salary range had been recommended with a view to facilitating KGs to set reasonable salaries for their teaching staff. The approach of adopting a recommended salary range, instead of a mandatory salary scale, allowed more flexibility to cater for the diverse needs of individual KGs. In considering remuneration for individual teachers, KGs might take into account teachers' expertise in different areas, additional duties, outstanding performance, etc. Individual KGs had the discretion to pay experienced teachers higher salaries within the salary range. KGs would also be required to put in place a proper and well-defined school-based mechanism to determine remuneration packages and pay adjustment.

12. Dr Fernando CHEUNG did not subscribe to the Administration's explanation and urged the Administration to set up a task force comprising representatives of the KG sector, school sponsoring bodies, parents and other stakeholders to study issues related to the development of a mandatory salary scale. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che concurred with Dr CHEUNG and considered that the Administration should take action to ensure that KG teachers would receive reasonable remuneration when the free quality KG education policy was implemented.

13. Ms Starry LEE was of the view that a mandatory salary scale was conducive to providing stability and certainty in the remuneration of KG teachers and attracting young people to join the profession. She referred to the differences between the Administration and the KG sector over the issue of mandatory salary

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scale, and urged the Administration to maintain dialogue with the KG sector to address their concerns.

14. US(Ed) assured members that the Administration would continue to collect feedback from the KG sector and stakeholders. He recapitulated that the salary-related practices under the funding mode for aided schools could not be applied to KGs in isolation, as there were other control measures such as approval of operating classes and centralized allocation of school places. He reiterated that it was more appropriate and fit to provide KGs with a recommended salary range which could ensure competitiveness while at the same time allow flexibility for the KG management to decide on their staff remuneration.

15. Ms Cyd HO considered that establishing a mandatory salary scale for KG teachers would not undermine the flexibility and diversity of the KG sector. A salary scale with incremental points could provide certainty, which would be conducive to building up a stable and quality teaching force. Mr Albert HO sought the views of the deputations on the explanation provided by the Administration.

16. At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms CHOI Yuk-lin of 幼師薪酬關注組 and Dr FUNG Wai-wah of the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union opined that establishing a mandatory salary scale for KG teachers would not undermine the flexibility and diversity of the KG sector. Ms LAU Yin-king of the Council of Non-profit Making Organization for Pre-primary Education was of the view that salary structure and management flexibility of KGs were separate matters. Regarding US(Ed)'s explanation that the aided school sector was subject to various control measures, Ms WONG Siu-fung of the Alliance on the Fight for 15-Year Free Education and Ms CHOW Wai-chun of the Hong Kong Early Childhood Educators Association pointed out that the KG sector was also subject to a basket of monitoring measures, such as the Quality Review and the requirements under the Child Care Services Ordinance. Some of these measures were not applicable to the aided school sector.

17. US(Ed) reiterated that in formulating the new policy, the Administration had given due consideration to the views expressed by the KG sector and stakeholders. It was after very careful consideration that the Administration had come to the view that it was more appropriate to provide KGs with a recommended salary range under the free quality KG education policy. Mr NG Leung-sing concurred with the Administration. He was concerned that instead of focusing on remuneration-related issues, more attention should be paid to the dedication and commitment of KG teachers, which were vital for the implementation of quality KG education.

18. Dr Kenneth CHAN remarked that after the remuneration practices of university staff had been delinked from that of civil servants, the remuneration system in the higher education sector had been de-stabilized. He was aware that early childhood education was a popular undergraduate programme. Nonetheless,

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in the absence of a mandatory salary scale, graduates might become hesitant in developing a career in KG education.

19. In reply, US(Ed) reiterated that under the free quality KG education policy, KGs would be encouraged to provide a career ladder by introducing a three-level teaching staff structure comprising the principal, senior teachers and class teachers. The Administration had recommended a salary range with a view to facilitating KGs to set reasonable salaries for their teachers. The new arrangements would cater for the needs of serving and prospective KG teachers.

20. The Chairman shared the view of some members that consideration should be given to setting up a mandatory salary scale to ensure that KGs would offer competitive remuneration to attract new blood and retain experienced teachers in the profession. He urged the Administration to work closely with the KG sector with a view to improving the salary arrangements under the free quality KG education policy.

21. US(Ed) assured members that the Administration was committed to enhancing the quality of KG education in Hong Kong. It had all along recognized the importance of a quality and stable teaching force, the professional development of KG teachers as well as other factors contributing to quality KG education. He informed members that the full-year recurrent expenditure on free quality KG education policy would amount to HK\$6.7 billion in the 2017-2018 school year, representing a substantial increase of more than 60% from the estimated recurrent expenditure on pre-primary education of HK\$4.1 billion in the 2015-2016 school year. US(Ed) stressed that the Administration would continue to take steps to promote the sustainable development of quality KG education.

Subsidy for staff remuneration

22. On the amount of subsidy for staff remuneration, the Deputy Chairman noted that it would be calculated with reference to the mid-point salary of KG teachers. He expressed concern that KGs which had employed a large number of long-serving teachers might not have sufficient funding to meet the high expenditure on staff salaries. As a result, it would give rise to a high wastage rate of experienced KG teachers. The Deputy Chairman urged the Administration to provide full reimbursement to KGs for teaching staff salaries under the new policy.

23. Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che referred to the lump-sum grant implemented in the social welfare sector, the amount of which was capped at the mid-point salaries of the respective ranks of staff. They said that this funding mode had led to adverse consequences in the social welfare sector, notably the displacement of experienced and longer-serving staff. They cautioned that the calculation of subsidy for staff remuneration under the free quality KG education policy should be free from such drawbacks.

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24. In this regard, US(Ed) advised that under the new policy, KGs would be required to observe the rules and guidelines set by EDB to ensure that the government subsidy would be used appropriately. A specific portion of the subsidy would be designated as the salary portion for teaching staff and could only be used for this purpose. KGs might deploy any part of the remaining portion of government subsidy for teaching staff salaries, but not vice versa. To encourage KGs to optimize the use of the subsidy on staff remuneration, EDB would claw back excessive surplus in the salary portion.

Migration to the new policy

25. Dr Priscilla LEUNG pointed out that KG education was crucial in laying the foundation of children's balanced development and life-long learning. She noted from the depositions that some KGs might be unable to meet the high expenditure on staff salaries for their long-serving teaching staff when the free quality KG education policy was implemented. She enquired whether the Administration would provide support to the KG sector for migration to the new policy.

26. US(Ed) advised that eligible KGs would be provided with additional financial support in the form of a one-off time-limited tide-over grant ("ToG") for two years starting from the 2017-2018 school year. During the period covered by ToG, eligible KGs could make use of ToG to defray their salary expenses for their long-serving teaching staff who received higher salaries. At the same time, these KGs should formulate their school-specific financial and staffing policy for migration to the new policy.

27. The Deputy Chairman and Dr Priscilla LEUNG considered that the disbursement of ToG for only the first two years upon the launch of the new policy might not be sufficient for some KGs. In their view, disbursement of ToG should continue until the retirement of these long-serving teaching staff. US(Ed) took note of members' concern and said that the Administration would closely monitor the situation when the new policy was implemented.

28. Ms Starry LEE concurred that the free quality KG education policy was a significant improvement in KG education. However, she was concerned about the viability of KGs of a smaller operating scale, and suggested that the Administration should proactively assist these KGs to migrate to the new policy, as well as put in place a mechanism to handle salary-related complaints of KG teachers. Furthermore, the Administration should ensure that under the new policy, the salaries of long-serving teaching staff would not be less favourable than their existing remuneration.

29. In response, US(Ed) advised that in the 2015-2016 school year, the median monthly salary of teachers working full-time in KGs was about HK\$19,700. Meanwhile, the lower end of the recommended salary range for KG teachers was HK\$18,000 based on the price level in the 2013-2014 school year. If the salary range was adjusted to take into account the price changes for some five years when

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the new policy was rolled out in the 2017-2018 school year, it could be expected that even the lower end of the salary range would exceed the existing level of HK\$19,700 for KG teachers. Hence, the salaries payable to KG teachers would likely exceed the prevailing remuneration levels.

30. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan enquired about the factors that the Administration would take into account when adjusting the recommended salary range for KG teaching staff. Some members including the Deputy Chairman, Ms Starry LEE and Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che opined that apart from the Consumer Price Index, the Administration should consider other factors, such as salary increases in the past years, when adjusting the recommended salary range. US(Ed) took note of members' concerns and said that the Administration would devise an appropriate mechanism for adjusting the recommended salary range.

31. Noting that the Administration would soon promulgate the arrangements for implementing the new policy, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung enquired whether the approach of adopting a recommended salary range for KG teachers could be changed. US(Ed) confirmed that to implement the free quality KG education policy in the 2017-2018 school year, the Administration would need to finalize and promulgate various detailed arrangements, including the recommended salary ranges for KG staff, to all KGs in July 2016. He assured members that the Administration would take note of the views expressed by members and stakeholders when mapping out the future development of the free quality KG education policy.

III. Latest development on "Using Putonghua as the Medium of Instruction for Teaching the Chinese Language Subject" in primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong

(LC Paper No. CB(4)1181/15-16(02) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)1181/15-16(03) -- Background brief entitled "Using Putonghua as the medium of instruction for teaching the Chinese Language Subject in primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat)

32. Members noted the background brief prepared by the Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(4)1181/15-16(03)].

Briefing by the Administration

33. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the latest situation of using Putonghua as the medium of instruction for teaching the Chinese Language subject ("PMIC") in primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong as well as the findings of a longitudinal study on the implementation of PMIC ("Longitudinal Study") conducted by the Education University of Hong Kong ("EdUHK"), as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)1181/15-16(02)].

Discussion

34. Before proceeding to the discussion, the Chairman informed members that he had received the wording of a motion proposed by the Deputy Chairman, a copy of which was tabled at the meeting. As the Panel would discuss the matters concerned in the ensuing discussion, he would not arrange further debate for the motion. Members raised no objection.

Implementing PMIC in schools

35. Ms Cyd HO agreed with the policy objective to enhance the biliteracy and trilingualism of students. Since Hong Kong was an international city, students should be encouraged to learn more languages. However, she opined that learning Putonghua and implementing PMIC were two different matters. Ms HO doubted whether implementing PMIC was consistent with the policy of mother-tongue teaching because Putonghua was not the mother tongue of the majority of students in Hong Kong.

36. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen said that he had no objection to students learning Putonghua, but he opposed the implementation of PMIC. He expressed concern about the declining Cantonese proficiency of people in Hong Kong, in particular the mispronunciation of Cantonese words. Given that Cantonese was the mother tongue of the majority of people in Hong Kong, Dr Kenneth CHAN queried whether there was any solid evidence of the effectiveness of PMIC.

37. Mr Gary FAN said that according to the findings of a survey recently conducted by Neo Democrats, out of about 500 primary schools in Hong Kong, more than 60% had already implemented PMIC. Parents who wished to find a primary school which adopted Cantonese in teaching the Chinese Language subject ("CMIC") would have limited choice. He considered that the prevailing policy to promote PMIC would undermine the flexibility of individual schools in making their own professional judgement.

38. The Deputy Chairman noted from the findings of the Longitudinal Study that there was no conclusive evidence on the effectiveness of PMIC in enhancing the proficiency of students in Chinese language. He also noted that implementing

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PMIC would bring about some problems. For example, students might become reluctant to answer questions in PMIC classes. The Deputy Chairman was concerned whether students' Chinese proficiency, as reflected in their attainments in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education ("HKDSE") Examination, had declined as a result of the implementation of PMIC in schools.

39. Referring to the experience of her sons who had attended secondary schools adopting the local curriculum, Dr Priscilla LEUNG said that she would not agree that students' performance in the Chinese Language subject of HKDSE Examination had deteriorated as a result of the implementation of PMIC in schools. She considered that the implementation of PMIC should be subject to the professional decision of schools. Any general requirement on schools to fully adopt PMIC or CMIC might not be in the best interest of students.

40. Mr Michael TIEN expressed his condolences to SED over the passing away of his wife. Mr TIEN was concerned that some schools might have adopted PMIC because the Administration had set PMIC as the long-term vision. He sought clarification whether schools would be allowed to implement PMIC with reference to their own circumstances.

41. SED advised that the Government's language education policy was to promote biliteracy and trilingualism of students. All along, it had been a school-based decision of primary and secondary schools on whether to use Putonghua or Cantonese as the medium of instruction for teaching the Chinese Language subject having regard to the readiness of teachers, ability of students, the language environment, availability of learning and teaching support. The Administration had no plan to expedite the implementation of PMIC in schools, nor to set any specific implementation timetable. SED further informed members that apart from primary schools which fully adopted either CMIC or PMIC, more than 50% of primary schools currently operated a mixed mode of PMIC and CMIC classes. Therefore, students and parents had many schools for consideration in respect of the medium of instruction for teaching the Chinese Language subject.

42. Ms Starry LEE noted from the findings of the Longitudinal Study that senior primary students and junior secondary students in PMIC classes performed better in listening, reading and writing. She considered that the Administration should study whether PMIC was implemented in other places where the majority of the population used Cantonese; and if yes, the effectiveness of PMIC in enhancing the Chinese proficiency of the students.

43. The Chairman noted that Cantonese was also widely used in Macao. He requested the Administration to provide information on the medium of instruction for teaching the Chinese Language subject in Macao after its reunification with the Mainland. The Chairman also requested the Administration to provide information on the Chinese proficiency of students in places such as

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Hong Kong, Macao, the Mainland and Taiwan where the population was predominantly Chinese.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's written response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)1257/15-16(01) on 18 July 2016.)

44. Mr Gary FAN was concerned whether teachers were well-equipped in PMIC. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that teachers with good subject knowledge in Chinese language might not be able to teach effectively in Putonghua. The Chairman was concerned whether there were sufficient local teachers who were qualified to teach the Chinese Language subject in Putonghua. Ms Cyd HO considered that the learning of Chinese language also involved the cultural and literary aspects. She was concerned that in order to meet the long-term target of adopting PMIC, schools would recruit Putonghua-speaking teachers from the Mainland to teach the Chinese Language subject. This would not be conducive to enhancing the understanding of Cantonese culture among the next generation of students.

45. Ms Starry LEE noted that according to the findings of the Longitudinal Study, schools should consider whether they had fulfilled the pre-requisites prior to implementing PMIC. In this regard, Ms LEE expressed concern about the support available to schools and teachers for implementing PMIC in schools.

46. The Deputy Secretary for Education (5) ("DS(Ed)5") advised that teachers teaching the Chinese Language subject and Putonghua had to meet the respective qualifications requirements. As teaching effectiveness of PMIC built on effective pedagogical knowledge in Chinese Language and Putonghua, the Administration would liaise with teacher education institutions to explore feasible options to enhance teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills for PMIC.

Long-term vision of PMIC

47. Some members, including the Deputy Chairman, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, Mr Gary FAN and Mr Michael TIEN, noted that according to the findings of the Longitudinal Study, no conclusion was made on whether PMIC was more effective in teaching the Chinese Language subject. Notwithstanding, EDB had stated that it would continue to pursue the long-term vision of PMIC. Mr LEUNG, Mr FAN and Mr TIEN considered it necessary for the Administration to explain why it had made such a decision. The Deputy Chairman said that biliteracy and trilingualism of students could be promoted by different means other than PMIC. He would propose to move a motion urging the Government to abolish the long-term vision of PMIC.

48. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan supported the long-term vision of PMIC and noted from the findings of the Longitudinal Study that students in PMIC classes had performed better in some domains such as writing. She considered that in the

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longer run, Hong Kong students would benefit from being proficient in Putonghua. Dr CHIANG said that nowadays, in many foreign countries, learning of Chinese (Putonghua) had taken the place of English as the most popular second-language subject among students. She highlighted that the increase in percentages of schools implementing PMIC was indicative of schools' support for PMIC.

49. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan and Dr Priscilla LEUNG objected to the motion proposed by the Deputy Chairman. Ms Starry LEE said that Members of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong disagreed with the motion to be moved by the Deputy Chairman urging for abolition of PMIC as the long-term vision.

50. SED advised that the Longitudinal Study adopted a case-study approach to examine the process, changes and impacts to schools in adopting PMIC, as well as the effects of PMIC or CMIC on students' performance. Although no conclusion was made on whether PMIC was more effective than CMIC in teaching the Chinese Language subject, the findings from the study had reflected that PMIC had no negative impacts on the studying of the Chinese Language subject. Students' performance under PMIC and CMIC varied in different domains (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and stages of schooling (senior primary and junior secondary stages).

51. SED stressed that schools could decide whether and how to implement PMIC having regard to their own circumstances. EDB would not specify any timetable or mandatory requirement on schools to implement PMIC. According to the findings of surveys conducted by the Standing Committee of Language Education and Research ("SCOLAR"), from the 2008-2009 to 2015-2016 school years, the percentages of primary schools and secondary schools implementing PMIC had increased from 55% to about 72% and from 31% to about 37% respectively. The professional decision of schools to implement PMIC should be respected. SED said that at present, the Administration did not consider it appropriate to abolish the long-term vision of PMIC.

52. Dr Kenneth CHAN and Dr Fernando CHEUNG queried that pursuing PMIC as the long-term vision was based on political consideration rather than pedagogical evidence. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen noted that the research team of EdUHK had submitted the report of the Longitudinal Study to EDB in February 2015. However, EDB did not provide the report to the Panel on Education at its meeting on 13 April 2015, nor to the Committee on Chinese Language Education of Curriculum Development Council in November 2015. Mr CHAN queried whether the Administration had deliberately postponed the release of the report of the Longitudinal Study.

53. SED advised that the percentages of primary schools and secondary schools implementing PMIC had increased steadily in recent years. It was up to individual schools to decide whether to adopt PMIC and the pace of implementing PMIC

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having regard to their own circumstances. He stressed that the implementation of PMIC was an initiative under the prevailing policy on education.

54. On the provision of the study report, DS(Ed)5 clarified that the research team submitted the initial draft report of the Longitudinal Study to EDB in February 2015. Pending finalization of the report, EDB had included information on some initial findings of the study in its discussion paper provided for the Panel meeting of 13 April 2015. SCOLAR was still discussing the findings of the final report when the Committee on Chinese Language Education held its meeting in November 2015.

Motion

55. Concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that he would proceed to deal with the motion to be moved by the Deputy Chairman without further debate as the relevant issues had been deliberated.

56. Speaking on his motion, the Deputy Chairman urged the Administration to abolish the long-term vision of PMIC since there was no general evidence showing that students could benefit from PMIC. He considered that the implementation of PMIC should be subject to the professional decision of individual schools.

57. At the invitation of the Chairman, SED recapitulated that the study report had revealed that students in PMIC classes performed better in some domains. The implementation of PMIC was a school-based decision rather than a mandatory requirement. The Administration would not agree that the long-term vision of PMIC should be abolished.

58. The Chairman put the motion to vote. Of the members present, the following 10 members voted for the motion –

Mr IP Kin-yuen, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung,
Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Dr Kenneth CHAN, Mr Gary FAN,
Mr Charles MOK, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen, Ms Cyd HO and
Mr Michael TIEN.

The following five members voted against the motion –

Mr Christopher CHUNG, Mr NG Leung-sing, Ms Starry LEE,
Dr Priscilla LEUNG and Dr CHIANG Lai-wan.

No member abstained.

59. The Chairman declared that the motion was passed (wording of the motion at **Appendix II**).

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(*Post-meeting note:* The Administration's written response to the motion passed at the meeting was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)1251/15-16(01) on 15 July 2016.)

IV. The overall development of education in Hong Kong

(LC Paper No. CB(4)1181/15-16(04) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

60. The Chairman said that he would extend the meeting for 15 minutes to 12:15 pm to allow more time for discussion.

Briefing by the Administration

61. At the invitation of the Chairman, SED briefed members on the developments in education and policy initiatives of the EDB in the past two years or so, as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)1181/15-16(04)].

(*Post-meeting note:* The speaking note of SED tabled at the meeting was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)1212/15-16(06) on 4 July 2016.)

Discussion*Concerns about pressure on students under the existing education system*

62. Mr Michael TIEN stressed the importance of a happy childhood and expressed concern about the pressure of homework on students. He recalled that when whole-day primary schooling was implemented, it was intended that students would complete their homework at school so that they could have time for other activities at home, such as reading, playing or preparing for upcoming lessons. However, the current situation was that students were often assigned too much homework to do at home. In this regard, he opined that EDB should consider issuing strict guidelines to schools. Mr TAM Yiu-chung noted that many parents were concerned about the pressure on students arising from heavy homework and examinations.

63. The Deputy Chairman said that shortly before the meeting, he had received a number of submissions expressing concerns about issues such as pressure on students and student suicide. He urged the Administration to take steps to remove undue pressure on students, such as abolishing the Territory-wide System Assessment ("TSA") at Primary 3 and launching the "School Retreat Day", as well as strengthening support for students.

64. On the concern about homework, SED said that EDB had issued guidelines in late October 2015 to encourage schools to formulate an appropriate and

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transparent school-based homework policy. Schools were also encouraged to include the formulation of homework policy in their school development plans and to gauge the views of parents when formulating the policy. SED further said that the Administration would encourage schools to take steps to enable students to complete their homework at school.

65. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che said that as he was aware, some members of the Committee on Prevention of Student Suicides ("the Committee") considered the terms of reference of the Committee too restrictive. As such, they were precluded from reviewing the education system comprehensively. Mr CHEUNG opined that the interim report of the Committee should be released early so that the public could better understand the direction and progress of work of the Committee. Dr Kenneth CHAN said that some deputations had urged the Administration to release the interim report as early as possible and to meet with them to discuss measures to prevent student suicides.

66. SED informed members that he would meet the Chairman of the Committee shortly and the Committee was expected to submit its interim report to EDB in July 2016. The Acting Permanent Secretary for Education/Deputy Secretary for Education (3) ("Acting PS(Ed)/DS(Ed)3") advised that the terms of reference of the Committee focused on studying the possible causes of student suicides and recommending preventive measures. She stressed that student suicide was a complex problem with multiple causes and could not be attributed solely to the education system.

Impact of demographic changes on provision of school places

67. Mr TAM Yiu-chung opined that the Administration should make reference to population projections, and planned for sufficient places from kindergarten to tertiary levels. Mr NG Leung-sing expressed concern about insufficient student enrolment by self-financing post-secondary institutions due to the decline in number of secondary school graduates. He enquired whether the feasibility of merging some self-financing post-secondary institutions would be considered.

68. SED advised that he was a member of the Steering Committee on Population Policy, and had been keeping in view the development of education-related issues in the light of demographic changes. He assured members that the provision of school places at different levels would be planned with reference to the latest projected student population. SED further said that the self-financing post-secondary education sector would take appropriate measures in response to the fluctuation in student population. The Government attached great importance to the development of the tertiary education sector in terms of its quality and quantity, and would provide appropriate support to the sector as necessary.

Issues related to students with special needs

69. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che enquired whether the Administration would review its policy on integrated education for the purpose of enhancing support for students with special educational needs. In response, US(Ed) advised that the Administration had actively followed up the recommendations of the Subcommittee on Integrated Education formed under the Panel. One of the initiatives was the launch of the Pilot Project on Special Educational Needs Coordinators. The Administration would continue to take measures to cater for the diverse needs of students.

70. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen was concerned about the policy and measures, if any, to protect sexual minorities from discrimination and bullying in schools. He opined that the Administration should strengthen communication with stakeholders in this regard.

71. Acting PS(Ed)/DS(Ed)3 advised that the Administration had not received any complaint about discrimination against sexual minorities in schools. EDB had all along attached great importance to the creation of an inclusive school culture under which all were equal irrespective of their sexual orientation, and would not tolerate bullying or any discriminatory act in schools. Through circulars and guidelines, EDB had reminded schools and teachers to eliminate discrimination and to ensure the safety of students in schools. The Administration also organized seminars and sharing sessions for teachers on the handling of bullying according to relevant guidelines.

Issues related to the teaching force

72. The Chairman pointed out that a stable and quality teaching force was vital for the development of education. During this legislative session, the Panel had discussed staff establishment and salary structure of primary school teachers, as well as the salary structure of kindergarten teachers. He considered it incumbent upon the Administration to sustain a quality teaching force and provide teachers with job security. Mr TAM Yiu-chung noted that nowadays, many students attended tuition classes after school. Many private tuition schools were offering attractive remuneration to compete with ordinary schools for experienced and well-qualified teachers. Hence, Mr TAM considered that the Administration might need to take appropriate measures to help ordinary schools retain their teachers.

73. SED advised that it was the Government's policy that schools should cater for the needs of their students and offer appropriate assistance and support to cater for learners' diversity. Under normal circumstances, it was not necessary for students to attend tuition schools to meet their learning needs. Meanwhile, the Administration would keep in view the turnover of teachers in ordinary schools.

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74. With agreement of members, the Chairman said that the meeting would be further extended beyond 12:15 pm to allow sufficient time to complete the discussion of this agenda item.

Other concerns

75. Mr NG Leung-sing noted that in 2016-2017, the estimated total expenditure on education would amount to \$84 billion. He said that the Administration should listen to the views of different stakeholders and enhance education policies to meet the changes in society. Dr Kenneth CHAN noted with concern that in recent years, a number of education-related issues, such as the implementation of national education, TSA, the quality of self-financing post-secondary programmes, and the proposed Belt and Road Scholarship Scheme, etc. had aroused a lot of controversy. The Deputy Chairman concurred that the Administration should listen to the views and concerns of stakeholders in formulating ways to enhance the education system.

76. The Chairman opined that government policies should keep pace with changes in the society. Referring to schools operating in matchbox-style and sub-standard premises, he highlighted that students studying in these schools had been disadvantaged by the adverse teaching and learning environment. Regarding tertiary education, the Chairman said that the insufficient provision of publicly-funded first-year-first-degree places was not conducive to the nurturing of talents for Hong Kong.

77. SED re-affirmed that the Government had all along monitored the development of the education system and taken appropriate measures to address various concerns.

78. The Chairman said that national education would facilitate the effective implementation of "One Country, Two Systems" in Hong Kong. In this regard, SED said that subsequent to the decision of the Government in late 2012, schools could implement national education on a voluntary basis having regard to their own circumstances.

V. Any other business

79. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:30 pm.

Panel on Education**Meeting on Saturday, 2 July 2016, at 9:30 am****Agenda item II: Review on the salary structure of kindergarten teachers****Summary of views and concerns expressed by related bodies**

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
1.	幼師薪酬關注組	Presentation of views as detailed in the submission [LC Paper No. CB(4)1206/15-16(01)]
2.	The Alliance on the Fight for 15-Year Free Education	The deputation urged the Administration to establish a mandatory salary scale for compliance of the kindergarten ("KG") sector under the free quality KG education policy so as to give due recognition to the experience of KG teachers, in particular when they changed employment from one KG to another. It also expressed concern that KGs might not be able to employ experienced teachers due to insufficient funding and urged the Administration to provide full reimbursement to KGs for teaching-staff salaries.
3.	Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union	Presentation of views as detailed in the submission [LC Paper No. CB(4)1212/15-16(03)]
4.	Hong Kong Early Childhood Educators Association	Presentation of views as detailed in the submission [LC Paper No. CB(4)1212/15-16(04)]
5.	Council of Non-profit Making Organization for Pre-primary Education	Presentation of views as detailed in the submission [LC Paper No. CB(4)1212/15-16(05)]

教育事務委員會
Panel on Education

在2016年7月2日會議上就議程項目
"香港中、小學推行「以普通話教授中國語文科」最新進展"
通過的議案

Motion passed under the agenda item
"Latest development on 'Using Putonghua
as the Medium of Instruction for Teaching the Chinese Language Subject'
in primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong"
at the meeting on 2 July 2016

議案措辭

鑑於本港試行「普教中」多年仍未有廣泛證據顯示「普教中」能讓學生得益，本事務委員會促請當局取消以普通話教授中國語文科作為「遠程目標」。

(葉建源議員動議)

Wording of the Motion

(Translation)

Given that after years of trying out "PMIC" in Hong Kong, there still lacks general evidence showing that students can benefit from "PMIC", this Panel urges the Administration to abolish the "long-term vision" of using Putonghua as the medium of instruction for teaching the Chinese Language Subject.

(Moved by Hon IP Kin-yuen)