

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

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**Panel on Education**

**Meeting on 14 November 2016**

**Background brief on issues related to student suicide**

**Purpose**

This paper summarizes the deliberations and concerns of the Panel on Education ("the Panel") on issues related to student suicide.

**Background**

2. After commencement of the 2015-2016 school year, more than 20 student suicide cases occurred in less than half a year. In response to the student suicide spate, the Education Bureau ("EDB") put forward the following five responsive measures in March 2016 to address the issue -

- (a) setting up the Committee on Prevention of Student Suicides<sup>1</sup> ("the Committee") to examine the causes of student suicides and make recommendations on appropriate preventive measures;
- (b) conducting regional-based seminars for parents and teachers on "Emotional Quotient and Resilience Enhancement";
- (c) conducting school-based talks on suicide prevention by educational psychologists;

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<sup>1</sup> The Committee was chaired by Professor Paul YIP, Director of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention at the University of Hong Kong, with members comprising school, parent, youth and student representatives; professionals from the healthcare and social welfare sectors and representatives of different government bureaux and departments.

- (d) forming a special team to provide additional support to schools on a need basis; and
- (e) developing an information kit on "Enhancing Life Resilience" for schools, parents and students.

Also, each public sector primary and secondary school and school under the Direct Subsidy Scheme was provided a special Home-School Co-operation ("HSC") Grant of \$5,000 to arrange parent education activities to strengthen parents' awareness of students' mental health.

### **Major views and concerns**

3. The Panel was gravely concerned about the occurrence of student suicide spate in the 2015-2016 school year and a special meeting was held on 21 March 2016 to deliberate on related issues. Two motions were respectively proposed by Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Mr Michael TIEN at the special meeting and were passed at the meeting on 22 March 2016. The wordings of the two motions are in **Appendix I**. The major views and concerns expressed by members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

#### Pressure of the existing education system on students

4. Members in general concurred that the Administration should critically review the existing education system with a view to alleviating students' pressure arising from learning and articulation. They urged the Administration to reduce unnecessary homework, drilling and examinations across the board; review the implementation of the Territory-wide System Assessment ("TSA"); provide more choices of curriculum and diversified pathways to cater for different needs of students; review the New Senior Secondary curriculum and increase subsidized university places to relieve the competition pressure on students.

5. The Administration assured members that it had all along monitored the development of the education system and taken appropriate measures to address various concerns. The measures included issuing guidelines to schools to urge them to formulate appropriate homework and assessment policies; undertaking a comprehensive review on TSA; conducting reviews on the NSS curriculum and assessment; launching Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors to increase the opportunities for subsidized higher education; and promoting vocational and professional education and training to provide multiple study pathways for students.

6. Some members proposed to formulate happiness assessment indicators for gauging students' levels of satisfaction with school life and introduce "School Retreat Day" in schools so as to create room for listening to students' voices and needs. According to the Administration, some schools were exploring the feasibility of making arrangement for reserving a half-day school day for similar purposes.

#### Life education

7. Some members took the view that the Administration should step up life education so as to nurture students' positive values and strengthen their adversity coping skills. According to the Administration, life education was incorporated in different subjects within the school curricula. Teaching materials were available from EDB's website and information kits would be available in April 2016. Schools were encouraged to enhance their life education through school-based activities according to their own circumstances and needs. Experiential learning activities were provided to primary and secondary students through various guidance projects. Professional development programmes would be strengthened to better equip teachers to provide appropriate support to students in facing adversity and managing stress.

#### Workload of teachers

8. Members were concerned about the heavy workload of teachers. On whether the student-to-teacher ratio could be enhanced so as to release learning and teaching capacity to facilitate the provision of support to students, the Administration advised that as announced in 2016 Policy Address, starting from the 2016-2017 school year, secondary schools would be allowed to turn the Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant and the Career and Life Planning Grant into regular teaching posts. The Administration subsequently advised that the overall student-to-teacher ratios in public sector secondary and primary schools have been improved significantly in the past few years, dropping from 18.0:1 and 18.4:1 in the 2005-2006 school year to 12.4:1 and 14.1:1 in the 2015-2016 school year (revised estimate) respectively.

#### Cross-sector services support

9. Members considered it necessary to provide additional resources to enhance professional support for students with mental health needs. The Administration advised that EDB had encouraged schools to adopt the Three-Tier Support Model under the existing integrated education policy to provide appropriate support students with mental illness. Also, the ratio of

educational psychologist-to-school would be enhanced to 1:4 progressively for public sector schools with a large number of students with special educational needs starting from the 2016-2017 school year.

10. In response to members' queries about the collaboration between the public and private sectors in the provision of adolescent psychiatric service, the Administration advised that schools could directly contact the service centres of the Early Assessment Service for Young People for seeking relevant professional advice and support.

11. Some members were worried that widespread news coverage on suicide cases might trigger more suicidal behavior through imitation and considered that the Administration should draw reference from overseas practice and formulate appropriate guidelines for local media. The Administration assured members that it would continue to work closely with different sectors to tackle the problem of student suicide from all fronts.

#### Special Home-School Co-operation Grant

12. Some members questioned the usefulness of the special HSC Grant in promoting home-school co-operation given the limited amount of \$5,000 per school. They were also concerned about the possible increase in teachers' workload arising from the use of the special HSC Grant to organize activities. Question had also been raised on whether the EDB would organize territory-wide parent education activities in collaboration with local experts of parent education.

13. As explained by the Administration, the special HSC Grant was a one-off special measure in addition to the five measures already announced to support students' development in mental health. It was expected that individual schools could use the special HSC Grant to subsidize Parent-Teacher Associations in arranging parent talks or activities by experts to facilitate parents to support the healthy mental development of children. It was not the intention of the Administration to require teachers to take up the work of organizing activities funded by the special HSC Grant.

#### Committee on Prevention of Student Suicides

14. Some members opined that the Committee should analyze past cases as the basis of making recommendations on preventive measures and include in its study whether students studying the local curriculum were subject to greater stress, as well as measures to strengthen parent education. In response, the Administration undertook to convey members' views to the Committee.

### **Relevant Council questions**

15. At the Council meetings of 2 and 16 March 2016, Hon Mrs Regina IP, Hon Albert CHAN, Hon WONG Yuk-man and Dr Hon Helena WONG respectively raised questions on the measures to prevent students from committing suicide and to alleviate the study pressure on students.

### **Latest position**

16. In July 2016, the Committee submitted its progress report with preliminary recommendations to the Secretary for Education. At the Panel meeting on 14 November 2016, the Administration will brief members on the recommendations in the Final Report of the Committee.

### **Relevant papers**

17. A list of relevant papers on the website of the Legislative Council is in the **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 4  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
10 November 2016

在 2016 年 3 月 21 日特別會議就議程項目 — "學生自殺問題"下提出，  
並在 2016 年 3 月 22 日會議上通過的議案

**Motion proposed under agenda item - "Issues related to student  
suicide" at the special meeting on 21 March 2016 and  
passed at the meeting on 22 March 2016**

### **議案措辭**

本委員會對本學年接連出現學生自殺的情況表示深感哀痛，對於多宗的自殺個案，我們認為不能簡化為單一或個人因素，而是涉及政策和制度的問題。本委員會促請政府當局為全港學校進行「學校休整日」，創造空間聆聽學生的聲音和需要、促進學生、教師及家長的關係、加強及落實生命教育的理念；同時亦須對教育同工作出支援、讓同工充份休息及整理工作經驗；全面減少及停止不必要的功課、操練及考試，在課程及學校活動上提供更多選擇予學生及家長。

本委員會亦促請教育局、勞工及福利局、食物及衛生局建立跨部門協調機制，推動及落實精神健康政策和支援，增加各專業人員人手，包括教學、輔導及醫療人員，全面改善班級與教師及校本專業人員的比例，以期釋放學與教的空間，更能做好學生支援工作。本委員會亦建議政府檢討新高中課程及香港中學文憑試實施後，學生壓力情況的改變，長遠而言增加大學資助學額，減輕學生競爭壓力。

(張超雄議員動議，張國柱議員，葉建源議員，郭榮鏗議員及陳家洛議員和議)

**Wording of the Motion**

(Translation)

This Panel expresses deep grief at the spate of student suicidal cases that have occurred in the current academic year. We consider that these suicidal cases, instead of simply caused by one single factor or personal factors, were related to various policy and institutional issues. This Panel urges the Administration to introduce "School Retreat Day" in schools across the territory so as to create room for listening to students' voices and needs, strengthening the relationship among students, teachers and parents, as well as enhancing and realizing the concept of life education. Meanwhile, the Administration must support education workers and provide them with sufficient time to take a rest and consolidate their work experiences; reduce and discontinue unnecessary homework, drilling and examinations across the board; and offer more choices of curriculum and school activities for students and parents.

This Panel also urges the Education Bureau, the Labour and Welfare Bureau, the Food and Health Bureau to establish an inter-departmental coordination mechanism to promote and implement the mental health policy and support measures; deploy additional professional manpower, including teaching, counselling and medical staff; introduce overall improvements to the ratio of class to teachers and the ratio of class to school-based professionals, so as to release learning and teaching capacity to facilitate the provision of support to students. This Panel also proposes that the Government should review how pressure on students has changed subsequent to the implementation of the new senior secondary curriculum and the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination, and that the Government should increase the number of subsidized university places in the long run to alleviate the competition pressure on students.

(Moved by Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung and seconded by Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che, Hon IP Kin-yuen, Hon Dennis KWOK and Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok)

在 2016 年 3 月 21 日特別會議就議程項目 — "學生自殺問題"下提出，  
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suicide" at the special meeting on 21 March 2016 and  
passed at the meeting on 22 March 2016**

**議案措辭**

本人在 2014 年 11 月 5 日立法會會議動議『還學生快樂童年』議案，並獲全票通過，促請政府正視學童壓力，找出對症下藥的措施。其後教育局於 2015 年 2 月就議案提交進度報告，對於本人及其他議員所提出的建議，未有充分、全面跟進。近日發生多宗學生輕生事件，更見教育局責無旁貸，當局檢討教育制度、紓緩學生壓力的工作裹足不前。本會促請當局就『還學生快樂童年』議案，以及所有曾就議案發言的議員的意見作出跟進，正視教育制度對學生造成的傷害，將檢討教育制度納入專責委員會的處理事項，並就以下範疇盡快展開研究：

- (1) 為學生訂立快樂評估指標，透過焦點小組，了解學生對校園生活、學習情況、家人和朋輩關係的滿足度，教育局及每間學校需要跟進評估結果；
- (2) 全面調查全港中、小學的家課量，以及家課量與學童壓力的關係，確保學校在課時內安排時段讓學生完成家課；
- (3) 新高中學制推行前後，大學生應對壓力的心理質素變化；
- (4) 盡快回應『還學生快樂童年』議案所提出的措施，包括制訂完善的、具持續性的教育課程，供家長和教師參加，以灌輸正能量給學生；全面推廣『翻轉課堂』及其他創新教學法；拓展多元出路，以減輕學生的應試壓力。

(田北辰議員動議)



### **Wording of the Motion**

(Translation)

A motion on "Returning a happy childhood to students" moved by me at the Council meeting of 5 November 2014 urging the Government to face up to the pressure on students and introduce measures to resolve the problem was unanimously passed. The Education Bureau ("EDB") subsequently provided a progress report on the motion in February 2015, but the report did not adequately and fully follow up the suggestions made by me and by other Members. It is evident from the recent spate of student suicidal cases that EDB is duty bound to take actions to ease the problem but little progress has been made in reviewing the education system and alleviating the pressure on students. This Panel urges the authorities to follow up the motion on "Returning a happy childhood to students" and the views expressed by all the Members who spoke on the motion; face up to the harm done by the education system to students; include a review of the education system into the matters to be dealt with by the relevant committee; and expeditiously embark on a study covering the following areas:

- (1) to formulate a set of happiness assessment indicators for students so as to gauge, through focus groups, students' levels of satisfaction towards school life, learning and their relationship with families and peers, while EDB and individual schools are required to follow up such assessment results;
- (2) to conduct a comprehensive survey, on a territory-wide basis, on the amount of homework in primary and secondary schools as well as the relationship between the amount of homework and the pressure on students, so as to ensure that schools allocate time slot(s) during lesson time for students to complete their homework at school;
- (3) to study the changes in the psychological quality of university students in coping with pressure before and after the implementation of the new senior secondary academic structure;

- (4) to expeditiously respond to the measures proposed in the motion on "Returning a happy childhood to students", including devising comprehensive and sustainable education programmes for parents and teachers so as to enable them to impart positive energy to students; to widely promote "flipped classroom" and other innovative pedagogies; and to provide diversified pathways to students to reduce the examination pressure on them.

(Moved by Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun)

## Appendix II

### List of relevant papers

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Paper</b>
Legislative Council	2.3.2016	<a href="#">Official Record of Proceedings</a> <a href="#">Pages 7 – 17 (Question 1)</a>
Legislative Council	16.3.2016	<a href="#">Official Record of Proceedings</a> <a href="#">Pages 9 – 65</a> <a href="#">(Urgent Questions 1 to 3)</a>
Panel on Education	21.3.2016 (Item I)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a> <a href="#">CB(4)764/15-16(01)</a> <a href="#">CB(4)979/15-16(01)</a>
Panel on Education	22.3.2016 (Item I)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a> <a href="#">CB(4)1190/15-16(01)</a>

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