



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局  
Education Bureau  
Government Secretariat, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
The People's Republic of China

本局檔案 Our Ref. :

來函檔案 Your Ref. : CB4/PL/ED

電話 Telephone : (852) 3509 8529

傳真 Fax Line : (852) 3104 0425

27 December 2017

Ms Angel Wong  
Clerk to Panel on Education  
Legislative Council  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central  
Hong Kong

Dear Ms Wong,

**Panel on Education**  
**Follow-up to the Meeting on 13 February 2017 under the Agenda Item of**  
**“The Liberal Studies subject under the New Senior Secondary Curriculum”**

I refer to your letter dated 15 February 2017. Our response to the two motions passed at the captioned meeting is set out at the Annex for Members' reference.

(NG Ka Shing, Joe)  
for Secretary for Education

**Panel on Education**  
**Motions passed under the agenda item of**  
**“The Liberal Studies subject under the New Senior Secondary**  
**Curriculum” on 13 February 2017**

The Panel on Education passed two motions under the agenda item of “The Liberal Studies subject under the New Senior Secondary Curriculum” at the above meeting : (i) urging the Government to comprehensively review the Liberal Studies ("LS") subject, and replace the existing score-based grading system for LS examination papers with a "passed/failed" grading system for the LS subject, so as to reduce the examination pressure on students; and (ii) urging the Government to reinstate the Liberal Studies Curriculum Support Grant for senior secondary classes, so as to provide necessary support for LS teachers and students in the teaching and learning of the LS subject, thereby enhancing the concept and teaching outcomes of the LS subject as well as reducing the workload of teachers and students. The consolidated response of the Education Bureau (EDB) is set out in the following paragraphs.

After the first cohort of students under the New Academic Structure (NAS) had completed the Senior Secondary Curriculum and the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination in 2012, the Curriculum Development Council (CDC), the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) and the EDB jointly launched a NAS review. Recommendations of the review were discussed and endorsed by relevant committees under the CDC and the HKEAA. The respective committees are all well-represented, with members comprising representatives of post-secondary institutions, school principals, serving teachers, etc. The short-term review was completed in April 2013 while the medium-term review was completed in June

2015. The review of individual senior secondary subjects is conducted on a need basis for the continual renewal of the subject curricula. The review of LS, as an integral part of the NAS review, was similarly conducted by the relevant LS committees<sup>1</sup> under the CDC and the HKEAA to enhance the operationalisation of the curriculum, school-based assessment and public examination.

The suggestion of the Panel on Education of replacing the existing grading system for LS examination papers with a “passed/failed” grading system was discussed by the CDC Committee on Liberal Studies and the CDC-HKEAA Committee on Liberal Studies at their meetings held in March, April, October and November 2017. These two committees affirmed the value of LS and the revised curriculum as recommended in the medium-term review, and agreed in general to the existing grading system of the subject. The committees considered that the existing assessment mode and assessment criteria could reflect the performance and outcomes of students’ learning in a fair and effective manner. In addition, the grading of LS is closely related to the requirements of the university admission and the international benchmarking of the local curriculum. Any changes related to its grading system and assessment criteria should be carefully and comprehensively deliberated.

To follow up on the 2017 Policy Address, the EDB set up a task force in November to commence a review of the school curriculum. The task force members include academics, experienced educators, professionals, etc. The EDB understands that there are different views on LS in the community. These views will be relayed to the task force for deliberation in the review of the school curriculum.

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<sup>1</sup> The relevant committees of Liberal Studies include the CDC Committee on Liberal Studies, the CDC-HKEAA Committee on Liberal Studies and the HKDSE Liberal Studies Subject Committee.

Regarding the suggestion of the Panel on Education on reinstating the Liberal Studies Curriculum Support Grant (LSCSG), the EDB would like to provide relevant information and its response as follows:

The LSCSG was a one-off non-recurrent grant in the amount of \$320,000 disbursed to each publicly funded secondary school in the 2010/11 school year for a period of two years. Its purpose was to create, at the initial stage of implementing the NAS, favourable conditions for the introduction of LS so as to lay a sound foundation for the subject's future development. In 2012, in consideration of the utilisation of the grant by schools, the EDB decided to extend the tenure of the grant to cover the 2012/13 school year as well and invited schools to apply for an additional LSCSG with the maximum amount of \$160,000 for use in the 2012/13 school year. Schools should be aware of such arrangements. The tenure of the LSCSG and the additional LSCSG came to expire at the end of the 2012/13 school year and such provision has been discontinued. In fact, the resources provided for supporting the implementation of LS are not limited to the above grant. The EDB has provided each secondary school with the Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant<sup>2</sup> (SSCSG) from the 2009/10 school year onwards. Schools may use the SSCSG flexibly for recruiting teachers or teaching assistants, acquiring services and purchasing learning and teaching materials to facilitate the implementation of the senior secondary curriculum under the NAS. Besides, under the principle of school-based management, schools are provided with the Operating Expenses Block Grant / Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant and other recurrent grants. Schools can flexibly use the grants, in accordance with school-based

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<sup>2</sup> In order to allow schools to better prepare for implementing the NSS academic structure at its initial stage, and to handle the heavy workload effectively during the parallel running of both the old and new academic structures, the government disbursed the SSCSG one year earlier in the 2008/09 school year. Schools may turn the Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant (SSCSG) into regular teaching posts from the 2016/17 school year onwards.

needs, to support various educational measures, including the implementation of senior secondary LS and other subjects.

With the provision of various support measures on LS in recent years, including the publication of LS curriculum and assessment resources, the implementation of the streamlined measures on the School-based Assessment in LS and the revised curriculum, teachers' and students' workload has been alleviated. Their understanding of the breadth and depth of the curriculum and their mastery of the requirements of the public examination have also been enhanced. The EDB will continue to provide a wide array of measures to support the implementation of LS, including organising professional development programmes and networking activities for teachers, developing curriculum support materials, offering on-site support services and providing subject-based resources through the Liberal Studies Web-based Resource Platform. The EDB would not provide additional funding to specifically support LS alone at this juncture.

Education Bureau

December 2017