



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

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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 3 November 2017**

Please kindly find our response to the six motions passed at the meeting is set out at Annex for Members' reference.

Yours sincerely,

(Ms Fiona Au)  
for Secretary for Education

Encl.

**Response to the motions passed under the agenda item  
“Matters arising from the policy briefing on 31 October 2017”  
at the meeting on 3 November 2017**

Wording of the Motion

This Panel urges the Administration to expeditiously review in a comprehensive manner its education philosophies and system; examine the education goals at different learning stages, in particular kindergarten and primary schooling stages; study the incorporation of nurturing students’ learning interests (including but not limited to their interests in learning Chinese and English), learning desire, emotion management, adaptability, etc. into the major education goals of the kindergarten and primary schooling stages; and commence a study on how to evaluate the aforesaid goals.

(Moved by Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun)

Response

Our education aims to nurture the future generations as quality citizens who are socially responsible and cultivated with a sense of national identity, a love for Hong Kong and an international perspective. The Education Bureau (EDB) attaches great importance to children’s balanced development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics in achieving whole-person education. The ongoing renewal of school curriculum is in line with the education blueprint for the 21st century developed by the Education Commission in 2000, which focuses on fostering students’ learning to learn capabilities for whole-person development and lifelong learning. It has also taken into account the experiences gathered from the implementation of the New Academic Structure and the senior secondary curriculum implemented since 2009, and thoroughly considered stakeholders’ views. The current curriculum is broad and balanced, with diverse and specialised subjects to cater for students’ academic, professional and vocational development needs.

On kindergarten and primary education, the “Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide” (2017) sets out fostering in children an interest in

learning and an inquisitive mind, as well as instilling in children positive values and attitudes, etc. as curriculum aims. The “Basic Education Curriculum Guide - To Sustain, Deepen and Focus on Learning to Learn (Primary 1 - 6)” (2014) also sets out the seven learning goals of primary education, focusing on further promotion of whole-person development of students, for example, strengthening their self-directed learning skills (including learning motivation), developing their multiple intelligence and helping them adopt a healthy lifestyle. Through the implementation of moral and civil education, schools help students nurture positive values and attitudes as well as develop good interpersonal relationship.

The Task Force on Review of School Curriculum was established by the EDB last year to comprehensively review the primary and secondary curricula, and explore how to make these curricula rigorous and forward-looking in a bid to help students enhance their capacity to learn and acquire the values and qualities essential in the 21st century, and prepare them for future challenges and the needs of our society. Meanwhile, the Task Force is concerned about how to develop curricula that cater better for students’ diverse abilities, interests, needs and aspirations.

### Wording of the Motion

This Panel urges the Administration to examine the conduct of this year's and future Territory-wide System Assessment/Basic Competency Assessment in alternate years on a random sampling basis and with anonymity of students/schools. The authorities may also examine, on the premise of anonymity of students/schools, the provision of examination papers in duplicate to participating schools on a random sampling or voluntary basis. One copy of the papers is made available to individual schools for them to identify their own weaknesses by making reference to the performance of their students in answering the questions in the examination papers, while the other copy is submitted together with those of other schools to the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority for data analysis, so as to assist the Government in formulating policies and deploying resources.

(Moved by Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun)

### Response

The Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy (the Committee) is currently studying issues related to the long-term arrangements for the Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA), including different administrative arrangements. In formulating the recommendations to be submitted, the Committee will consider the impact of different administrative arrangements and analyse in detail the views collected from the focus groups for school heads, teachers, school sponsoring bodies and parents. The Committee will submit a report to EDB upon completion of the review. EDB will consider the future arrangements after the Committee puts forward its recommendations.

### Wording of the Motion

This Panel urges the Government to set up a fully representative committee to examine whether and how the Territory-wide System Assessment/Basic Competency Assessment should be implemented in future, and to conduct public consultations.

(Moved by Hon IP Kin-yuen)

### Response

The Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy (the Committee) has been conducting a comprehensive review on TSA since October 2015. The Committee, which comprises professionals and scholars in the field of curriculum and assessment from tertiary institutions, frontline school heads and teachers, representatives of primary and secondary school councils and the Committee on Home-School Co-operation, etc., is widely representative.

In addition, with a view to listening to different views and recommendations from multiple perspectives, the Committee, in the review process, collects and gauges the views and recommendations of different stakeholders through various channels, including focus groups, questionnaire surveys, seminars, workshops, etc., so as to ensure that the recommendations of the review could reflect the views of different stakeholders and uphold the comprehensiveness and professionalism of the entire review.

The Committee submitted two review reports in 2016 and recommended a number of enhancement measures. Stakeholders generally agreed that the measures could effectively address public concerns about TSA. In early 2017, the Chairman of the Committee on Home-School Co-operation and District Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations, in response to the Committee's review reports, launched an initiative on "Opposing excessive drilling and making good use of assessment to provide feedback to learning and teaching", which received positive response and support from school sponsoring bodies, school councils and school heads associations. This fully reflects stakeholders' affirmation of the credibility of the Committee, as well as the professionalism and recognition of the review reports.

### Wording of the Motion

This Panel urges the Education Bureau to conduct expeditiously a study on the revamp of the “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework” to develop for non-Chinese speaking student a Cantonese-based Chinese Language curriculum so as to improve the abilities of non-ethnic Chinese to listen, speak, read and write, and to help them integrate into the community more easily.

(Moved by Hon Claudia MO)

### Response

In view of the diversified linguistic backgrounds and years of learning Chinese among the non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students, distinct differences exist in the starting points of learning Chinese and their learning progress. If a uniformed standard of second language curriculum with structured learning objectives by stages is required of all NCS students in Hong Kong, it will not only fail to address the realistic learning circumstances of NCS students, but also be in-effective in catering for their learning diversity. The “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework” (“Learning Framework”) implemented in primary and secondary schools, which is developed from the perspective of second language learners, covers the listening, speaking, reading and writing domains, and sets out clearly the expected learning outcomes of NCS students at different key stages of learning. With reference to the “Learning Framework”, teachers can set specific learning targets, learning progress and expected learning outcomes for their NCS students with reference to their diversified learning needs to help them learn Chinese progressively in a “small-steps” approach. With reference to the Chinese language curriculum framework, schools can use Cantonese or Putonghua to teach.

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### Wording of the Motion

This Panel urges the Government, in planning the distribution of the \$5 billion expenditure, to consider the provision of support for grass-roots students, such as the procurement of computers for grass-roots students, a review of the student financial assistance system which has not been reviewed for over 10 years, the introduction of an extra-curricular activities grant on a recurrent basis by, say, offering a monthly grant of \$250 to students receiving full grant textbook assistance and the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance.

(Moved by Hon SHIU Ka-chun)

### Response

The Government reviews various student financial assistance schemes from time to time, and will expand the scope of subsidies to step up support for students from needy families where necessary. For example:-

- The Government implemented the “Subsidy Scheme for Internet Access Charges” in the 2010/11 school year to provide subsidies for needy families, with a view to alleviating their burden in meeting the internet access charges for their children's e-learning at home.
- To continue enhancing the support for low-income families in meeting the school-related expenses of their children, the assistance programme "Enhancement of the flat rate grant under the School Textbook Assistance Scheme" under the Community Care Fund has been incorporated into the Government's regular assistance programme starting from the 2014/15 school year.
- A Grant for School-related Expenses for Kindergarten Students is provided for eligible kindergarten students to defray school-related expenses incurred from the students' kindergarten education starting from the 2017/18 school year.

For subsidising needy students to participate in after-school activities, EDB has implemented the School-based After-school Learning and Support Programmes (Programme) since the 2005/06 school year for providing schools and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with the

School-based Grant and the Community-based Project Grant respectively to organise after school activities. The objective of the Programme is to provide more support and opportunities for needy students to facilitate their whole-person development and personal growth through a wide spectrum of after-school activities. The provision of the Programme is complementary in nature. Apart from the Programme, the Government has launched various funding schemes to schools and NGOs to organise after-school activities to cater for the diverse needs of needy students (e.g. the After-school Care Programme under the Social Welfare Department, the Child Development Fund under the Labour and Welfare Bureau). We encourage schools to deploy and consolidate flexibly the various grants and to collaborate with NGOs, and make good use of community resources to meet the different needs of disadvantaged students. The total provision of the Programme in the 2017/18 school year is about \$240 million.

In addition, as mentioned in the Chief Executive's 2017 Policy Agenda, the Government will invite the Community Care Fund to consider providing subsidy to needy primary and secondary students for purchasing tablet computers to facilitate the practice of e-learning. We will brief Members of the Panel on Education on the programme at the meeting on 2 March 2018.



### Wording of the Motion

This Panel urges the Government, in planning the distribution of the \$5 billion expenditure, to consider the provision of support for grass-roots university students by reviewing the existing various loan schemes for post-secondary students, including: (1) relaxing the income limits of the income tests and abolishing the asset tests under the loan schemes for post-secondary students; (2) improving the repayment policy by pegging loan repayment to the graduate's income which should be used as the base in calculating the repayment amount; (3) reviewing various non-means-tested loan schemes and, in respect of the interests chargeable under the non means-tested loan schemes, bringing the requirement that "interest is accrued upon loan drawdown" in line with that of means-tested loan schemes, so as to alleviate the debt burden on students.

(Moved by Hon SHIU Ka-chun)

### Response

The Government's policy on student finance is to ensure that no student is denied access to education due to a lack of means. A number of reviews have been conducted on the income test mechanism and individual financial assistance schemes in recent years. For instance, the Government reviewed in the 2011/12 academic year the income test mechanism of the means-tested assistance schemes and relaxed the income ceiling for the full level of student financial assistance under the income test mechanism. The Government also simplified and adjusted the assistance levels of financial assistance for post-secondary students so that eligible students not on full assistance would receive a higher amount of assistance. At present, about 60% of the beneficiaries of student financial assistance schemes are receiving the full level of assistance.

To ensure the proper use of public monies, applicants of the means-tested assistance schemes for post-secondary students have to undergo an income test and an asset test. Under the asset test, the total value of assets held by an applicant and his/her parents is divided by the total number of family members. The result, known as the Net Asset Value per family member, is referenced against a sliding scale of asset value for discounting

financial assistance to determine if any discounting of the level of assistance calculated under the income test is required. Under the asset test, the first home is not counted towards an applicant's family assets. Taking an applicant from a 4-member family in the 2017/18 academic year for instance, his/her level of assistance calculated under the income test will not be discounted under the asset test if his/her total family assets do not exceed \$1.036 million. In the last three years, less than one percent of the applicants of the Tertiary Student Finance Scheme – Publicly-funded Programmes or the Financial Assistance Scheme for Post-secondary Students failed to pass the asset test. It will be inconsistent with the policy intent to abolish the asset test as it may result in the disbursement of financial assistance to students from families with low incomes but ample assets.

To alleviate the financial burden of student loan borrowers, the Government completed a review on the interest rate and repayment period of student financial assistance schemes in 2012. The interest rate of the living expenses loans of the means-tested financial assistance schemes has been reduced from 2.5% to 1% per annum. Moreover, the standard repayment period has been extended from five years to 15 years. On the non-means-tested loan schemes, we have reduced the risk-adjusted-factor rate from 1.5% per annum to zero. The current interest rate is 1.132% per annum. In addition, the standard repayment period has been extended from 10 years to 15 years.

To ease the financial burden of loan borrowers upon graduation and to allow them more time to seek a stable job, loan borrowers are given the option of starting the student loan repayment one year upon completion of their studies. Loan borrowers who have difficulty in repaying their loans on grounds of financial hardship, serious illnesses or further full-time studies may apply for a deferment of loan repayment. If their deferment applications are approved, a maximum of two years' interest-free extension of the loan repayment period is allowed, which means that the entire repayment period can be extended up to 17 years.

The non-means-tested loan schemes aim at providing financial assistance for post-secondary students who do not wish to, or fail to, go through the means test. They are different from the means-tested loan schemes

targeting students from low-income families who lack the means to pursue post-secondary studies (no interest is chargeable during the study period). To ensure the proper use of public funds, the non-means-tested-loan schemes operate on a no-gain-no-loss basis. Interest is accrued upon loan drawdown and throughout the study period until the loan is repaid in full. The Government needs to consider carefully the interest calculation under the non-means-tested loan schemes to prevent unnecessary and/or excessive borrowing, and increasing the borrowers' repayment burden in the future.