

**Legislative Council
of the
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**

Delegation of the Panel on Education

Report on the duty visit to Finland

8 to 14 September 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Paragraph
1 Introduction	1.1 – 1.6
2 Overview of education system in Finland	2.1 – 2.14
3 Governance and administration	3.1 – 3.13
4 Visits and exchanges	4.1 – 4.38
5 Concluding observations	5.1 – 5.22

Acknowledgements

Acronyms and abbreviations

Expenditure of the visit

Appendices

I Visit programme

II List of organizations and persons met by the delegation

References

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Purpose of report

1.1 A delegation of the Panel on Education ("the Panel") of the Legislative Council visited Finland from 8 to 14 September 2019 to study its education system. This report presents the main findings and observations of the delegation.

Background and objectives of the visit

1.2 The Panel is tasked to monitor and examine government policies and issues of public concern relating to education.

1.3 In the light of the widespread public concern about students' immense academic pressure, Legislative Council Members have long been calling on the Administration to take concrete measures including a review of the education system to address the concern. Noting from many experts that Finland has one of the best education systems in the world, the Panel considers it worthwhile to conduct a duty visit to Finland to obtain first-hand understanding on the Finnish education system, study how the Finnish approach to education facilitates happy learning and multiple articulation pathways for students, and exchange views with the Finnish Government and relevant parties involved in the formulation and implementation of education policies.

Membership of the delegation

1.4 The delegation comprised the following Members:

Panel members

Hon IP Kin-yuen

(Chairman of the Panel for the 2018-2019 session and leader of the delegation)

Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP

(Deputy Chairman of the Panel for the 2018-2019 session and deputy leader of the delegation)

Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP

Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung

Hon CHAN Hoi-yan

Non-Panel Members

Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP

Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS

1.5 Ms Angel WONG, Chief Council Secretary, and Miss Mandy NG, Senior Council Secretary, accompanied the delegation on the visit.

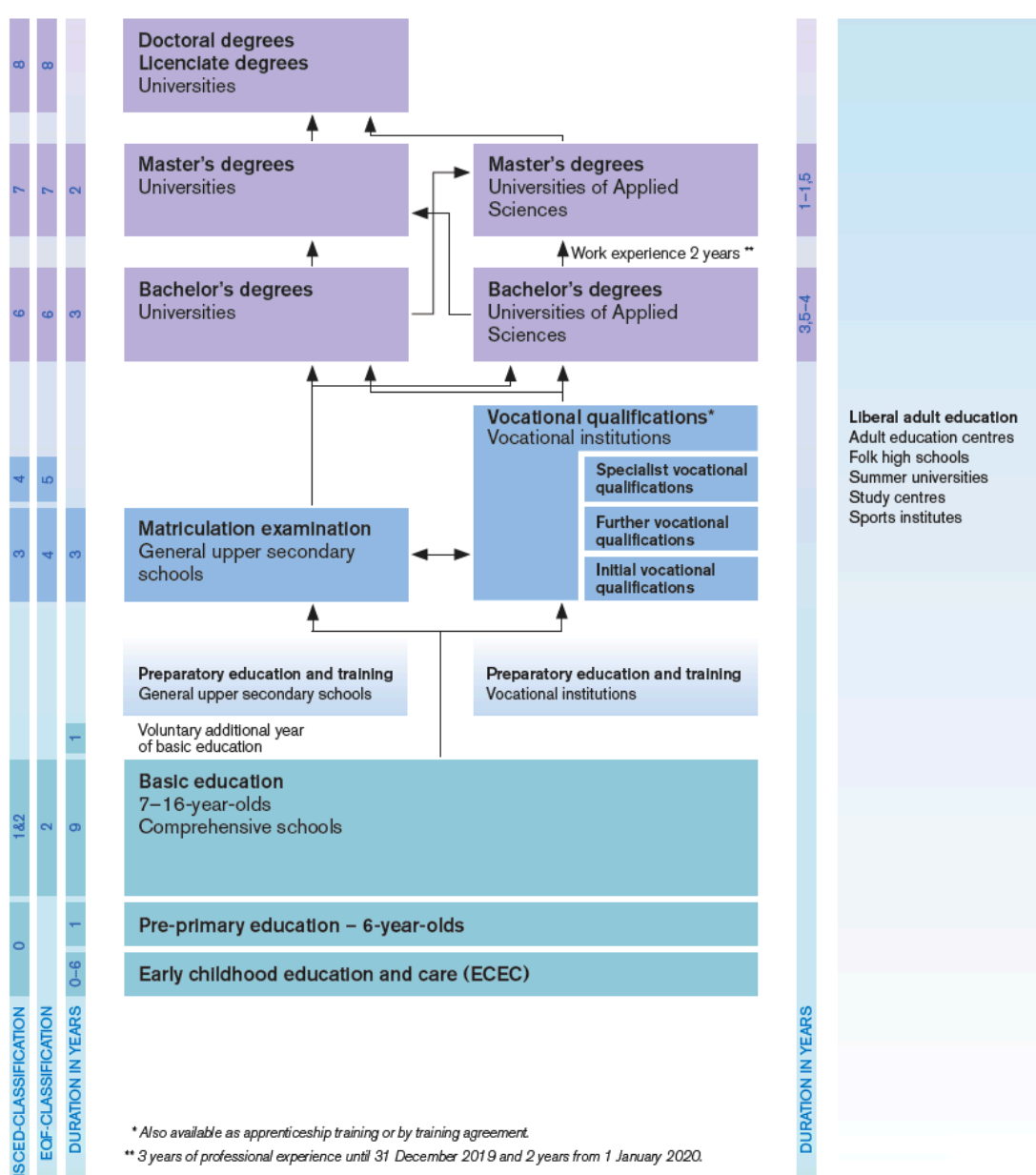
Visit programme

1.6 The delegation visited Helsinki, capital of Finland, from 8 to 11 September 2019 and Oulu, most popular student city in Northern Finland, from 11 to 14 September 2019. The visit programme and a list of the organizations and persons met by the delegation are in **Appendices I and II** respectively.

Chapter 2 – Overview of education system in Finland

2.1 This chapter provides a brief overview of the education system in Finland. The education system in Finland consists of early childhood education and care ("ECEC"), pre-primary education, basic education, upper secondary education and higher education. Meanwhile, the Finnish system also provides adult education which includes a multitude of alternatives from basic to higher education as well as vocational training.

Chart 2.1 – Education system in Finland (September 2019)



Source: The Ministry of Education and Culture

2.2 To ensure everyone equal opportunities to study, there are no tuition fees from pre-primary to higher education in Finland. Textbooks, daily meals and transport are also provided free in pre-primary and basic education. Upper secondary students are entitled to free daily meals and meals for higher education students are state subsidized. In addition, there is a well-developed system of student grants and loans. Full-time students at upper secondary schools, vocational institutions and higher education institutions may apply for financial aid.

Early childhood education and care

2.3 Children aged 0-5 are entitled to receive ECEC should their parents so decide.¹ ECEC comprises care, education and teaching (the so-called "Educare" model) to support children's balanced growth, development, learning and well-being. Learning through play is essential.

2.4 ECEC is provided or arranged as centre-based early education activities and family-based day care activities. Municipalities are responsible for providing ECEC services at daycare centres, and quality control and supervision of the services. Moderate fees based on parental income, family size and hours of service are charged. There is also private ECEC and the prices are determined by the service providers. In 2018, the Finnish government rolled out a pilot scheme to provide free half-day service for 12 400 or 20% of five-year-olds during 2018-2020 with an initial injection of €5 million (HK\$46 million).

Pre-primary education

2.5 Children will receive free and compulsory one-year pre-primary education when they turn six. In addition to pre-primary education, a child can also attend ECEC if the parents are working or studying. The objective of pre-primary education is to promote children's prerequisites for growth, development and learning.

2.6 Municipalities organize pre-primary education in ECEC centres and in schools. Pre-primary education is usually four hours a day, from Mondays to Fridays. Children are not taught how to read. They only learn by doing and playing together with others. Useful skills in school, such as alphabets, will be learnt in addition to considerable amount of playtime and outdoor activities.

¹ While participation of ECEC is voluntary, the enrolment rate for children aged 3-5 is some 80% in 2016.

Basic education

2.7 The nine-year basic education (grades 1-9) is free and compulsory for all children aged between 7 and 16 years. An additional year of basic education is optional for students to better prepare for their studies at the upper secondary level. Basic education is provided by comprehensive schools which are primary schools covering grades 1-6, lower secondary schools from grades 7-9 or joint comprehensive schools from grades 1-9.

2.8 Municipalities organize basic education, with the objective of supporting students' growth towards humanity and ethically responsible citizenship and providing them with the knowledge and skills needed in life. Schools do not select their students. Every student is allocated a place in the school closest to home. Students of lower grades generally receive about 20 hours of tuition per week and more for higher grades. There are no national tests for students in basic education.

Upper secondary education

2.9 After completing the compulsory nine-year basic education, students are eligible to receive upper secondary education. While not compulsory, over 90% of students start upper secondary studies immediately after basic education. Admission is mainly based on students' comprehensive school performance.

2.10 Upper secondary education consists of general and vocational tracks, operating on a modular structure with no specified year-classes. Upper general secondary schools provide all-round education which does not lead to any profession. Completion of upper general secondary education takes 3 to 4 years, depending on the students. At the end, students usually take the national matriculation examination which forms the basis for entry into universities.

2.11 Vocational education and training ("VET") track is more practical and designed to satisfy the needs of the labour market. Completing a vocational qualification takes about three years, including at least half a year of on-the-job learning in workplaces; or apprenticeship training. After this, students can continue their studies to complete a further vocational qualification or a specialized vocational degree. Due to the modular structure of upper secondary education, students may combine studies from both upper general education and VET at the same time.

Higher education

2.12 In Finland, higher education is provided by universities and universities of applied sciences ("UAS"). As there are only 14 universities and 25 UAS in Finland, the number of study places is limited. While the national matriculation examination provides general eligibility for higher education, universities and UAS devise entrance tests for student admission.

2.13 Universities engage in both education and research, and have the right to award doctorates. A bachelor's degree at universities generally takes three years to complete and a master's degree takes two years.

2.14 UAS provide more practical education that aims to educate students for professional work life. The completion of a UAS bachelor's degree usually takes three and a half to four years. After completing UAS degree, those who have at least three years of employment experience can apply to a master's programme at UAS.

Chapter 3 – Governance and administration

3.1 This chapter provides an overview of the administration and governance in Finnish education. The delegation has visited the Ministry of Education and Culture ("MEC"), the Finnish National Agency for Education ("EDUFI"), the Parliament of Finland and the City of Oulu with a view to understanding the formulation and implementation of education policy in Finland.

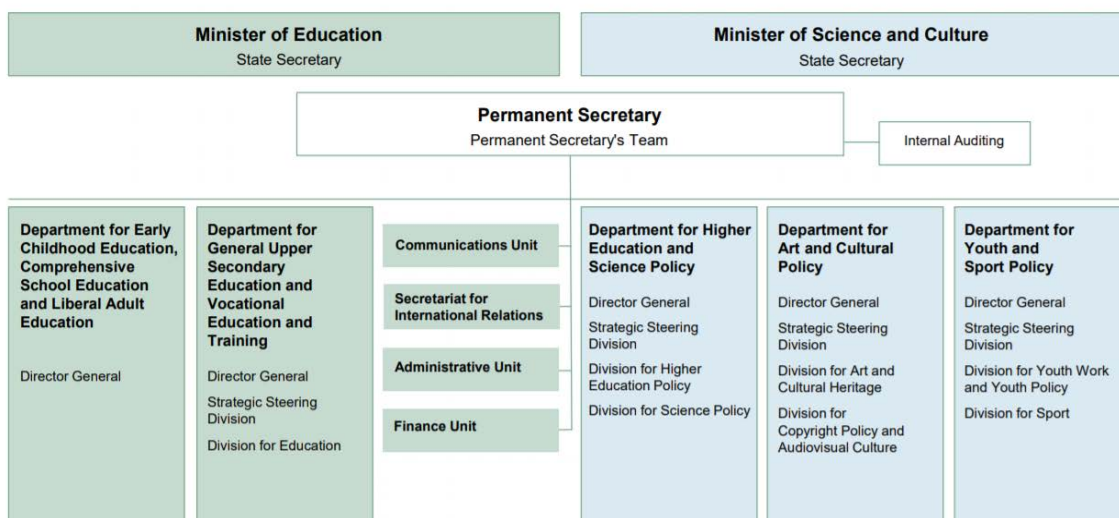
National level

3.2 Governance of the Finnish education system is based on the principle of decentralization. Although MEC defines education policy and EDUFI is responsible for policy implementation, municipalities are granted wide autonomy and responsibility.

Ministry of Education and Culture

3.3 Education policy is defined by the Parliament and the Government. Headed by the Minister of Education and the Minister of Science & Culture, MEC is the highest authority in the Government responsible for all publicly-funded education in Finland. It is also responsible for preparing educational legislation and its share of the state budget for the Government. In terms of its share of the state budget, MEC is the third largest ministry in Finland. The delegation is very pleased to be met by Ms Minna KELHÄ, State Secretary of Education, and her colleagues.

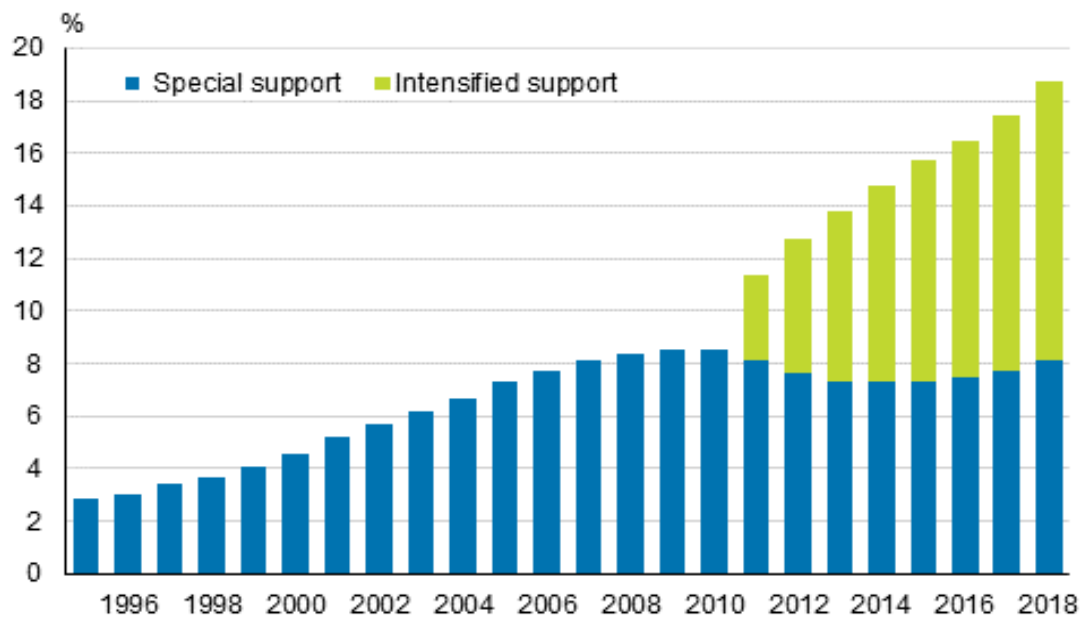
Chart 3.1 – Organizational structure of MEC



Source: The Ministry of Education and Culture

3.4 The delegation finds that the key principle of Finnish education policy is to ensure everyone equal opportunities to high-quality education and training, irrespective of their socio-economic background. To help and guide students to perform well in their studies, all students in compulsory education can receive guidance and support within their schools. In addition, special education is also provided to students with special educational needs ("SEN"). Members of the delegation note that Finland adopts a broad definition of students with SEN which covers not only those with disabling conditions such as sensory impairments and intellectual disabilities, but also students with difficulties in reading, writing, mathematics and foreign languages. On the basis of pedagogical assessment, educational support for students with SEN is categorized into three levels: general, intensified and special support in the increasing order of the degree of extra support for students.

Chart 3.2 – Share of comprehensive school students having received intensified or special support among all comprehensive school students in 1995-2018



Source: Statistics Finland

3.5 In Finland, most students receive mainstream education, with special schools only for those whose needs cannot be adequately met in mainstream education. Teachers stress importance of early identification so as to provide necessary individual support as early as possible and resolve problems before they become more serious. To support this, every school has a student welfare team including teachers, the school nurse, the school psychologist, the student counsellor, and the principal. Student welfare teams have regular meetings to share information, discuss issues related to students and deal with these issues as soon as possible.



The delegation met with representatives of MEC



Members posed for a group photo after meeting with MEC

Finnish National Agency for Education

3.6 EDUFI is a national development agency, which works closely with MEC to develop educational objectives, content and methods for early childhood, pre-primary, basic, upper secondary and adult education and training in the form of the national core curricula. Its core tasks are to prepare the national core curriculum and qualification requirements in

Finland; provide support for evidence-based policy-making, reform and development in education policy; provide services for educators and learners; and promote internationalization in Finland.

3.7 The delegation is most interested in the national core curriculum of Finland. According to EDUFI, the Government decides on the general objectives and the division of hours between the subjects taught in early education, basic education and upper secondary education. Based on the general objectives, EDUFI decides on the objectives, core contents and assessment criteria in different subjects, recording in a national core curriculum.



The delegation visited EDUFI

3.8 The core curriculum for basic education aims at everybody completing nine years of the comprehensive school and emphasizes the importance of joy and curiosity in learning process. In addition to a traditional classroom, more lessons are given outdoors and excursions are made to museums, companies and so on. The curriculum also features a requirement for at least one multidisciplinary learning module each school year, that is, a clearly-defined theme, project or course that combines the content of different subjects and deals with the selected theme from the perspective of several subjects. It also highlights seven transversal competences essential for meeting the challenges of the ever-changing world. The transversal competencies include thinking and learning to learn; cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; taking care of oneself

and managing daily life; multi-literacy; information and communication technology competence; working life competence and entrepreneurship; and participation, involvement and building a sustainable future.



The delegation presented a souvenir to representatives of EDUFI

Parliament of Finland

3.9 The Parliament of Finland makes decisions on legislation, funding and policies. There are 16 permanent special committees, including the Education and Culture Committee ("ECC"), which consider government bills, legislative initiatives, government reports and other matters through expert hearings and debate.



Parliament of Finland



The delegation exchanged views with ECC



The delegation presented a souvenir to ECC

3.10 The delegation met with members of ECC which deals with matters that come under MEC, covering education, training, science, art, cultural activities, sports, youth work, copyright, and financial aid for students. Members of the delegation note that a number of laws governing the education system, such as the Basic Education Act to regulate pre-primary education and basic education, the General Upper Secondary

Schools Act on general upper secondary education, the Universities Act and the Universities of Applied Sciences Act apply to higher education.



The delegation met with representatives of the Parliament of Finland

3.11 The delegation has also exchanged views with the Committee on issues and challenges in education. In order to ensure an equitable education system, Finland will continue to maintain strong efforts to provide sufficient funds for education. In the coming years, learning and welfare of children will be promoted, subsidies will be allocated for the development of ECEC and basic education. For example, primary school group sizes will be reduced, the quality of teaching will be improved by

providing in-service training to teachers, management and other staff to align them with the teaching and management challenges. Measures will also be explored to reduce the number of young people neither employed nor in education or training.



The delegation observed the proceedings of the plenary session of the Parliament of Finland

Local level

3.12 Administration of the Finnish education system is based on centralized steering and local implementation. Municipalities are responsible for organizing ECEC, pre-primary and basic education at the local level. In general, municipalities, schools and teachers enjoy substantial autonomy in providing educational services according to their own administration arrangements and visions. They determine the number of students in a class, the groupings, teaching materials and methods; and develop their own local curriculum based on the national framework to cater for students' needs. To control the quality of education they provide, municipalities and schools are also obliged to assess their own operations. There are no nationwide school and textbook inspections.

3.13 The delegation met with the representatives of City of Oulu and learnt that a total of 26 000 students attend schools and educational institutes run by the City of Oulu Department of Education. There are about 20 000 students in basic education. City-run general upper secondary schools for young people have 4 000 students. The City of Oulu, as other municipalities, finances educational services with taxes, state funding,

various fees and charges and sales revenues. Generally, the state funded about 25% of amount for providing basic education. The funding Oulu receives from the state for pre-primary and basic education is based on the number of population aged 6-15 years.



The delegation met with representatives of City of Oulu

Chapter 4 – Visits and exchanges

4.1 To better understand the Finnish education, the delegation visited a number of schools/organizations providing different levels of education. This chapter describes the key experience in these exchanges.

Day Care Center Franzénia

4.2 Day Care Center Franzénia, which is the largest of its kind in Helsinki, has 230 children aged from 1 to 6. Franzénia opens from 6:30 am to 5:30 pm daily and provides breakfast, lunch and snacks. Parents can choose full-day or half-day education and care service.

4.3 The delegation notes with great interest that the emphasis at Franzénia, as in all Finnish day care centres, is not on reading or writing but creative play and social skills. There is a mix of free play and teacher-directed play so as to make learning become fun. Children play anywhere in Franzénia, learn to sew with real thread and needles, go out for physical activity at its extensive playground area and go for excursions once every week. Teachers assess how children play and evaluate their development constantly. The main goal is to help children learn through play.



The delegation visited
Day Care Centre Franzénia



4.4 The national core curriculum for ECEC lists out five competence areas, namely languages, arts, community, natural environment and personal health. According to the Centre Head, Ms Tiina MARJONIEMI, Franzénia which follows the national core curriculum, does not specify standardized learning or performance goals for children. Instead, each child's learning and development is monitored in accordance with their individual education plan, crafted at the beginning of the school year through collaboration between the teacher, parents, and child. To provide holistic care services to children, there are one deputy head teacher, 16 teachers, 22 nursery nurses, one special education teacher, one assistant, three cleaners and three cooks in Franzénia.



Artwork of children in Day Care Center Franzénia

4.5 Members of the delegation have also exchanged views with the special education teacher. She shares with the delegation that a child with special needs will be placed in a special educational needs group or in an integrated group. She works closely with class teachers to identify students in need of additional support, and to plan support measures together with teachers, other professionals and parents. Moreover, an assistant who is well-versed in sign language is assigned to look after students with hearing impairment.

Pihkapuisto Comprehensive School

4.6 The Pihkapuisto Comprehensive School in Helsinki provides free and compulsory basic education for approximately 250 students aged 7-13 (grades 1-6) with over 30 different ethnic backgrounds. There are 12 class teachers, 3 teachers covering special needs classes, an English teacher, a

special education teacher, three teaching assistants, a school nurse, a psychologist and a school social worker.



The delegation was welcomed by the Pihkapuisto Comprehensive School

4.7 According to the Vice-principal, Mr Mikko OIKARINEN, basic education aims to teach students not only basic skills but also skills for the future: cooperation, discussion, independent thinking and self-direction. Guided by the national core curriculum, teachers at comprehensive schools have wide autonomy to revise the curriculum to meet the needs of the students.

4.8 Members note that comprehensive school days are short, with about four to six hours of tuition per day, depending on grade levels. At Pihkapuisto, school days begin at 8:15 am, 9 am or 10 am and end at 12 noon, 1:15 pm or 2 pm. Students generally make use of the longer after-school hours to take part in the activities organized by the schools, educational or recreational clubs, or youth and sport associations. Moreover, individual lessons in comprehensive schools usually take 45 minutes, followed by a 15-minute recess during which students are encouraged to play and move around in the playground. On the day of the visit, a lot of students were playing in the drizzling rain during recess.

4.9 Members of the delegation talked to the teachers while touring the school. It is noteworthy that the average class size in comprehensive schools is small, with only about 20 students. Moreover, teachers have strong connections with the children because instruction is usually given by the same class teacher in most subjects in the first six years of comprehensive schools and by subject specialists in the last three years. Teachers are responsible for students' continuous assessment in their respective subjects on the basis of the objectives written into the curriculum. Each student receives a report at least once every school year.



Members of the delegation observed classes at the Pihkapuisto Comprehensive School



4.10 Members of the delegation are also interested to learn that students with SEN in Pihkapuisto are identified and grouped for special support. Each group will not have more than 10 students. Teachers will exercise their professional judgment as to when these students can leave the group and join the normal classes.



The delegation joined the free lunch provided to students

4.11 The delegation has also been invited to join the free lunch provided to students at the school canteen. Members note that students go to the canteen at a set time specified for their class and wash their hands before joining the lunch queue. The food is arranged in a self-service buffet (main course and side dishes, beverages, bread and spread) where students take as much of each meal component as they wish. Teachers will join students, remind them of good table manners and tell them other interesting information. After eating, students take their dishes to an assigned place, sort the waste and head off to enjoy the rest of their break indoors or outdoors.

Töölön yhteiskoulu general lower and upper secondary school

4.12 Töölön yhteiskoulu general lower and upper secondary school in Helsinki is an independent school which provides basic education covering grades 7-9 and upper secondary education for both young people and adults. There are about 310 students at lower secondary level, about 300 students aged 16 to 19 at general upper secondary level, and about 700 adults studying at general upper secondary school for adults.

4.13 During the visit to Töölön yhteiskoulu, members of the delegation received a briefing from its Principal, Ms Pirkko MAJAKANGAS. Members learn that at the end of Grade 9, students will be awarded a basic education certificate showing their grades given by teachers. Admission to upper secondary schools is mainly based on students' grades in the certificate. In 2017, 53% of the students in Finland continued studies in general upper secondary education after the basic education.

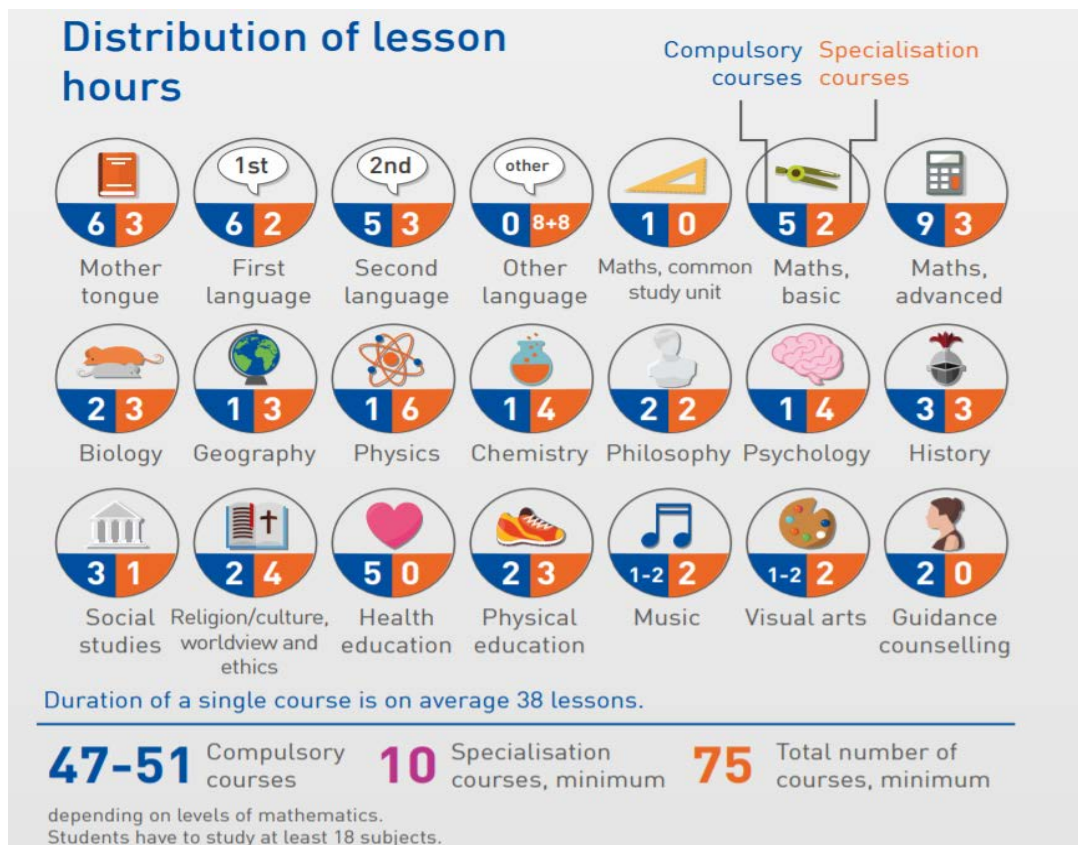


The delegation received a briefing by
Töölön yhteiskoulu general lower and upper secondary school

4.14 General upper secondary schools offer students an extensive basis and skills required for further studies and working life. Töölön yhteiskoulu upper secondary school provides education in general subjects according to the local curriculum, which is based on the national core curriculum for general upper secondary education in Finland. Its upper secondary students have to complete a minimum of 75 courses (1 course = 38 lessons) for graduation. Among them, 48 to 51 courses are compulsory. The courses provided in upper secondary schools included mother tongue; foreign language, other national language; mathematics; biology; geography; physics; chemistry; philosophy; psychology; history; social studies; religion or ethics; health education; physical education; music; visual arts; home economics and guidance counselling.

4.15 Teachers in Töölön yhteiskoulu, as in other schools, treat students as an individual, not a group. To further support students, the school has a student welfare team comprised of a school nurse, a psychologist, a social worker, a special education teacher, two guidance counsellors and student tutors. Moreover, Töölön yhteiskoulu cooperates with Aalto University, University of Helsinki and various companies and organizations and encourages students to visit universities and learn on working places.

Chart 4.1 – Distribution of lesson hours in general upper secondary education



Source: Finish National Agency for Education

4.16 Upper secondary students can continue to the universities or UAS after successful completion of the national matriculation examination, which is the only national examination that assesses the skills and maturity of all students on a nationwide basis. Each student must take tests in their mother tongue and a minimum of three optional subjects: the second national language, a foreign language, Mathematics and one subject in general studies (such as humanities and natural sciences). For Töölön yhteiskoulu, the popular fields of study for students in universities are law, medicine and business.



The delegation presented a souvenir to
Töölön yhteiskoulu general lower and upper secondary school

Oulu Vocational College

4.17 Another institution of interest to the delegation is the Oulu Vocational College. It is one of the biggest multidisciplinary vocational colleges in Finland, with 8 500 students and 855 staff, offering training in various fields: culture; social services, health and sports; technology, communication and transport; tourism; catering; and natural sciences.

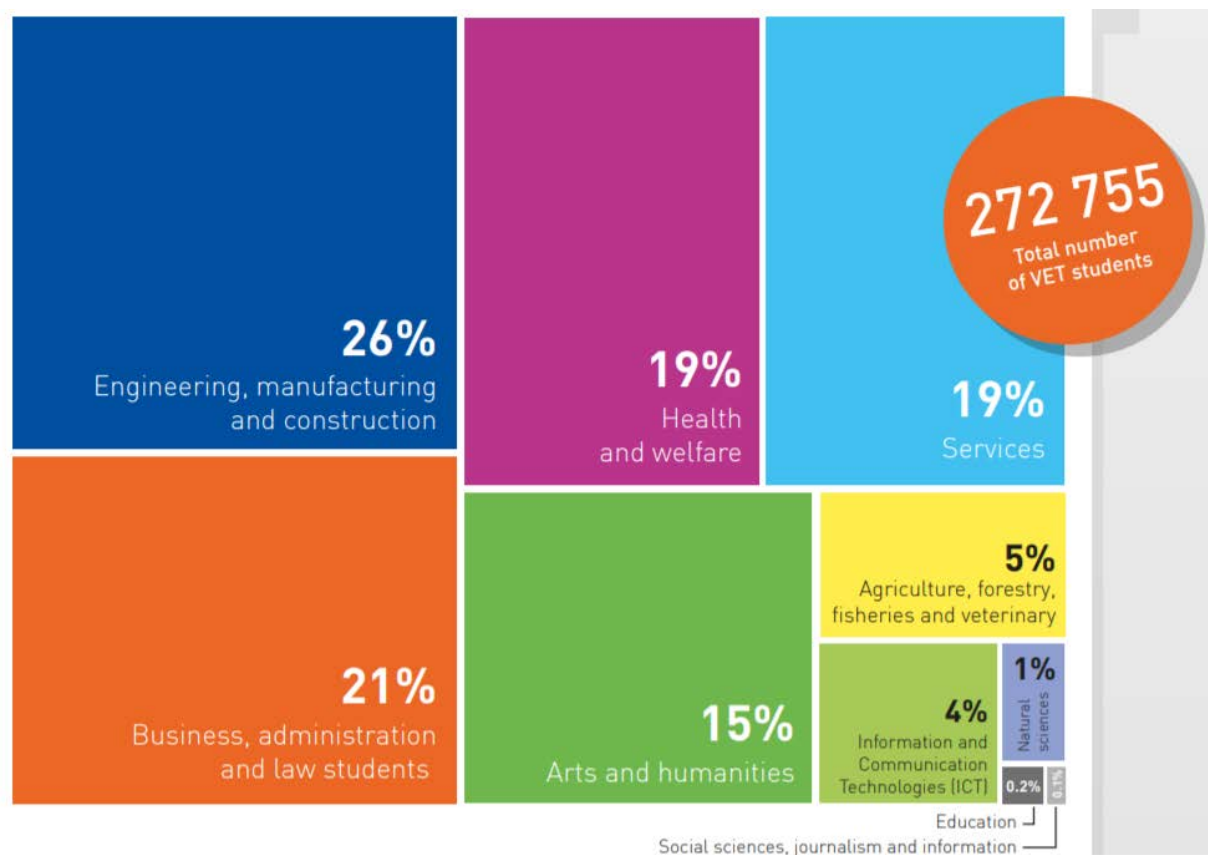


The delegation toured the facilities at the
Oulu Vocational College



4.18 Members of the delegation note that in 2017, 41% of the students in Finland chose to go to an upper secondary vocational school after the basic education. At the beginning of VET, each student will draw up a personal competence development plan with the College, outlining the content, schedule and methods of study. Throughout the period of study, about 75% of the coursework is vocational, in a student's field of choice, and the remaining 25% is in the core curriculum subjects, which are common to all upper secondary education. One of the main assessment methods for students' learning and competences is vocational skills demonstration in authentic settings. Skills demonstrations are designed, implemented and assessed in co-operation with representatives of the trade sectors.

Chart 4.2 – Distribution of VET students by field of study in 2017 (%)



Source: Finnish National Agency for Education and Ministry of Education and Culture

4.19 During the visit, members of the delegation took the opportunity to talk to the students. Students think VET offers high quality learning with strong working life orientation. They also find studying in the College meaningful because they choose their studies according to interests and hobbies. The delegation has been moved by the positive and enthusiastic

attitude of the students who are highly engaged in the learning process and genuinely excited to show off their skills.



The delegation observed teaching and learning
at the Oulu Vocational College

4.20 Members also toured the teaching kitchen which is furnished with purpose-built teaching and training facilities tailored for catering students. Members tasted the delicious food made by students and learnt that the food made is sold at the college's store.



The delegation toured the teaching kitchen

University of Oulu

4.21 Founded in 1958, the University of Oulu is one of the largest multidisciplinary universities in Finland, with eight faculties, 13 000 students, and 2 900 staff members. The eight faculties are Faculty of Biochemistry and Molecular Medicine, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Information Technology and Electrical Engineering, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Technology, and Oulu Business School.



The delegation met with representatives of the University of Oulu

4.22 The delegation has exchanged views with the management team of the University of Oulu and learnt that it is one of the nine universities offering teacher education in Finland. The disciplines covered by its Faculty of Education are education, educational psychology, music education, special education, psychology and sociology. Teacher education can be focused on primary, secondary, adult or early childhood and pre-primary education, depending on the programme and the student's own choices. With strong theoretical and practical content, teacher education is research-based with emphasis on developing pedagogical knowledge.

4.23 In Finland, kindergarten teachers are required to hold a bachelor's degree (three years to complete). Teachers in basic education and general upper secondary education are required to have a bachelor's degree and a master's degree (two years to complete). As for special needs teachers, they are required to hold a master's degree with special pedagogy as the main subject or a teaching qualification including special needs teacher studies.



The delegation toured the facilities at the University of Oulu

4.24 To better understand the teacher education in Finland, members are introduced to an expert training Intercultural Teacher Education Programme, leading to Bachelor and Master of Arts (Education) in which students are trained for international tasks in education. It is the only English teacher education programme with the focus on education, globalization, diversity, and ethics in Finland. Graduates will be qualified as a primary teacher in Finland, so the programme focuses on the special issues related to the teaching and education of pupils studying in grades 1-6 of basic education. Studies include compulsory three-month study or work period in an educational institution or a project abroad.

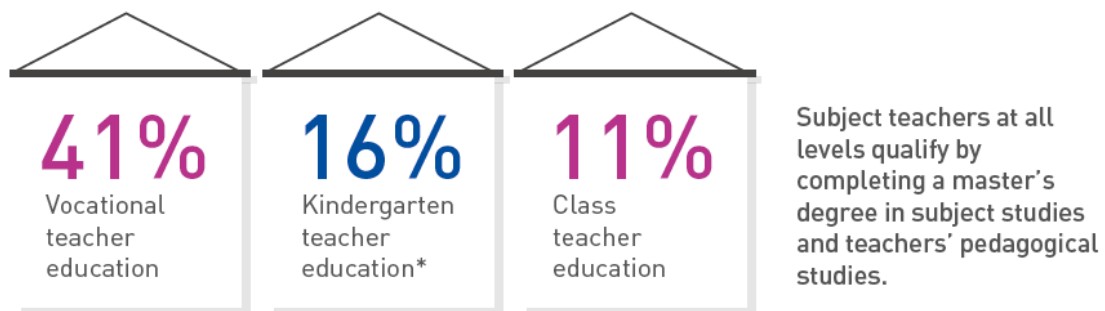
Chart 4.3 – International Teacher Education Programme

1st year	2nd	3rd		4th	5th
Orientation and technology enhanced learning /ICONS	Arts and Crafts Education IV: Physical Education and Visual Arts	Intercultural education and teaching as profession		Global Education and Development	Master's Level School Experience III and Pedagogical Seminar
Communication and advocacy / ICONS	Environmental Studies I: Living Environment	Second Official Language (Swedish) 2 and English 3		Educational Leadership and Administration	
Education as a Science	Nordic education	Basic Course in Qualitative Research		Minor studies II	
Arts and Crafts Education I: Music, Physical Education and Handicrafts	Arts and Crafts Education V: Handicrafts and Music	Basic Course in Quantitative Research			Master's thesis
Human Development and Learning	Curriculum, Planning and Evaluation	Minor studies I		Optional studies	
Mother Tongue and Literature I: Language and Textual Skills	Mother Tongue and Literature II: Literary Art and Drama			Optional studies	
Teaching and Educational Interaction	Inclusive & Special Needs education and Early Childhood education	Bachelor's Thesis		Advanced Course in Quantitative/Quantitative Research	Master's thesis
School experience I	Environmental Studies II: Natural Phenomena in the Environment			Thematic Practice	
Mathematics					
Society, Education and Culture	Second Language Learning and Teaching	Minor studies I		Minor studies II	
Arts and Crafts Education II: Visual Arts and Handicrafts	History, Social Studies and Religion/Ethics				
Educational Philosophy and Ethics	An Integrative Project: Multiliteracy in Phenomena				
					Thesis seminar
Arts and Crafts Education III: Physical Education and Music	Bachelor's Level School experience II	Optional studies		Optional studies	Optional studies

Source: University of Oulu

4.25 The delegation is surprised to note that there is tough competition for places in teacher education, with only 10% of candidates are accepted. In addition to the applicant's performance in upper secondary school and matriculation examination, the applicant has to undergo the entrance examination, interview, aptitude test and sometimes skills demonstration through teaching-like activities. Only candidates with a clear aptitude for teaching and strong academic performance are admitted. Those who are not admitted often turn to law or medical discipline instead.

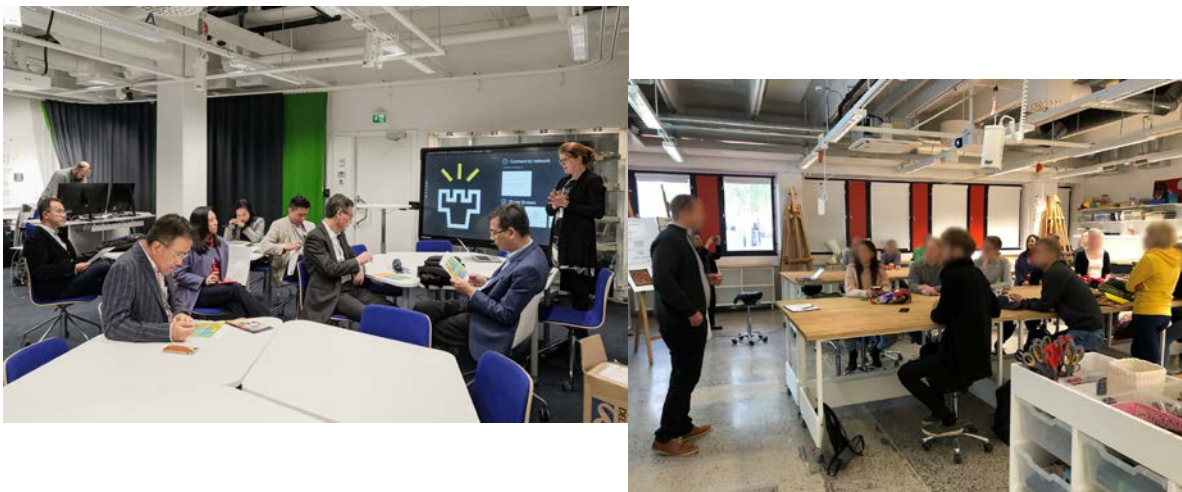
Chart 4.4 – Admission rate to teacher education in 2016



* Kindergarten teacher education qualifies one to work in both ECEC and pre-primary education for 6-year-olds.

Source: Vipunen – Education Statistics Finland

4.26 Members of the delegation are interested to know about the absence of common national standards for teacher education. Each university is responsible for the quality of the programmes and studies it provide. The common guidelines on teacher education curricula among universities are broadly grouped into: academic disciplines; research studies; pedagogical studies; studies on communication, language, and information and communication technologies; personal study plan preparation; and optional studies.



The delegation visited the Faculty of Education of the University of Oulu

4.27 The delegation has taken the opportunity to visit LeaF, a laboratory located at the Faculty of Education which supports learning and interactive research. As the link between teaching and research is emphasized in the teacher education of Finland, LeaF hosts a large variety of technology that can be used for multidisciplinary research and for doing various kinds of teaching experiments.



The delegation visited LeaF

Oulu University Teacher Training School

4.28 In addition to theoretical studies, student teachers in Finland must undergo practical training in a teacher training school before graduation. Teacher training schools provide student teachers with supervision and tutoring, as well as teaching experiments and educational research.

4.29 There are over 10 teacher training schools across Finland, and Oulu University Teacher Training School under the auspices of the Faculty of Education of the University of Oulu is the second largest among them. It comprises two primary schools, a secondary school, and an upper secondary school, with 1 200 students, 600 student teachers and 120 staff members.

4.30 The delegation exchanged views with the Senior Adviser of the Oulu University Teacher Training School, Dr Raimo SALO, and learnt that teacher training schools in Finland can be compared to university teaching hospitals for medical students. A teacher is regarded as an expert, comparable to an engineer, lawyer or a medical doctor. In addition, teachers are expected to continuously upgrade their skills through

professional development. To ensure that teachers are equipped with the updated knowledge and skills, teachers are required to receive at least three days of government-funded in-service training, primarily in areas important for implementing education policy and reform. Some municipalities organize large, multi-school training events while some schools develop professional development programmes to improve the professional competence of their teaching personnel.



Meeting with representatives of Oulu University Teacher Training School

4.31 Members of the delegation toured the facilities to feel the warm and supportive atmosphere in the Training School. They met some student teachers and learnt that guided teaching practice involves giving of lessons, guidance discussions and familiarization with tasks and responsibilities related to various issues arising in the everyday life of schools. Members were touched by student teachers' interest and passion to become a teacher.



Presentation of souvenir to Oulu University Teacher Training School

Me & MyCity

4.32 One of the transversal competences highlights in the national core curriculum is to provide students with working life skills and coach them to become entrepreneurs. To enhance entrepreneurship skills, students are encouraged to take part in the Me & MyCity programme which is a one-day learning module organized by a non-profit organization and co-financed by the government and private foundations.

4.33 The learning environment for 12-13-year-olds (children studying in grade six) is a miniature city (equipped with its own city hall, grocery store, and bank) where students work in a profession and function as consumers and citizens, as part of society. For weeks, students have prepared in their classrooms for this one-day visit, studying the topics of entrepreneurship, working life, citizenship and the economy. In the learning environment for 15-16-year-olds (grade 9), students compete in managing a company on the global markets for a period of one year. Students each have their own areas of responsibility on rival executive boards. The winning team is the one that has been able to achieve the best reputation in addition to a good operating profit.



The delegation toured the facilities at Me & MyCity

4.34 The delegation notes that the enterprises in Me & MyCity are real companies and public service providers, and the duties performed in them have been designed in collaboration with the business partners. Participating students must interview for their desired post – not all children get their first choice jobs, teaching them an early lesson about adapting to the working world and adjusting their expectations.

Hiukkavaara Community Centre

4.35 The delegation visited the Hiukkavaara Community Centre in Oulu which accommodates a primary and lower secondary school, a day-care centre and preschool, a youth centre, and a school library. Local residents can make use not only of the spaces, but also of community and adult education activities and sports facilities. The community centre is aimed at everyone living in the area.



Source: Hiukkavaara Community Centre



The delegation visited the
Hiukkavaara Community Centre in Oulu

4.36 Members of the delegation are impressed by the flexible and reconfigurable learning environment of the Hiukkavaara Community Centre. It does not contain traditional classrooms, and is instead based around open teaching cells or "nests". The spaces are adaptable and areas can be sectioned off if privacy is required, for example by using curtains and pieces of mobile furniture. The largest teaching nests can accommodate up to 200 pupils. Currently, the largest teaching group is 130 students, comparable to a relatively small village school.

Helsinki Central Library Oodi

4.37 Helsinki Central Library Oodi, located in the heart of Helsinki, is a modern library open to all. Meaningful reading is a precondition for students' success. The main task of Oodi is to promote reading for people of all ages. It is however a place of activity and learning as well.



Facilities at Helsinki Central Library Oodi

4.38 There is a cafe, an auditorium and a cinema on the ground floor. The second floor has a reading room, recording studios and a gadget store where visitors can rent power tools, sewing machines and even 3D printers. One room is occupied by children playing the popular video game. The third floor fills endless rows of white bookshelves with natural light. Members of the delegation are impressed by Oodi's unique architectural design, innovative technology and excellent learning environment.



The delegation presented a souvenir to Helsinki Central Library Oodi

Chapter 5 – Concluding observations

5.1 Members of the delegation consider the visit very enriching that it has enabled them to better understand the Finnish education system. While Finland is widely regarded as an educational success, it may not work if Hong Kong simply copies and pastes the Finnish system without taking into account the cultural, social, economic and demographic differences between Finland and Hong Kong. Yet, the delegation has made a number of observations that can be useful.

Government support

5.2 The delegation notes that education has been a national priority in Finland for many decades. The Finnish government plays a vital role in developing and reforming its education system. The Finnish Government defines and sets educational priorities. The main steering document in the Finnish education policy is the Government's Development Plan for Education and Research which outlines education policy priorities every four years. Dedicated government agencies, MEC and EDUFI, help shape education policy. More importantly, the Finnish education system is underpinned by legislation to safeguard the interests of all stakeholders. Relevant legislation includes the Basic Education Act to regulate pre-primary education and basic education, the General Upper Secondary Schools Act on general upper secondary education and the Universities Act on university education, etc.

5.3 Education in Finland is well-funded and built around the principle of equality of opportunity for all citizens, regardless of ethnic origin, age, domicile or financial situation. Education is free from pre-primary to higher education. In pre-primary and basic education, textbooks, daily meals and transportation for students living further away from the school are free for the parents. At upper secondary level, students have the right to a free meal and in higher education meals are subsidized by the state. In 2017, Finland's total public expenditure on education amounted to €1.8 billion (HK\$104.4 billion) or 5.3% of its Gross Domestic Product ("GDP").

5.4 In Hong Kong, 12 years' free primary and secondary education is provided to all children through public sector schools. In 2017-2018 financial year, Hong Kong's total public expenditure on education amounted to about HK\$88.5 billion, accounting for 3.3% of its GDP. The current-term Government had pledged to increase recurrent expenditure on education by \$5 billion a year upon taking office.

5.5 The delegation notes with great concern that parents in Hong Kong, particularly those from grass-roots families, have great financial burden in defraying education expenses. Higher education students usually rack up a large amount of loan debts. Members of the delegation have urged the Administration to continue to explore and provide different forms of subsidies for needy students to ease parents' financial burden. For example, providing textbooks to students free of charge, providing more support to students pursuing self-financing post-secondary education.

Curriculum

5.6 The delegation notes that Finnish education emphasizes the importance of joy and curiosity in learning process, and the positive impact of exercise on learning children. Finland adopts a play-based curriculum. Early years of a child are focused on play, rather than academic learning. Children are encouraged to have considerable amount of play and outdoor activities. Learning through play is essential. A typical school day is divided into hour sessions – 45-minute lesson and 15-minute recess before the next class begins. The delegation observed during the visit that teachers usually send kids outside in the playground during recess, no matter it rains or shines. A national programme "Finnish Schools on the Move" has also been organized with the view to establishing a physically active culture in Finnish comprehensive schools.

5.7 Furthermore, the delegation notes that Finnish children's curiosity is stimulated by studying in environments outside of the classroom. The national core curriculum of Finland supports in many ways learning outside the classroom. Students are encouraged to get out into forests or visit museums, libraries, businesses, universities, etc. Even small children in day care centres go on excursions every week.

5.8 Unlike Finland, children in Hong Kong are stressed out and overburdened with heavy homework load. Many of them also attend after-school tutorials. They do not have free time for sport, exercise or relaxation, even during the weekends. For a seven-hour school day, students only have a one-hour lunch break and two 20-minute recesses, during which most of them are staying in classrooms.² Members of the delegation consider playtime and out-of-classroom experiential activities crucial for students' cognitive, social, emotional and whole-person

² Lessons in many Hong Kong schools last 35-40 minutes and there is a break of 20 minutes after every two or three lessons.

development and should be encouraged. The Administration should review the curriculum so as to lengthen recess time, shorten lesson time and enrich students' learning experiences, with a view to encouraging joyful learning.

Learning environment

5.9 A striking feature of the Finnish education is the relaxed learning environment, which is in sharp contrast to Hong Kong. In Finland, students learn with little or even no stress. Actual schooling only takes place when the child turns seven. Children in comprehensive schools (grades 1-9) only have 4 to 6 hours of tuition a day and generally have only 30-minute homework every night. They can make use of the longer after-school hours to take part in various extra-curricular activities, which are beneficial to their overall learning and growth. Students' workload in basic education must allow them sufficient time for rest, recreation and hobbies.

5.10 The Finnish education system also emphasizes cooperation rather than competition or comparison. Finland does not consider standardized tests a key to raise students' achievement. The only national assessment throughout a child's education is the matriculation examination at the end of upper secondary education. In schools, children are not grouped according to their ability. In the lower grades, children from the most talented to the least talented are grouped together so that children can help each other.

5.11 The delegation notes with great concern that primary and secondary students in Hong Kong generally spend about seven hours each day in schools. According to the survey findings of the Lingnan University in 2016, students in Primary 4-6 on average spent 2.4 hours each day on homework in 2015, while the respective figure was 1.9 hours for students in Secondary 1-3.³ With a strong aspiration for academic advancement and amidst intense examination pressure, many local students attend private tutorial lessons for supplementary learning. According to a survey conducted by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups in 2012, the average amount of time spent on private tutoring by participating students in primary and secondary schools was about 4.9 hours per week or about 0.7 hour per day in 2012.⁴ Besides, students have to undertake mandatory

³ The survey was commissioned by Hong Kong Early Childhood Development Research Foundation, with participation of 1 146 students from 23 schools studying in Primary 4 to Secondary 3 in 2015. See Lingnan University (2016).

⁴ The survey was conducted in December 2012 and covered some 500 students from Primary 5 to Secondary 6. See Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (2013).

tests which assess their academic capabilities for moving on to the next grade. Members of the delegation consider that the education system in Hong Kong is too stressful and is in dire need of reform. The Administration should explore feasible means to ease stress among students, to engage their creativity and curiosity, and to instil in them a love for lifelong learning.

Teaching approach

5.12 Another striking feature of the Finnish education is its student-centred teaching approach. Teachers will take into account each child's individuality and devise different levels of assignments to cater for their needs. Emphasis is put on early identification and support. Students who temporarily fall behind in studies are entitled to remedial teaching while a learning plan is prepared for children who require regular support in learning. To support this, the class size in Finland is small. In 2017, the average class size is 19.6 students at the primary level of basic education and 19 at the lower secondary level. Schools also have student welfare teams comprising the principal, school psychologist, school nurse, social worker, and special education teacher.

5.13 To better chart and care for students' learning progress and development of individual skills, students in Finland have the same teacher for up to six years of their education. The teacher is entrusted to have full discretion on teaching methods, learning materials and assessment methods to cater for their students. A foundation of mutual trust and understanding is built. This is different from Hong Kong where class teachers change yearly or bi-yearly.

5.14 Members of the delegation consider small class size important in order to improve teaching and learning effectiveness. However, the delegation notes from the Education Bureau that the class size of primary education and secondary education in 2018-2019 is 27.6 and 27.3 students. As at February 2019, only 343 out of about 450 public sector primary schools in Hong Kong are implementing small class teaching. The Administration should expedite the implementation of small class teaching policy in all schools.

A culture of trust

5.15 The delegation is much impressed by the culture of trust in Finland. Trust is a strong part of the Finnish education system. There are no nationwide examinations or grading tests in comprehensive schools, nor

centralized school inspections. Parents trust the schools, teachers and the quality of work they undertake to provide the best possible education for children. Teachers are responsible for students' continuous assessment, which guides and promotes learning with encouragement and support. Registration of teachers is not required. Teachers are regarded as an expert, comparable to engineers, lawyers or medical doctors.

5.16 In addition, the delegation is surprised to note that there is no school ranking list in Finland. Students are not grouped into different schools based on their success. In parents' view, there is no differentiation between the schools. Every school is provided with the same facility. Hence, parents are happy to send their children to the public school nearby. This is completely different from Hong Kong where many parents struggle for a place in non-neighbourhood "good schools".

Teacher training

5.17 The delegation notes with surprise that teaching is a highly-regarded occupation in Finland. Teachers are highly educated, well trained and strongly committed to their work. A master's degree is required for most levels in Finland. Pre-primary teachers and teachers in ECEC, for whom the minimum qualification requirement is bachelor's level education, are an exception. Besides, teacher training emphasizes learning how to teach students to learn. While not particularly highly paid, admission to teaching education in universities is very difficult. Universities are in a position to select the most best-suited and most motivated applicants for the programmes. Those who are not admitted to teacher training often turn to law or medical discipline instead, which indicates the prestige of the teaching profession. Most people see teaching as a rewarding professional that enjoys high level of autonomy.

5.18 In addition, the Finnish government has all along put high efforts to strengthen the continuing competence development of teachers. Teachers are required to participate in in-service training every year. The state funds in-service training programmes. In order to put in place a systematic and coherent structure for the development of teachers' competence throughout their careers, a Teacher Education Forum was set up in 2016 to support the reform of pre-service and in-service training of teachers.

5.19 In Hong Kong, most of the secondary school graduates will not select teacher education as their first choice. Members of the delegation consider Finland's model may help attract people of high calibre. The

Administration should devise measures to attract passionate and motivated people to join the teaching profession and put more efforts to strengthen teachers' professional capacity and create space for teachers to undertake professional development activities on a full-time basis.

Vocational education and training

5.20 The delegation finds that vocational education, which is an integral part of the Finnish education system, is held in high regard. More than 40% of students applying for vocational upper secondary studies immediately after basic education. Vocational education graduates may seek higher education even after vocational school. They can apply to universities or UAS if they have completed a three-year professional degree or the equivalent. The system aims to prevent dead ends in vocational education, so that everyone is always possible to progress to higher studies. In Finland, vocational education is equally professional and fulfilling for a career.

5.21 On the contrary, there is an entrenched bias towards VET among some people in Hong Kong in favour of traditional academic pursuits. It is commonly perceived as a second choice by different stakeholders. Members of the delegation consider that the Administration should take measures to prevent universities from, for the purpose of pursuing international ranking, focusing too much on research work and academic disciplines tend to yield high research output, while neglecting the fundamental roles of transferring knowledge, providing vocational training and practical disciplines. On the other hand, more should be done to promote VET as an attractive pathway, help tackle the entrenched perception of VET as being a second choice, and encourage young people join industries that best suit their abilities and interests.

Collaboration between Finland and Hong Kong

5.22 Although the Finnish approach to education may not be readily applicable to Hong Kong owing to the differences in cultural and social conditions, it can serve as useful references for education in Hong Kong. The delegation hopes that more exchanges and collaboration programmes will be held between the education sectors of Finland and Hong Kong, with a view to improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning in Hong Kong.

Acknowledgements

The delegation wishes to thank all the distinguished individuals, including Members of the Parliament, government officials and representatives of educational institutions as well as teachers and students whom the delegation met during its visit in Finland, for their detailed briefings and useful exchanges of views.

The delegation is also grateful to the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland, the City of Oulu and the Consulate-General of Finland in Hong Kong for their assistance in drawing up a comprehensive visit programme and providing logistical support. With their dedicated efforts, the delegation was able to visit a number of educational institutions in Finland and learn more about the latest development of the Finnish education directly from leading professionals. The arrangement has not only deepened the delegation's insight into the Finnish education world, but also provided an opportunity for the delegation to experience daily life in Finnish schools.

Acronyms and abbreviations

ECC	Education and Culture Committee
ECEC	Early childhood education and care
EDUFI	Finnish National Agency for Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
SEN	Special educational needs
the Panel	Panel on Education
UAS	Universities of applied sciences
VET	Vocational education and training

EXPENDITURE OF THE VISIT

Item <small>(Note 1)</small>	Expenditure chargeable to Members' Overseas Duty Visit Accounts (seven Members joined the duty visit) (HK\$)	Expenditure chargeable to the Secretariat's expenditure account (two Secretariat staff members joined the duty visit) (HK\$)
1. Air passage	130,611	24,420
2. Hotel accommodation (5 nights)	62,230	18,940
3. Meals and sundry allowance	37,270	11,482
4. Other miscellaneous expenses	1,690 <small>(Note 2)</small>	3,821 <small>(Note 3)</small>
Sub-total	231,801 <small>(Note 4)</small>	58,663
TOTAL	290,464 <small>(Note 4)</small>	

Notes:

- (1) As in-town transportation for the visit was provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the City of Oulu, the said item was not included in this expenditure report.
- (2) This included travel insurance expenses for Members.
- (3) This included travel insurance expenses for Secretariat staff members, souvenirs, telecommunication services and miscellaneous expenses.
- (4) \$18,197 of this sum is the expenditure of individual Members which exceeds the approved ceiling of \$55,000 for each Member's Overseas Duty Visit ("ODV") account. This amount has to be paid first by the Members personally. If, by the end of the current term of Legislative Council, there are unused balances in other Members' ODV accounts, the funds available will be used to reimburse those Members who have expended more than their allocation, in proportion to their excess qualifying expenditure.

Visit programme

8 September 2019 (Sunday)	Depart from Hong Kong
9 September 2019 (Monday)	Visit to Pihkapuisto Comprehensive School
	Meeting with representatives of the Finnish National Agency for Education
	Meeting with the State Secretary of Education
10 September 2019 (Tuesday)	Visit to Day Care Centre Franzénia
	Visit to Helsinki Central Library Oodi
	Lunch meeting with representatives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
	Visit to Me & MyCity
11 September 2019 (Wednesday)	Visit to Töölön yhteiskoulu general lower and upper secondary school
	Meeting with representatives of the Education and Culture Committee
	Lunch meeting with representatives of the Parliament of Finland
	Tour of the Parliament building
	Depart for Oulu

12 September 2019 (Thursday)	Visit to University of Oulu
	Visit to Oulu University Teacher Training School
13 September 2019 (Friday)	Visit to Oulu Vocational College
	Lunch meeting with representatives of the City of Oulu
	Visit to Hiukkavaara Community Centre
	Depart for Hong Kong
14 September 2019 (Saturday)	Arrive in Hong Kong

List of organizations and persons met by the delegation

9 September 2019 (Monday)
Pihkapuisto Comprehensive School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Mikko OIKARINEN, Vice-principal
Finnish National Agency for Education ("EDUFI") <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Erja VITIKKA, Counsellor of Education - Ms Marjo RISSANEN, Counsellor of Education
Ministry of Education and Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Minna KELHÄ, State Secretary of Education - Mr Aki TORNBERG, Senior Ministerial Advisor - Mr Jussi PIHKALA, Senior Ministerial Advisor - Ms Sari WESSMAN, Senior Ministerial Advisor - Ms Hanna AUTERE, Counsellor of Education of EDUFI
10 September 2019 (Tuesday)
Day Care Centre Franzénia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Tiina MARJONIEMI, Head - Ms Pia PAKARINEN, Deputy Mayor for Education of City of Helsinki
Helsinki Central Library Oodi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Laura NORRIS, Service Manager
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Pekka KAIHILAHTI, Deputy Director General of Department of Asia and the Americas - Mr Sami LEINO, Director of Unit for East Asia and Oceania - Ms Eevamaria MIELONEN, Programme Officer of East Asia Team
Me & MyCity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Betty YU, Customer Manager - Ms Jenny HOLMING, Relations Manager

11 September 2019 (Wednesday)
Töölön yhteiskoulu general lower and upper secondary school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Pirkko MAJAKANGAS, Principal
The Parliament of Finland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Juho ERROLA, Second Deputy Speaker - Mr Joakim STRAND, Chairperson of Committee for the Future ("CF") - Mr Pirkka-Pekka PETELIUS, Vice Chairperson of CF - Ms Paula RISIKKO, Chairperson of Education and Culture Committee ("ECC") - Ms Eeva-Johanna ELORANTA, Vice Chairperson of ECC - Ms Veronika HONKASALO, member of ECC - Mr Mikko KINNUNEN, member of ECC - Ms Sari MULTALA, member of ECC - Mr Mikko OLLIKAINEN member of ECC
12 September 2019 (Thursday)
University of Oulu <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prof Helka-Liisa HENTILÄ, Vice Rector for Education - Ms Kati MÄKITALO, Dean of Faculty of Education - Prof Elina LEHTOMÄKI, Global Education of Faculty of Education - Ms Johanna LAMPINEN, Coordinator of International Education of Faculty of Education - Dr Jari LARU, Educational Technologist of Faculty of Education
Oulu University Teacher Training School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr Raimo SALO, Senior Advisor - Ms Aino-Maaria RAUTENBACH, Education Specialist
13 September 2019 (Friday)
Oulu Vocational College <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Jarmo PALONIEMI, Managing Director and Principal - Mr Antti ROVAMO, Director - Ms Tiina KARVONEN, Head of Department

The City of Oulu

- Prof Kyösti OIKARINEN, Chairman of the City Board of Oulu
- Ms Outi ROURU, Head of International Affairs
- Mr Mika PENTTILÄ, Director of Education and Culture
- Ms Marjut NURMIVUORI, Director of Basic Education and Youth
- Mr Pekka FREDRIKSSON, Director of Upper Secondary and Adult Education

Hiukkavaara Community Centre

- Ms Anne MOILANEN, Director and Head Teacher
- Ms Elina VÄISÄNEN, Director of Early Childhood Education Centre
- Ms Eija RUOHOMÄKI, Senior Advisor for Education

References

1. City of Oulu. (2019) *Education in Finland and Oulu*. Available from: <https://www.ouka.fi/oulu/english/education1> [Accessed October 2019]
2. Education Bureau. (2019a). *Government Expenditure on Education*. Available from: <https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/about-edb/publications-stat/figures/gov-expenditure.html> [Accessed October 2019]
3. Education Bureau. (2019b). *Primary Education*. Available from: <https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/about-edb/publications-stat/figures/pri.html> [Accessed October 2019]
4. Education Bureau. (2019c). *Secondary Education*. Available from: <https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/about-edb/publications-stat/figures/sec.html> [Accessed October 2019]
5. EduTAT. (2019) *Me & MyCity*. Available from: <https://www.edutat.fi/me-mycity/> [Accessed October 2019]
6. Finnish National Agency for Education. (2017) *Teachers and principals in Finland 2016*. Available from: <https://www.oph.fi/en/statistics-and-publications/publications/teachers-and-principals-finland-2016> [Accessed October 2019]
7. Finnish National Agency for Education. (2018) *Compulsory education in Finland*. Available from: https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/compulsory_education_in_finland.pdf [Accessed October 2019]
8. Finnish National Agency for Education. (2019) *Facts and figures on general upper secondary education in Finland*. Available from: <https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/lukio-english-final-web.pdf> [Accessed October 2019]
9. Helsinki Central Library Oodi. (2019) *What is Oodi?* Available from: <https://www.oodihelsinki.fi/en/what-is-oodi/> [Accessed October 2019]
10. Legislative Council Secretariat. (2018) *Overall study hours and student well-being in Hong Kong*. LC Paper No. IN05/17-18. Available from: <https://www.legco.gov.hk/research-publications/english/1718in05-overall-study-hours-and-student-well-being-in-hong-kong-20180130-e.pdf> [Accessed October 2019]

11. Legislative Council Secretariat. (2019a) *Education system in Finland*. LC Paper No. FSC17/18-19. Available from: https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr18-19/english/panels/ed/duty_v/ed20190908-1819fsc17-education-system-in-finland-e.pdf [Accessed October 2019]
12. Legislative Council Secretariat. (2019b) *Early and innovative childhood education in Finland*. LC Paper No. FSC18/18-19. Available from: https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr18-19/english/panels/ed/duty_v/ed20190908-1819fsc18-early-and-innovative-childhood-education-in-finland-e.pdf [Accessed October 2019]
13. Legislative Council Secretariat. (2019c) *Teacher training in Finland*. LC Paper No. FSC19/18-19. Available from: https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr18-19/english/panels/ed/duty_v/ed20190908-1819fsc19-teacher-training-in-finland-e.pdf [Accessed October 2019]
14. Ministry of Education and Culture. (2016) *Teacher education in Finland*. Available from: <https://minedu.fi/documents/1410845/4150027/Teacher+education+in+Finland/57c88304-216b-41a7-ab36-7ddd4597b925> [Accessed October 2019]
15. Ministry of Education and Culture. (2017) *Ministry of Education and Culture*. Available from: <http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/80705/Brochure%202017.pdf> [Accessed October 2019]
16. Ministry of Education and Culture. (2019) *Finnish Education System*. Available from: <https://minedu.fi/en/education-system> [Accessed October 2019]
17. Ministry of Education and Culture and Finnish National Agency for Education. (2017) *Finnish education in a nutshell*. Available from: http://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/finnish_education_in_a_nutshell.pdf [Accessed October 2019]
18. Ministry of Education and Culture and Finnish National Agency for Education. (2019a) *Finnish VET in a nutshell*. Available from: <https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/finnish-vet-in-a-nutshell.pdf> [Accessed October 2019]
19. Ministry of Education and Culture and Finnish National Agency for Education. (2019b) *Finnish VET in Facts and Figures*. Available from: https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/vet_facts_figures.pdf [Accessed October 2019]

20. Oulu Vocational College. (2019) *This is OSAO*. Available from: <https://www.osao.fi/en/about-osao/> [Accessed October 2019]
21. Parliament of Finland. (2019) *Education and Culture Committee*. Available from: <https://www.eduskunta.fi/EN/valiokunnat/sivistysvaliokunta/Pages/default.aspx> [Accessed October 2019]
22. Statistics Finland. (2019) *Special Education*. Available from: http://www.stat.fi/til/erop/index_en.html [Accessed October 2019]
23. University of Oulu. (2019) *Creating Innovation for the Future*. Available from: <https://www.oulu.fi/university/node/34711> [Accessed October 2019]