

LegCo Panel on Education

**List of issues to be considered
(as at 10 February 1999)**

1. Freeze of tuition fees for government-funded tertiary educational programmes in the 1998-99 academic year

Item proposed by Hon NG Ching-fai. The Administration is still examining the impact of the freeze of tuition fees on the resources of tertiary educational institutions. Discussion of the item has been deferred to a future meeting.

2. Private school policy

At the policy briefing on 12 October 1998, the Administration responded to a question raised by Hon TSANG Yok-shing on the measures to facilitate the development of a vibrant private school sector. The Administration has undertaken to further discuss with the Panel the details with regard to land grant to non-profit-making private schools and allocation of government-built premises to new private schools joining the Direct Subsidy Scheme.

3. Subsidy to kindergartens

At the policy briefing on 12 October 1998, Hon CHOY So-yuk asked the Administration to consider increasing the subsidy to kindergartens so that more kindergartens could achieve the target of having 60% of teachers to be Qualified Kindergarten Teachers without having to increase the tuition fees. The Administration has undertaken to consult the Panel on improvement proposals in this respect.

4. Provision of physiotherapists and allied health personnel in special schools

Item proposed by Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung who is concerned about the provision of physiotherapists, speech therapists and allied health personnel in special schools for handicapped children.

5. Review of the education-related executive and advisory bodies

In accordance with the recommendation of the Education Commission Report No. 7 (ECR7), the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) has conducted a review on the education-related executive and advisory system. A consultation document on the Review of the Education-related Executive and Advisory Bodies was published in May 1998. The consultation period ended on 27 May 1998 and some of the recommendations have been implemented. The Panel may wish to consider whether this item should be deleted.

6. Review of academic structure

The Education Commission (EC) has been tasked to review the structure of pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education which will cover, among others, the age at which students should begin each stage of education, the duration of each stage, the curriculum and assessment methods, and the interface between the different stages. On 20 April 1998, two working groups, namely, the Working Group on Pre-primary and Universal Basic Education and the Working Group on Post-Secondary 3 Education, were set up under the EC to conduct the review. The Working Groups will consult the various advisory bodies and education community.

7. Policy on university hostels

When discussing a Public Works Subcommittee paper (PWSC(98-99)9) about the new student hostel in City University on 4 September 1998, PWSC members had urged for a more generous provision for publicly-funded student hostel places at UGC-funded institutions. The PWSC Chairman has advised that issues related to the policy on university hostels be further considered by the Panel on Education.

8. Allocation of land for construction of new schools

At the meeting on 18 January 1999, Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong proposed to discuss the allocation of sites for constructions of new schools. He suggested inviting the Secretary for Planning, Environment and Lands to join discussion on the Administration's policy on provision of land for construction of new schools.

9. Improvements to the Secondary School Places Allocation System (SSPAS)

Item proposed by Prof NG Ching-fai. Concerned about the confusion in the allocation of secondary school places in 1998, Prof NG would like to know if secondary schools should be allowed more flexibility in the admission of secondary one students.

10. Teaching of Putonghua in schools

Item proposed by Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong. The Education Commission Report No. 6 has recommended a number of measures to promote teaching of Putonghua in schools. The Administration may be invited to brief the Panel on the policy and progress in this respect, such as the supply of teachers, qualifications of teachers, resources and support for teaching Putonghua in schools, etc.

11. Provision of library facilities in primary schools

Item proposed by Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong. Education Commission Report No. 5 has recommended provision of a library in each primary school. Mr CHEUNG is concerned about the policy and resources allocated for this purpose.

12. Integrated education

Item proposed by Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong who is concerned about the policy and resources for integrating children with learning difficulties or adjustment problems into the mainstream schools. He would also like to know the outcome of the two-year pilot scheme on integrated education, such as the difficulties encountered and the possible solutions.

13. Benchmark qualification for English language teachers

Item proposed by Hon Emily LAU. The Education Commission Report No. 6 has recommended that minimum language proficiency standards for all language teachers be specified. Members are concerned about the teaching of English language in schools and would like to receive an update on the issue.