

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2) 2557/99-00
(These minutes have been seen by
the Administration and cleared
with the Chairman)

Ref : CB2/PL/ED

LegCo Panel on Education

**Minutes of special meeting
held on Thursday, 8 June 2000 at 8:30 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

Members Present : Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung (Chairman)
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon SIN Chung-kai
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP

Members Absent : Prof Hon NG Ching-fai (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, JP
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, JP
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum
Hon CHOY So-yuk
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon SZETO Wah

Public Officers Attending : Mr Joseph LAI
Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower

Mr Patrick LI
Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower

Mr Anthony K H TONG
Deputy Director of Education

Mr Peter P Y LEUNG
Acting Senior Assistant Director of Education (Support)

Mr S L MA
Principal Education Officer (Information Systems)

Clerk in Attendance : Mr LAW Wing-lok
Chief Assistant Secretary (2) 5

Staff in Attendance : Mr Stanley MA
Senior Assistant Secretary (2) 6

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The Chairman welcomed representatives of the Administration to the special meeting.

I Enhancement of Administration Computer Systems in Schools and the Education Department
(LC Paper No. CB(2) 2237/99-00(01))

2. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Director of Education (DDE) introduced the Administration's paper and said that the enhancement to the School Administration and Management Computer System (SAMS) and the Education Department Information System (EDIS) was proposed to -

- (a) replace and upgrade the existing computers of the SAMS and EDIS, and expand the coverage of users of the EDIS;
- (b) integrate the SAMS network and computers in schools provided for Information Technology (IT) in education; and
- (c) convert the SAMS into a web-based application.

3. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed support for the proposal to create a new commitment of about \$370 million for upgrading the SAMS and EDIS. He pointed out that many teachers had complained about the slow processing speed of the SAMS. In the face of rapid technological development in IT, the processing power and storage capacity of the SAMS, which were based on the standards in 1994, could no longer meet present day users' requirements. He considered that the computers of SAMS should have been replaced earlier to meet users' expectations and needs.

4. Mr CHEUNG was worried that the few clerical staff in each school could hardly cope with the increasing administrative workload arising from the use of IT in school

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education and administration. He asked whether additional resources would be allocated to schools for implementation of the enhanced SAMS.

5. In response, Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (DS/EM) said that SAMS was developed to enhance efficiency in school administrative work such as recording students' examination scores, and the Government did not consider it necessary to provide additional staff to schools to run the enhanced SAMS. He undertook to provide in the financial proposal to be submitted to the Finance Committee for consideration on 23 June 2000, information on the provision of additional clerical support to secondary and primary schools in recent years.

6. DDE said that because each school only had a small number of computers connected to SAMS, clerical staff in schools might have problems coping with the increased workload during peak periods (e.g. after year-end examinations) when the demand for SAMS was high. However, after integrating the SAMS and computers for IT education, schools could pool all IT resources in schools together and put them to optimal use for both administrative work and teaching and learning activities. Together with the introduction of the operating expenses block grant starting from the 2000/01 school year, schools would have flexibility to deploy additional and temporary resources to operate the enhanced SAMS.

7. Principal Education Officer (Information Systems) (PEO(IS)) supplemented that qualified contractors had been appointed to assist in day-to-day operation and maintenance of computers and network systems in schools. He pointed out that the enhanced SAMS would incorporate new software programmes to simplify administrative procedures and enhance efficiency of the system. The enhanced SAMS would also incorporate a web-based application which would allow teachers to access the SAMS anywhere and anytime through computers connected to the Internet; and schools to download any upgraded version of SAMS and add-on school administrative software through the Internet.

8. The Chairman enquired about the schedule for implementation of the enhanced SAMS in the 1 200 public sector schools.

9. PEO(IS) responded that the Administration had planned to start and complete the upgrading of the SAMS in 2000/01 and 2002/03 respectively, and to complete conversion of the SAMS into a web-based application in October 2002. The Education Department (ED) would give greater flexibility to schools in the replacement and upgrading of computers to cater for their different needs. He pointed out that while some schools might urgently need replacement of aging machines, others might wish to replace the system later due to other priorities. To facilitate schools to decide on their own when to arrange site preparation works and replace computers, they would have the options of receiving cash grants from the Government for the procurement of equipment only, or for both the procurement of equipment and conducting site preparation works.

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Alternatively, schools could ask the Government to buy the equipment and/or carry out the site preparation works on their behalf.

10. Miss Emily LAU enquired about the current provision of clerical and technical staff in primary and secondary schools. She also asked whether schools had requested additional staff resources to operate computers under the SAMS.

11. PEO(IS) responded that depending on the number of classes, the clerical staff establishment in each secondary and primary school was 4-6 and 2-3 respectively. He pointed out that many schools had complained about the SAMS and requested replacing the computers and upgrading the software programmes of the SAMS. He undertook to confirm whether ED had received complaints from schools regarding the provision of staff resources to run the SAMS.

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[*Post-meeting note* : The Administration's response was subsequently forwarded to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)2467/99-00(01) on 27 June 2000]

12. DDE supplemented that the establishment of SAMS in 1994 was aimed at assisting teachers in school administrative work and that the current enhancement would further reduce teachers' non-teaching workload. He pointed out that training on the operation of the enhanced SAMS would be provided to teachers and staff concerned.

13. In response to Miss Emily LAU enquiry about the life cycle of the enhanced SAMS, DDE said that the normal life span of computer hardware was five years. PEO(IS) reiterated that developed with a web-based application, the enhanced SAMS would facilitate future upgradings of software programmes onto school computers and save substantial manpower costs.

14. Mr SIN Chung-kai requested the Administration to provide more information on the improved functions and applications of the enhanced SAMS in its submission to the Finance Committee for funding approval. DS/EM undertook to provide the information as requested.

15. Miss Emily LAU enquired about the benefits which would be derived from the enhancement of the EDIS.

16. DDE responded that the existing computers of the EDIS were aging and the capacity of EDIS was insufficient to entertain a large amount of public enquiries simultaneously. The proposed upgrading of the EDIS would make possible the delivery of services on-line through the Internet and enable ED to respond to public requests in a more efficient manner. PEO(IS) supplemented that the enhanced EDIS would provide all officers of the rank of Assistant Education Officer (or equivalent) or above with access to EDIS and the Internet.

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17. In response to Miss Emily LAU, DS/EM said that the cost and benefits of the enhanced EDIS would be set out clearly in the Administration's submission to the Finance Committee.

18. In concluding discussion, the Chairman said that the Panel supported in principle the proposal to enhance the SAMS and EDIS.

II Any other business

19. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 9:20 am.

Legislative Council Secretariat

24 August 2000