

Information Paper

Review of Student Travel Subsidy Scheme

Purpose

At the Panel meeting on 20 March, arising from a referral from Duty Roster Members of the LegCo Redress System, Members requested the Administration to review its policy on the provision of travel subsidy to primary school students. In addition, Members would also like to know the options available to parents when their children's primary school is converted into whole-day operation by decanting one of its sessions to new school premises. This paper briefs Members on the position.

Student Travel Subsidy Scheme for primary pupils

2. The travel subsidy scheme for primary pupils aged below 12 was approved by the Finance Committee in December 1997 and came into effect from the 1998/99 school year. It was estimated that some 13% of pupils in public sector primary schools attend schools outside their Primary One Admission (POA) net. These pupils would have to travel to and from school using various means of transport. The scheme was intended to help needy families in meeting the travel expenses of these pupils. To qualify for assistance, a pupil must (a) pass a means test; (b) attend a public sector school outside his residing POA net; and (c) reside beyond ten minutes walking distance from school.

3. The allocation of primary school places by POA net is a long-standing practice. Unless the school nets are very small, there are bound to be pupils who have to travel beyond the walking distance of ten minutes from home within a school net. This is well-established and accepted by parents. We do not have any plan at the moment to revise the ambit of the travel subsidy scheme for primary pupils. Nonetheless, we shall keep the scheme under regular review to see whether there is any need for change.

Options to parents when a school is converted into whole day operation

4. In general, when a school sponsor is allocated new school premises, the school will inform parents in the first instance. A survey to

understand parents' wishes regarding the change to the new premises will be conducted. This survey may sometimes be followed by a more in-depth opinion questionnaire so that parents will be able to voice their personal concerns in greater details. After consultation, the school will assist parents to resolve individual problems as far as possible. Site visits to the new school premises may be arranged if necessary.

5. Notwithstanding efforts made in consulting and resolving problems for parents, it is still possible for parents to refuse a transfer to the new school. For students who do not wish to transfer to the new school, they will be accommodated in the original school as far as possible.

Education and Manpower Bureau
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