

LEGCO PANEL ON EDUCATION

Book Grant for Teachers

Introduction

This paper seeks Members' views on the proposal to provide a one-off book grant to promote the professional development of teachers through reading and self-learning.

Background

2. At present, government, aided and caput schools receive a number of grants for maintaining library facilities, including the Library Book Grant, Grant for New Schools and Grant for Chinese/English Extensive Reading. The subsidy for Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools also incorporates these grants. However, these grants are mainly for providing reading materials for students and promoting teaching and learning in schools, rather than for professional development of teachers.

3. As with other professions, teachers need to update their professional knowledge and skills through life-long learning, such as participating in regular refresher courses and reading of professional publications.

4. Teachers' professional publications can be very wide-ranging, covering generic education theory to specific academic disciplines, as well as teaching materials. While some of the more general publications may be available from public libraries, more education-specific collections are currently held by the teacher education institutes, the Teacher Centre and the Education Department. Although teachers have access to public libraries, the Teacher Centre and the Education Department, there are not enough copies of educational books and journals to go round. Distance and time also create disincentives amidst the busy schedule of teachers. It will be more convenient to have school-based collections to share among teachers.

5. In October 2000, the Chief Executive announced in his Policy Address that in 2001, a one-off grant of \$23 million would be made available for public sector schools to purchase educational publications aimed at enhancing teachers' professional development. We propose to

provide government, aided, caput and DSS schools with a one-off grant, at the rate of \$500 per teacher, specifically to purchase professional publications for teachers. Special schools are also included in the scheme.

Proposed implementation plan

6. Subject to the approval of the Finance Committee of the grant, we propose the following implementation plan :-

- (a) a school's number of teaching staff as at 1 April 2001 will be used as the basis for calculating the grant for each school. We estimate that about 45,000 teachers will benefit from the grant. The total amount required will be about \$23 million;
- (b) the grant will be disbursed to schools in May 2001 together with guidelines on selection of publications and accounting procedures, as well as a suggested book list for reference. We expect schools to consult all teaching staff before making the purchase, to ensure that the specific needs and interests of individual teachers are taken care of, and that various key learning areas are covered;
- (c) to allow sufficient time for schools and teachers to decide and procure the publications, they will have until the end of the 2003-04 school year to use the grant; and
- (d) schools (e.g. those in the same district or under the same sponsoring body) will be encouraged to coordinate in the procurement and subsequent sharing of books. Where necessary, the Education Department will assist schools to set up book-sharing networks among schools.

Public consultation

7. We have consulted major teacher associations and school councils. They all welcomed additional reading resources for teachers.

Support sought

8. Members are invited to support the proposal above.

Education Department
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