

**For information**

**Bills Committee on Education (Amendment) Bill 2002**

**One-line Vote**

**Purpose**

This paper gives our response to the enquiries raised by Members at the Bills Committee meetings on 12 and 13 February 2004 in connection with a one-line vote.

**Background**

2. Professor Arthur K C Li, the Secretary for Education and Manpower (SEM) had a meeting on 9 February 2004 with three primary school councils: Subsidised Primary Schools Council, Hong Kong Aided Primary school Heads Association and Hong Kong Primary Education Research Association, to discuss issues relating to the budget cut of primary schools. At the meeting, SEM said that the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) was studying the arrangements for non-salary subsidies to schools and after the enactment of the Education (Amendment) Bill 2002 (the Bill), schools would be empowered with more autonomy to handle their resources flexibly, which might include the arrangement of a one-line vote. There were school heads asking whether the one-line vote would be extended to cover the salaries of teachers. SEM replied that there was no such plan but he would not rule out such a possibility in the long run.

**Relationship between a one-line vote and the Bill**

3. We would now like to clarify that EMB has no plans at all to implement a one-line vote, which includes teachers' salaries. At present, EMB is reviewing the non-salary recurrent subsidies, including the Operating Expenses Block Grant. The purpose of the review is to further enhance schools' autonomy and flexibility in using the non-salary recurrent subsidies.

4. In addition, at the Bills Committee meeting on 12 February 2004, the representative of the Department of Justice and the legal advisor of the Bills

Committee have clearly indicated that the Bill has no direct relationship with the one-line vote since whether or not the Bill is passed, the Administration, if necessary, might still implement a one-line vote by amending the Codes of Aid. If it is necessary to amend the Codes of Aid, EMB will certainly consult the education sector and the Panel on Education of the Legislative Council.

Education and Manpower Bureau  
March 2004