

ITEM FOR FINANCE COMMITTEE

HEAD 40 - EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Members are invited to approve the change in the Controlling Officer for Head 40 - Education Department in the 2002-03 Estimates of Expenditure from the Director of Education to the Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower with effect from 1 January 2003.

PROBLEM

The Director of Education (DE) is currently the Controlling Officer for Head 40 - Education Department (ED). After the post is deleted with effect from 1 January 2003, there will be no Controlling Officer for Head 40 in the 2002-03 Estimates of Expenditure.

PROPOSAL

2. We propose to change the Controlling Officer for Head 40 - ED in the 2002-03 Estimates of Expenditure from the DE to the Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower (PSEM) with effect from 1 January 2003.

JUSTIFICATION

3. To facilitate the merging of Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) and ED into a new organisation, we have proposed a number of establishment changes taking effect from 1 January 2003, vide EC(2002-03)6. One of the changes is the deletion of the DE post. The Establishment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee endorsed our proposal on 20 November 2002.

4. At present, the expenditure for EMB and ED are accounted for under Head 146 and Head 40 respectively. Subject to the approval of the establishment changes for the merger proposal by this Committee, we will merge the two Heads of Expenditure in the 2003-04 draft Estimates. Meanwhile, to minimize disruption to the existing accounting systems in the middle of a financial year, we will keep the two expenditure heads intact for the rest of the current financial year. Accordingly, we propose to designate PSEM as the Controlling Officer for Head 40 - ED, which is hitherto controlled by DE, for the rest of 2002-03. The change in Controlling Officer will not entail any changes to the Estimates under Head 40 as approved by Members in the passage of the Appropriation Bill 2002 earlier this year. As Controlling Officer, PSEM will also take up all the authority delegated by this Committee to DE on previous occasions.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5. The proposal has no financial implications.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

6. We consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Education on 28 October 2002 on the merging of EMB and ED and the redistribution of duties under the new establishment. These include the designation of PSEM as the Controlling Officer for Head 40 - ED in the 2002-03 Estimates of Expenditure for the rest of the financial year. Members generally supported the proposals.

Education and Manpower Bureau
November 2002