



教育署
Education Department

本署檔號 Our ref: EMB(I)/ADM/55/2
來函檔號 Your ref:
電話 Tel. No.: 2892 6665
圖文傳真 Fax No.: 2575 4291

24 January 2003

Ms Miranda HON
Clerk to Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms HON,

**The Director of Audit's Report on the
Results of Value for Money Audits (Report No. 39)**

**Chapter 9: Primary Education --
Planning and Provision of Primary School Places**

I refer to the Director of Audit's letter of 7 January to you on the above, and copied to us.

The Director of Audit's major query is that should the vacant classrooms in the three schools' old premises have been used to house the essential items provided for under the respective SIP projects, the two annexes in Schools I and K and the additional floor area in School J would be unnecessary given that subsequent enrolment of the schools does not justify the retention/ provision of new classrooms. I would like to offer our views for Members' consideration –

- (a) As explained in the then Director of Education's letter of 19 December 2002, the reason for retaining the vacant classrooms in School I (six classrooms), School J and School K (11 classrooms each) and building additional classrooms in Schools I and K (five classrooms each) under the respective SIP projects was that the above classrooms were anticipated to be required to meet the projected demand at the time when funding approval was sought in 1996 for School I and in 1997 for Schools J and K. In the cases of Schools J and K, the classroom requirement for implementation of

教育統籌局與教育署已於二零零三年一月一日合併為新的教育統籌局。為免浪費，我們繼續使用舊文具存貨。

We are the new Education and Manpower Bureau formed by the merger of the old Bureau and the Education Department. To minimize waste, we are using our old stationery while stock lasts.



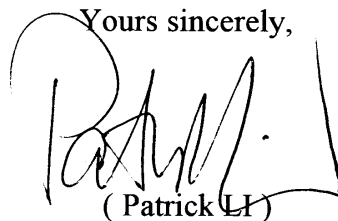
whole-day primary schooling had also been taken into account. In other words, based on the data then available, there was a need to reserve sufficient number of vacant classrooms in the three schools to meet the projected demand.

- (b) To improve the classroom teaching and learning environment, we accommodated five of the required classrooms in each of Schools I and K in the new annexes built under the respective SIP projects. For the vacant classrooms of equivalent number in the old premises, they were substandard and did not meet modern day educational needs of the students. These classrooms were therefore converted into alternative uses.

As reported in the then Director of Education's letter mentioned above, the use of most/ all of the vacant classrooms in Schools I, J and K has been changed to other teaching and learning activities in the 2001/02 school year. This is to take account of the latest enrolment situation and the latest projection of the supply and demand of primary school places.

At the risk of stating the obvious, I wish to add that population projection forms the basis for planning the provision of school places. Planners can only use the latest data available to them and it is unreasonable to assume that they can foretell the drop in demand for school places a few years down the road. Hence, consideration of the justification for certain SIP projects must be contextualised. Nevertheless, to ensure prudent use of public funds, this Bureau will continue to monitor the enrolment situation of the three schools and will closely liaise with them to make sure that available resources including their vacant classrooms are put to the best use for the benefits of teaching and learning.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Patrick LI', written over a horizontal line.

(Patrick LI)
for Secretary for Education and Manpower

c.c. Director of Audit (Attn: Mr David M T LEUNG) 2583 9063