

**Legislative Council Panel
on Education**

**Merger of the Education Commission
and the Board of Education**

Introduction

This paper informs Members of the arrangements for merging the Education Commission (EC) and the Board of Education (BoE).

Background

2. The BoE was established in 1920 to advise the Director of Education (DE) on educational matters. On the recommendation of the visiting panel reviewing education in Hong Kong, the EC was set up in 1984 to advise the Government on education objectives and policies as well as to co-ordinate advice on education at all levels. The established convention since then is that the EC advises on policies and issues of general concern to all education sectors while the BoE focuses on school education and operational matters.

3. In practice, given the pivotal role of school education in the entire education system, the EC's emphasis has been on major policy issues affecting school education. Past experience also shows that it is unsatisfactory to discuss policy issues without considering the operational aspects. The problem of overlap with the BoE is exacerbated in the deliberation and implementation of the education reform which spans 10 years. The EC considers it necessary to monitor the implementation of the reform recommendations so that it will be better placed to advise on how the reform measures should be adjusted in the light of experience. Over the past year or so, very often, the same issues were discussed at both the BoE and the EC; examples include through-train schools, Basic Competency Assessment and Secondary School Places Allocation system. There is thus room for streamlining the consultation process.

4. The reorganisation of EMB and ED into one entity represents an attempt to integrate policy making and implementation. In line with this objective, and following the abolition of the post of Director of Education, it is logical to merge the BoE and the EC. After the merger of the EC and the BoE, apart from education objectives and policies the EC will also advise on those implementation aspects which have important policy implications, but not on day-to-day implementation issues.

Terms of Reference (ToR)

5. The existing ToRs of the BoE and the EC and the revised ToR of the EC are at Annexes A and B respectively. The major changes are explained as follows. First, consistent with the spirit of the accountability system, the EC will advise the Secretary for Education and Manpower (SEM), instead of the Chief Executive (CE). On major policy issues, SEM will continue to consult the CE and the Executive Council on the recommendations of the EC and, where he may take a different view, highlight the differences, as was done in the past.

6. Second, it is within the existing ToR of the EC to advise on matters that concern the planning and development of education at all levels. However, the present formulation of the ToR has given rise to misunderstanding about EC's interface with the University Grants Committee and other independent organisations. With the recent establishment of the Manpower Development Committee, which oversees the development of vocational and continuing education, it is desirable to spell out more clearly EC's role, namely, to advise on the planning and development of early childhood and school education and, in carrying out its tasks, to co-ordinate the work of the University Grants Committee, the Vocational Training Council and other education advisory bodies.

7. Third, as the main education committee to advise SEM, it is reasonable to allow flexibility in the ToR for SEM to refer educational issues to the EC for advice, where necessary.

Membership

8. Existing members of the EC and the BoE are drawn from among the key stakeholders, including frontline educators at different education levels,

teacher educators, parents, and lay members. With the exception of government officials and the chairmen of the key education advisory committees, members are appointed on an ad personam basis. The existing composition of the EC and the BoE is in Annex C.

9. Following the merger of the EC and the BoE, we propose to broaden the membership of the EC to include representatives of the main school councils and the Home School Cooperation Committee on an ad personam basis. The proposed composition of the revamped EC is in Annex D.

Implementation plan

10. The current term of the BoE will expire at the end of 2002, whereas the EC membership will expire in June 2003¹. To maintain continuity and for the sake of a smooth transition, we shall appoint to the EC on 1 January 2003 the Chairmen of the Subsidised Primary Schools Council, the Subsidised Secondary Schools Council and the Special Schools Council, as well as the Chairman of Home-School Cooperation Committee, on an ad personam basis. At present, they are members on the BoE but not the EC. We also intend to appoint the current BoE Chairman to EC as a lay member.

11. We shall fully re-structure the EC in accordance with the composition in Annex D when the current term expires in June 2003. For efficiency and better management of meetings, the number of EC members will remain at around 20.

12. We accept that, given the wide implications of education issues, it is not enough to seek the advice of the EC alone even with the inclusion of ex-officio and functional representatives. Where necessary, the EC will co-opt members for discussion of relevant agenda items, or set up working groups with co-opted members to examine specific issues. In addition, as part of consensus building, we must continue to reach out and communicate with a wider group of different stakeholders, e.g. LegCo, district councils, principal groups, teacher organisations, school sponsoring bodies, etc.

¹ The term of office of the EC Chairman will expire on 30 April 2003.

Conclusion

13. The merger of the EC and the BoE is consistent with the objective of integrating policy formulation and implementation that underpins the merger of EMB and ED. It also helps to enhance efficiency by streamlining the consultation process, and removing duplication of work. The expansion of ex-officio and functional appointments to the EC institutionalises the input of key stakeholders and strengthens the representation of the EC.

Education and Manpower Bureau
6 November 2002

Existing Terms of Reference

Board of Education (BoE)

The Board of Education is a statutory body established under the Education Ordinance to advise the Hong Kong Government, through the Director of Education, on educational matters at school level. Its main tasks are to advise on the implementation of approved policies, to review existing policies and to propose changes.

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Education Commission (EC)

The Education Commission advises the Government on the following :

- the overall educational objectives and policies, and the priorities for implementation having regard to resources available;
- the co-ordination and monitoring of the planning and development of education at all levels.

In carrying out these tasks, the Commission will co-ordinate but not seek to direct the work of Board of Education (BoE), University Grants Committee (UGC), Vocational Training Council (VTC) and other education advisory bodies. Specifically, it will –

- receive and comment on the periodic reports submitted to the Government by BoE, UGC, VTC and other major advisory bodies on education;
- request the above-mentioned bodies to initiate discussion on issues falling within their respective purview as necessary;
- receive regular reports from the Government on the introduction and implementation of major education policies and initiatives; and
- initiate educational research as appropriate.

The Commission oversees the operation of the Quality Education Fund, with advice from the Quality Education Fund Steering Committee.

The Commission submits its reports and recommendations to the Chief Executive.

**Education Commission
Proposed Terms of Reference**

I. The Education Commission advises the Secretary for Education and Manpower on –

- (a) the overall educational objectives and policies, and the planning and development of early childhood and school education; and
- (b) the priorities for implementation of its recommendations having regard to resources available;

II. In carrying out its tasks, the Commission will co-ordinate but not seek to direct the work of University Grants Committee (UGC), Vocational Training Council (VTC) and other education advisory bodies. Specifically, it will –

- (a) receive and comment on the periodic reports submitted to the Government by UGC, VTC and other major advisory bodies on education;
- (b) request the above-mentioned bodies to initiate discussion on issues falling within their respective purview as necessary;
- (c) entertain requests from the Government for advice on educational issues; and
- (d) initiate education research as appropriate.

III. The Commission oversees the operation of the Quality Education Fund, with advice from the Quality Education Fund Steering Committee.

IV. The Commission submits its reports and recommendations to the Secretary for Education and Manpower.

**Membership of the Education Commission
(as at November 2002)**

Membership	Name
Chairman	Dr Rosanna Y M WONG, JP (王葛鳴博士)
Unofficial Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ms CHAN Chui-chun (陳翠珍女士) ii. Professor CHENG Kai-ming, SBS, JP (程介明教授) iii. The Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong (張文光議員) iv. Professor CHUNG Yue-ping, JP (鍾宇平教授) v. Mr Irving KOO Yee-yin, SBS, JP (顧爾言先生) vi. Mr Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, JP (梁君彥先生) vii. Mr PANG Yiu-kai, JP (彭耀佳先生) viii. Mr TAI Hay-lap, BBS, JP (戴希立先生) ix. Mr Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP (田北辰先生) x. Mr TSO Kai-lok, MH (曹啟樂先生) xi. Ms Harlanna YEUNG Chui-chun (楊翠珍女士) xii. The Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung, BBS (楊耀忠議員)
Ex-officio Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower ii. Director of Education iii. Chairman, Board of Education iv. Chairman, Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Council v. Chairman, Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications vi. Chairman, University Grants Committee vii. Chairman, Curriculum Development Council viii. Chairman, Vocational Training Council

**Membership of the Board of Education
(To expire on 31 December 2002)**

Membership	Name
Chairman	Mr Moses CHENG Mo-chi, JP (鄭慕智先生)
Unofficial Members	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mr Chiu Chi-shing (趙志成先生)2. Mr Fung Lap-wing (馮立榮先生)3. Mr Fung Man-ching (馮文正先生)4. Mr Stephen Hui Chin-yim (許俊炎先生)5. Mr Kwok Kwok-chuen, BBS (郭國全先生)6. Ms Lam Woon-sum, MH (林澆心女士)7. Ms Lau Seung-man (劉湘文女士)8. Mr Lee Kit-kong (李傑江先生)9. Dr Simon Leung Man-on (梁民安博士)10. Dr Leung Wing-tai (梁永泰博士)11. Mrs Mak Chen Wen-ning, BBS (麥陳尹玲女士)12. Dr Pang King-chee (彭敬慈博士)13. Mr Pang Yiu-kai, JP (彭耀佳先生)14. Mr Tai Hay-lap, BBS, JP (戴希立先生)15. Dr Tang Mei-sin (鄧薇先博士)16. Dr Sandra Tsang Kit-man (曾潔雯博士)17. Mr Isaac Tse Pak-hoi, MH (謝伯開先生)18. Rev Yuen Tin-yau (袁天佑牧師)
Ex-officio Members	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Director of Education2. Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (2)

Membership Structure of the Education Commission

Type of Membership	Stakeholder Bodies Represented
Chairman	Appointed ad personam
Ex officio members	Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower (or her representative) Chairman of – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications (b) Curriculum Development Council (c) Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (d) Quality Education Fund (e) University Grants Committee (f) Vocational Training Council
Members appointed on ad personam basis	Representatives of – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Subsidized Secondary Schools Council (b) Subsidized Primary Schools Council (c) Special Schools Council (d) Home-School Cooperation Committee People from the following sectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Principal and Teacher (two) (b) Early childhood education worker (c) Teacher educator (d) Other community sectors (four)
Total : 20	