

**Information Note on  
the Arrangements for the Remaining Surplus Laboratory Technicians  
of Aided Secondary Schools in the 2003/04 School Year**

**Purpose**

This paper reports on the results of the arrangements for the remaining 12 surplus laboratory technicians of aided secondary schools in the 2003/04 school year and the implementation of “job-sharing” in the affected schools.

**Background**

2. In May 2003, it was assessed that 41 aided secondary schools would have surplus laboratory technicians in the 2003/04 school year. As of the date of the special meeting of the Education Panel on 20 August 2003, most of these 41 affected schools had resolved their surplus problems through various arrangements, of which 6 were resolved through job-sharing. At the special meeting, members requested us to report on the results of the arrangements for the remaining 12 surplus laboratory technicians in the 2003/04 school year and the implementation of “job-sharing” in the affected schools.

**Present Situation**

3. To assist the remaining 12 surplus laboratory technicians, we had contacted the SMC concerned and requested them:

- (a) to seriously consider redeployment to other schools under the same sponsoring body;
- (b) to review critically the school curriculum and the number of practical periods required;
- (c) to make recommendation for the surplus laboratory technicians to other schools; and
- (d) to release the surplus laboratory technicians from duty to attend interviews.

We also urged the schools and staff concerned to consider “job-sharing”.

4. After much negotiation, four out of the remaining 12 surplus laboratory technicians successfully secured a post as laboratory technician in the 2003/04 school year. One laboratory technician was redeployed to another school under the same sponsoring body. One was absorbed under the present staff entitlement of the existing school and two successfully employed by other secondary schools. For the remaining eight cases, we had explored all possibilities with the schools and the staff concerned. None of the above proposals were accepted by the school management and the staff. These 8 affected schools finally terminated the service of these surplus laboratory technicians in September 2003.

5. As regards the “job-sharing” arrangement in the six affected schools, they reported to us in August 2003 that they would adopt “job-sharing” to resolve the problem of surplus laboratory technicians. Subsequently, two of them reported to have resolved their surplus laboratory technician situation through natural wastage instead of “job-sharing”. For the remaining four, three adopted the sharing of two laboratory technician posts among three laboratory technicians and one had two laboratory technicians sharing the posts of one laboratory technician and one teaching assistant.

### **Related Issues**

6. Promoting laboratory safety in schools has always been one of our concerns. In enhancing teachers’ and students’ awareness of laboratory safety, we have published a handbook on *Safety in Science Laboratories*, produced a new set of laboratory safety posters, established two websites and organized regular training programmes for teachers and laboratory technicians. We also conduct a Survey on Laboratory Accidents to collect up-to-date information about the standard of laboratory safety. But in order not to induce too much work on the teachers, the survey is conducted on a triennial basis. We will conduct the next survey by the end of 2003 and the results will be released in 2004.

7. We have set up a Task Force with the Hong Kong Subsidized Secondary Schools Council to work out the future arrangements for handling surplus staff (including laboratory technicians).