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來函檔號 Your Ref. :

30 December 2003

Ms Miranda HON
Clerk
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 audit (Report No. 41)**

Chapter 7: Planning and provision of public secondary school places

Thank you for your letter dated 19 December 2003 seeking audit's views on whether and how the School Development and Accountability Framework (SDAF) is relevant to the issues raised under the question of under-utilisation of classrooms. My views are given below.

Relevance of SDAF to classroom utilisation

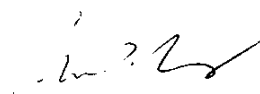
As at the beginning of the 2002-03 school year, there were 145 vacant classrooms in 50 public secondary schools. Among those aided schools with vacant classrooms, the problem was more serious in four schools (i.e. Schools A, B, C and D), each of which had five or more vacant classrooms. Schools B, C and D had difficulties in attracting students. However, Audit noted that Schools B and C had obtained positive value-added scores in the three core subjects (i.e. Chinese, English and Mathematics) in 2000, 2001 and 2002, whereas School D had obtained low scores in the three years (paras. 2.2 to 2.14).

On the basis of these scores, Audit recommended that the Secretary for Education and Manpower (SEM) should encourage those schools which are providing added value to the educational process to operate classes in all their available classrooms. As for those schools which have not made significant contributions to the progress of their students, Audit recommended that the SEM should require such schools to make improvements within a reasonable period of time. In response, the SEM said that the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) "will take into account a host of indicators to evaluate the performance of schools. The EMB's value-added score is only one of the many indicators". The SEM also said that "to ensure a fair assessment of a school, a myriad of performance data should also be considered. The EMB is indeed pursuing an SDAF in which a balanced set of indicators and data will be used to evaluate the performance of schools in all key aspects" (paras. 2.18(i) and (o)).

In Audit's view, the EMB should, in principle, take action to ensure that schools make use of all available classrooms. Where vacant classrooms exist in a school, it is up to the SEM to decide whether to use the value-added scores or the myriad of indicators under the SDAF to assess the school's performance in order to take appropriate action to address the problem.

A Chinese translation of this letter will be forwarded to you shortly.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David M T Leung', with a stylized flourish at the end.

(David M T LEUNG)
for Director of Audit

c.c. Secretary for Education and Manpower