

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)3324/03-04
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 21 June 2004 at 4:30 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung, BBS (Chairman)
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum (Deputy Chairman)
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon SIN Chung-kai
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, GBS, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon SZETO Wah
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
Dr Hon LO Wing-lok, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
- Members Absent** : Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon MA Fung-kwok, JP
- Public Officers attending** : Item IV
Mr Edward YAU, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (1)

Mr Michael STONE, JP
Secretary-General
University Grants Committee

Item V

Mrs Cherry TSE, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (2)

Mrs Fanny LAM
Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and
Manpower (Education Commission and Planning)

Ms IP Ling-bik
Principal Education Officer (Hong Kong)
Education and Manpower Bureau

Ms Betty LEUNG
Chief Curriculum Development Officer (School-based
Curriculum Development (Secondary))
Education and Manpower Bureau

Miss LAM Kam-fung
Senior Education Officer (School Places Allocation)
Education and Manpower Bureau

Item VI

Mr Chris WARDLAW
Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (5)

Mrs Sabrina TANG
Principal Education Officer (New Territories)
Education and Manpower Bureau

Mr LEUNG Shiu-keung
Principal Education Officer (Curriculum
Development)²
Education and Manpower Bureau

Item VII

Mr CHENG Yan-chee
Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (4)

Ms Mimi LEE
Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and
Manpower (Quality Education)

Mr SHE Mang
Principal Inspector (Information Technology in
Education)
Education and Manpower Bureau

Clerk in attendance : Ms Doris CHAN
Chief Council Secretary (2)2

Staff in attendance : Mr Stanley MA
Senior Council Secretary (2)6

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I. Confirmation of minutes

[LC Paper No. CB(2)2790/03-04]

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2004 were confirmed.

II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

2. Members noted the following papers-

- (a) referral from the Complaints Division on a representation from “爭取基層生活保障組” [LC Paper No. CB(2)2530/03-04(01)];
- (b) draft Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) papers on the construction of two direct subsidy scheme schools in Sha Tin and Tseung Kwan O [LC Paper No. CB(2)2567/03-04(01)];
- (c) draft PWSC paper on the construction of a private independent school (secondary-cum-primary) at Shum Wan Road, Aberdeen [LC Paper No. CB(2)2759/03-04(01)];
- (d) submission from North District Secondary Schools Headmasters Conference [LC Paper No. CB(2)2780/03-04(01)];
- (e) submission from North District Primary Schools Headmasters Conference [LC Paper No. CB(2)2780/03-04(02)]; and
- (f) the Administration’s paper on “Study on effective strategies of class and group teaching in primary schools” [LC Paper No. CB(2)2844/03-04(01)].

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III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[Appendices I and II to LC Paper No. CB(2)2786/03-04]

3. Members agreed to hold meetings on the following dates and to invite deputations to express views at the meetings –

- (a) 5 July 2004, Monday at 4:30 pm to discuss “remuneration systems in University Grants Committee-funded institutions after deregulation of university salaries”; and
- (b) 19 July 2004, Monday at 4:30 pm to discuss “Review on the implementation of the recommendations of the Education Commission Report No. 5 on improving teacher-student ratios and class sizes in primary and secondary schools”.

IV. Remuneration systems in University Grants Committee(UGC)-funded institutions after deregulation of university salaries

4. Members noted the submission from the Federation of the Hong Kong Higher Education Institutions which was tabled at the meeting [LC Paper No. CB(2)2925/03-04(01)]. Mr Tommy CHEUNG declared interest that his spouse was a serving staff member in the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

Introduction

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (1) (DS(EM)1) introduced the Administration’s paper entitled “Remuneration systems in UGC-funded institutions after deregulation of salary scales” [LC Paper No. CB(2)2786/03-04(01)]. He highlighted that –

- (a) individual institutions were free to decide their own remuneration systems which might be based on the existing salary scales linked to civil service pay or on totally new mechanisms; and
- (b) the deregulation exercise was cost neutral, i.e. institutions would not be worse off as a result of the exercise in terms of the public funding they received.

6. Secretary General, University Grants Committee (SG(UGC)) supplemented that subsequent to the deregulation of salary scales in July 2003, all UGC-funded tertiary institutions had embarked on their own reviews of the pay and remuneration packages of their staff, and were currently at different stages of taking the matters forward. As of early June 2004, the Lingnan

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University, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong had completed their review exercises and started implementing new pay and remuneration systems. The other five UGC-funded institutions were in the process of review, i.e. consulting staff, putting up recommendations for consideration and/or endorsement by the respective governing bodies, etc.

Development and implementation of new remuneration systems in UGC-funded institutions

7. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that according to staff feedback, deregulation of university salaries had led to substantial reduction in staff salaries. In particular, some new staff of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University were remunerated at about 42% less than the previous entry level salaries. He pointed out that some institutions had taken the opportunity to replace the automatic salary increment system with a merit-based system under which award of salary increments would be subject to a performance assessment. However, the criteria and standards for the conduct of such assessment had not been set out in detail. Mr CHEUNG also expressed concern that in some institutions, the percentages of salary reductions for junior staff in the lower echelon were much higher than those for senior staff in the top echelon. Mr CHEUNG asked how UGC would assist an institution to –

- (a) maintain healthy and harmonious staff relationship, given the adoption of a remuneration system which allowed a substantial difference in salaries between similar level staff who were employed before and after a specified date;
- (b) establish an independent and transparent mechanism to monitor the operation of a fair and consistent appraisal system for award of salary increments to staff working in different faculties; and
- (c) enhance team work among academic and non-academic staff when salary reductions for senior management staff were far less than those for junior staff.

8. SG(UGC) said that in line with the principle of institutional autonomy, UGC-funded institutions should have discretion on how to review and develop their new remuneration systems after deregulation of staff salaries. UGC was confident that institutions would consult their staff extensively through appropriate channels and explore a wide range of alternatives during the review process. UGC would keep in view the development of new remuneration systems in UGC-funded institutions.

9. SG(UGC) acknowledged that the implementation of a new pay and remuneration structure which applied to new recruits but not serving staff might give rise to some staff discontent. Institutions would take into account their

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unique circumstances and adopt appropriate strategies to facilitate implementation of their new remuneration systems. SG(UGC) pointed out that similar to the salary adjustments in the civil service sector in 1999, institutions would have to make the best use of available resources during a time of budget deficit.

10. On the development of a fair and consistent salary increment system, SG(UGC) said that institutions would decide whether to adopt a merit-based or an automatic annual salary increment practice for their staff in different faculties. UGC anticipated that along with the development of a performance-based increment system, institutions would incorporate an appropriate appeal and grievance mechanism for aggrieved staff to lodge complaints on salary increment matters. SG(UGC) pointed out that the staff representatives of university councils could also reflect the views of staff on the matter at meetings of institution's council or appropriate committee.

11. As regards a large difference in salary reduction between senior staff and junior staff in some institutions, SG(UGC) said that in undertaking a review of their staff pay and reward structure for their academic and non-academic staff, institutions would consider the competitiveness of their remuneration packages with those of comparable jobs in the local and international markets. As a result, some institutions had recommended lower percentages of salary reduction for their senior non-academic staff in order to facilitate attraction and retention of the best staff.

12. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong agreed that UGC should not interfere with the autonomy of institutions to develop a new remuneration system for their staff. He suggested that UGC should examine the causes of the disputes arising from the development and implementation of the new remuneration systems and work out a set of guiding principles for institutions to observe. He considered it unsatisfactory to adopt a new system under which new recruits appointed after a specified date would receive a starting salary which was 40% to 50% less than those of the serving staff with more or less the same experience. Dissatisfaction would also arise if a substantial difference in salary reductions was recommended for senior and junior staff.

13. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong also suggested that each UGC-funded institution should establish an independent and transparent mechanism to consult staff on salary increment system, as well as an appeal and grievance mechanism for staff who felt aggrieved by the implementation of the new remuneration system to lodge complaints. He urged UGC to play a more proactive role in monitoring the development and implementation of new remuneration systems in UGC-funded institutions.

14. SG(UGC) responded that all institutions had their appeal and grievance mechanisms in place and would refine their appeal procedures to facilitate

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implementation of their new governance structures and remuneration systems as appropriate. He pointed out that UGC would play a role in the monitoring of institutional performance in achievement of their role statements by way of the role-related funding mechanism. He, however, did not consider it appropriate for UGC to provide a set of guiding principles for institutions to observe in formulating their new remuneration systems. He considered that UGC should continue to advise institutions at the system level, and keep an eye on the development and implementation of the new remuneration systems in individual institutions. He assured members that UGC would take appropriate actions if there was a substantial number of justified staff complaints on the new remuneration systems.

15. SG(UGC) further said that institutions were now at different stages of developing or implementing their new remuneration systems, and would consult their staff through different channels at an appropriate time. It would be premature at this stage to conclude whether a new remuneration system was effective or not. He cited the recent disputes over the proposed reduction of various civil service allowances as an example to illustrate the practical problems arising from the implementation of new remuneration systems which were less favourable than the existing ones.

16. Mr SZETO Wah asked when and how UGC would approach institutions to provide assistance or advice in the development or implementation of a new remuneration system.

17. SG(UGC) responded that UGC would continue to maintain regular contacts with institutions on matters relating to their developments. Depending on the circumstances of individual institutions, UGC would provide appropriate assistance and advice on issues arising from the implementation of a new remuneration system. SG(UGC) stressed that UGC-funded institutions were autonomous bodies, and their governing bodies were empowered to decide the best ways to implement a new remuneration system and handle any staff complaints and grievances which might arise in the course of implementation.

18. Mr TSANG Yok-sing and Mr Tommy CHEUNG considered it inappropriate for UGC to set guiding principles for the development and implementation of new remuneration systems in UGC-funded institutions. They considered that it was most important that institutions should consult their staff thoroughly in the review and development process, and establish an independent and transparent mechanism to handle staff appeals and grievances which might arise in the course of implementation. SG(UGC) reiterated that institutions had formal procedures in place for staff to lodge complaints, and would consult staff thoroughly in the course of the development and implementation of their new remuneration systems.

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Follow-up

19. The Chairman said that the Administration and UGC had explained their roles on the development of new remuneration systems in UGC-funded institutions. He suggested that members should continue discussion of the matter with deputations at the special meeting scheduled for Monday, 5 July 2004 at 4:30 pm.

V. Allocation of secondary school places for children of the ethnic minorities

[LC Paper No. CB(2)2786/03-04(02)]

The revised Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) arrangement for ethnic minority students

Choice of schools

20. Mr TSANG Yok-sing noted that paragraph 4 of the Administration's paper stated that many parents of non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students had expressed concern about the limited number of school choices and the long home-to-school travelling distance, and there had been calls that NCS students should be put on par with local students in allocation of secondary school places. Mr TSANG said that he was given the impression that most parents considered it more appropriate for their children to learn in English than in Chinese in secondary schools. Even though their children were locally born, parents still considered it difficult for their children to learn in Chinese in secondary schools. Mr TSANG asked why the Administration had revised the SSPA arrangement and whether it would be more difficult for NCS students to enrol in mainstream schools adopting English as the medium of instruction under the revised arrangement.

21. Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (2) (DS(EM)2) responded that the prevailing policy was to provide an opportunity for NCS students to learn in mainstream secondary schools in addition to those traditionally admitting NCS students. She tabled two Secondary One Choice of Schools Forms [LC Paper No. CB(2)2025/03-04(01) issued on 24 June 2004] and explained the previous and revised SSPA arrangements for NCS students. Under the previous arrangement, students who indicated themselves to be NCS students were given a choice of about 10 secondary schools and allocation of places were conducted on a territory wide basis according to their allocation band, random number and parental choice of schools.

22. DS(EM)2 further explained that under the revised SSPA arrangement for NCS students, apart from the discretionary placement which would remain unchanged, NCS students were provided with a choice of 30 schools and

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allocated places on a school net basis. She pointed out that to cater for the need of NCS primary students who had little exposure to Chinese language, a number of secondary schools traditionally admitting a greater number of NCS students were included in all school nets with NCS students. In the 2004-05 school year, 210 of the 451 NCS students participated in the SSPA had successfully secured a secondary one (S1) place at the discretionary placement (DP) stage. Of the remaining 241 NCS students, some 37% of them had included mainstream secondary schools in their choice of schools, and 18% of these schools adopted Chinese as medium of instruction (CMI schools). She added that there were NCS students who had demonstrated the interest to learn in Chinese in CMI schools.

23. Chief Curriculum Development Officer (School-based Curriculum Development (Secondary) (CCDO(SBCD(S))) briefed the meeting on the survey conducted with 15 S1 and S2 NCS students of different ethnic origins including Pakistan, England and Venezuela in learning Chinese in a secondary school which traditionally admitted a larger proportion of NCS students. She highlighted that the majority of the 15 students and their parents were able to listen and speak Cantonese, but not quite able to read and write Chinese. Overall, 14 of the 15 students had demonstrated the interest to learn Chinese and nine of them had expressed the willingness to learn other subjects in Chinese. All the students found that the adapted Chinese curriculum (based on the central curriculum) could cater for their learning needs.

Impact of the revised arrangement

24. Mr TSANG Yok-sing expressed concern about the impact of the revised SSPA arrangement for NCS students on the operation of mainstream schools and schools which traditionally accepted more NCS students. He asked how mainstream schools with NCS students and schools with less NCS students than before would adjust their operation to meet the learning and adaptation needs of a mixture of local and NCS students.

25. DS(EM)2 responded that the actual allocation results of NCS students at the Central Allocation (CA) stage would be available in July 2004. She said that sufficient places of secondary schools traditionally admitting more NCS students had been provided in all school nets with NCS students. There would be little problems for NCS student to be allocated to such schools if they indeed chose the latter as their top priorities. She said that an assessment tool had been provided to help primary schools with NCS students to assess the students' Chinese standard so as to facilitate parents to make suitable and informed school choices. She considered that given the small number of NCS students who would choose to go to mainstream school and the keen interest in learning in Chinese amongst those who opted for mainstream schools, the mainstream schools should have no problem taking care of their learning and adaptation needs. She added that EMB would encourage schools traditionally admitting

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more NCS students to include Chinese language in their curriculum to cater for the needs of NCS students who wished to learn Chinese language. NCS students who were allocated to mainstream schools but had experienced learning difficulties after admission might approach EMB for assistance.

Consultation and implementation

26. Mr TSANG Yok-sing asked whether EMB had consulted parents of NCS students about their preference in allocation of secondary school places to their children. He also asked whether EMB had consulted the schools concerned on the revised SSPA arrangement.

27. DS(EM)2 responded that EMB had consulted the SSPA Committee and initiated discussions and exchanged views on the revised SSPA arrangement with concern groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and members of the Ethnic Minorities Forum, many of which had parent representatives. They were in general positive to the proposed changes and supported the integration policy for NCS students.

28. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong considered it bureaucratic that EMB had only consulted the concern groups, NGOs and SSPA Committee, but not the parents and schools with a higher intake of NCS students who/which would be directly affected by the revised SSPA arrangement. He held a strong view that if the objective was to promote the integration policy for ethnic minority children, the Administration should consult the parents and primary school sector direct and provide a transition period for primary schools to adapt to the policy and NCS students to prepare for learning in Chinese in mainstream secondary schools. Mr CHEUNG asked whether, in view of the strong objection of NCS students and their parents, EMB would consider providing a choice for NCS students to enrol in a mainstream school or a school which traditionally admitted more NCS students in the 2004-05 school year, and a transition period for implementing the revised SSPA arrangement.

29. DS(EM)2 responded that the revised SSPA arrangement would provide NCS students in different school nets with a choice of 30 schools comprising both mainstream schools and schools which traditionally admitted more NCS students. EMB appreciated that some NCS primary students might not have the required proficiency level of Chinese language to learn in mainstream schools and hence had a genuine need to study in secondary schools which traditionally admitted a greater number of NCS students. Therefore, sufficient S1 places in these secondary schools had been provided in each school net with NCS students. On contacts with parents and primary schools affected, DS(EM)2 explained that EMB had briefed parents of NCS students on the revised SSPA arrangements in March 2004. EMB considered that the revised SSPA arrangements should provide NCS students with more school choices and the flexibility to choose mainstream schools and schools which traditionally accepted more NCS

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students.

30. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong suggested that EMB should consult parents and schools with a higher intake of NCS students instead of only the concern groups, NGOS and the SSPA committee on the best way to implement the integration policy for ethnic minority students. He considered that since parents were not adequately consulted and no transition period was provided for implementing the revised arrangement, EMB should provide NCS students with a choice in allocation of S1 place in the 2004-05 school year, i.e., a list of 10 schools with a higher intake of NCS students on a territory-wide basis and another list of 30 mainstream schools in a school net.

31. DS(EM)2 responded that the views of the concern groups and NGOs presented to EMB should have incorporated the views of NCS students and their parents. She pointed out that some parents might wish to be provided with a choice of a combination of mainstream schools and schools with a higher intake of NCS students for their selection at the CA stage. Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (Education Commission and Planning) supplemented that according to past experience, about 90% of NCS students were enrolled in three of the 10 schools which traditionally admitted more NCS students. Only a very few places were available in the other seven schools and normally only band one NCS students could secure a place in these schools due to keen competition.

32. Mr Tommy CHEUNG asked how EMB would arrange NCS students who experienced learning difficulties in mainstream schools to switch to schools with a higher intake of NCS students. He suggested that given the small population of NCS students, EMB should start consulting parents of NCS students in P1-5 classes on the integration policy. He also asked how EMB would provide support to mainstream schools which were allocated NCS students in the 2004-05 school year.

33. DS(EM)2 responded that EMB was aware of the need to strengthen the support to mainstream schools which might admit NCS students for the first time. It could only identify the schools after the result of the SSPA was released in July 2004. Apart from school-based support, EMB would help schools concerned to build up a network of mutual support and sharing of good practices. DS(EM)2 added that EMB would consult parents and schools earlier in the next allocation exercise. She said that for NCS students who had difficulty adapting to learning in mainstream schools, they could always approach EMB for assistance. Should they be approached by any of these students or their parents, Members were invited to refer them to EMB for follow-up.

34. CCDO(SBCD(S)) supplemented that EMB would provide on-site school-based curriculum support to assist mainstream schools which might not have the experience in taking care of NCS students to meet the learning and

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adaptation needs of NCS students. It would also develop a webpage to provide a platform for all language teachers to share their experiences in catering for different needs of learners.

35. Mr TSANG Yok-sing asked whether implementation of the revised Primary One Admission (POA) arrangement was an indication of the Government's intention to change status of those few primary schools which traditionally admitted more NCS students. He pointed out that these primary schools were most concerned that the revised POA arrangement would give rise to reduction of classes in subsequent years.

36. DS(EM)2 responded that the Administration had no intention to change the status of those schools which traditionally admitted more NCS students. In fact, EMB considered that primary schools with a large intake of NCS students had their role and functions in the provision of primary education to the NCS students, especially among those newly arrived. However, EMB considered it necessary to provide choices for ethnic minority children of not only schools with a higher intake of NCS students, but also mainstream schools especially for those who were locally born, who intended to take Hong Kong as their permanent home or who had expressed a keen desire for early integration. She added that there was no reduction of classes in primary schools with a large intake of NCS students as a result of the revised POA arrangement in the 2004-05 school year.

Follow-up and way forward

37. Ms Emily LAU asked whether EMB had estimated the number of NCS students who would be allocated through SSPA to mainstream schools outside their priority choice. She considered that the Administration should endeavour to assist NCS students who intended but were not allocated to a secondary school which traditionally admitted more NCS students. Ms LAU suggested that the Panel should follow up the matter in the new term if the Administration could not resolve the concerns of parents of NCS students about the revised SSPA arrangement. Mr Tommy CHEUNG also suggested that EMB should review the implementation of the integration policy for NCS students.

38. DS(EM)2 reiterated that there would be sufficient S1 places for the NCS students who had indicated their wish to enrol in secondary schools which traditionally admitted more NCS students. As for those who might be allocated to mainstream schools because of their school choices, the Administration would provide appropriate assistance after the SSPA result was released. In view of members' concern, DS(EM)2 undertook to provide an information paper on the result of the revised SSPA arrangement for ethnic minority students in July 2004, and to review the implementation of the revised allocation systems for NCS students for the next cycle.

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[*Post-meeting note* : The Administration's paper was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)3156/03-04 on 26 July 2004.]

39. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong and Dr YEUNG Sum considered it crucial that EMB should provide NCS students with a place in a secondary school adopting a medium of instruction of their choice in the 2004-05 school year. Mr Tommy CHEUNG considered that EMB should provide appropriate support services to NCS students who were enrolled in mainstream schools in the 2004-05 school year.

40. DS(EM)2 assured members that EMB would provide appropriate assistance to NCS students who wished to be in but were not allocated to schools which traditionally accepted more NCS students. On provision of support services to NCS students enrolled in mainstream schools, DS(EM)2 said that EMB would draw reference from the experience of those schools which had already admitted ethnic minority students of their own volition even before the school places allocation mechanism was refined as well as the experience of the seven primary schools which traditionally admitted more NCS students.

VI. School-based professional support for teachers

[LC Paper No. CB(2)2786/03-04(03)]

41. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (5) (DS(EM)5) briefed members on the main points of the Administration's paper on the subject.

The proposed support programmes

42. Mr SZETO Wah expressed support for the funding proposal in principle, but expressed reservations about the feasibility of the establishment of a Principal Support Network (PSN) and the implementation of a School Support Partners Scheme (SSPS) under which serving or retired principals and teachers with an outstanding track record would be seconded or recruited, on a full-time or part-time basis, to provide school-based support services to schools on implementation of the education reform. He also pointed out that there were interpersonal and situational factors which would affect the performance of a principal or teacher in different schools. He pointed out that schools would be reluctant to release their outstanding principals and teachers, and outstanding principals and teachers might be concerned whether they would be welcomed or accepted by peers in other schools.

43. DS(EM)5 responded that at the current stage of education reform, schools were in need of direct professional support from experienced peers. As revealed in researches, principals and teachers with an outstanding track record would be highly valued by peers and should be well accepted by the staff in schools in

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receipt of their professional support. He pointed out that one of the key aims of the proposed school-based professional support programmes was to relieve workload and release energy in schools, and not to impose a fresh set of requirements on schools. The Administration would provide training and adequate opportunities for the secondees to make their secondment rewarding, and to deliver high quality school-based support to the staff who actually carried out the education reform in schools.

44. DS(EM)5 further said that the support to schools was a development process in matching the available expertise with the needs of schools which were being identified in parallel. Depending on the needs of individual schools, the Administration would provide a range of part-time and full-time working options over an extended period for the experienced principals and teachers to participate in the two schemes. He considered that a longer secondment would enable EMB to invest more heavily in the appropriate training and development which would not only promote the quality of professional support to schools but also enhance the expertise of principals and teachers who would continue to contribute to the development of school education after the completion of their secondment. In addition, the professional secondment would allow sustained acting up opportunities for school staff which would build additional capacity in schools to lead the reform. Principal Education Officer (New Territories) supplemented that the Curriculum Development Institute had appointed experienced teachers to join school-based curriculum development teams to provide professional support to schools in the development of school-based curriculum and the results were satisfactory.

45. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong considered that there would be considerable difficulties, risks and pressures in the implementation of the proposed PSN and SSPS. He doubted whether schools would take the risk to release their outstanding principals and teachers to join the PSN and SSPS on a full-time or part-time basis for a period of three years. He pointed out that principals and teachers in schools were already overloaded with various tasks in teaching and learning and education reform. They could hardly have the energy and time to discuss with members of the professional support teams on matters relating to the implementation of the education reform. Moreover, it was also doubtful whether schools would like to invite other principals to guide their principals in implementing education reform.

46. DS(EM)5 expressed understanding of the difficulties, risks and pressure involved in the implementation of the proposed support schemes. He agreed that principals and teachers in schools were now working under pressure. He pointed out that one of the key aims of the proposed school-based professional support programmes was to relieve workload and release energy in schools, and not to impose another set of requirements on schools. The excellent teachers under secondment would provide school-based professional support in the area of learning and teaching, which should help reduce the workload of teachers in

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schools. DS(EM)5 added that the pace and scale at which support would be provided to schools would be driven by the identification of school requirements as well as the availability of professional secondees and appropriate support programmes.

47. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that he would not oppose the funding proposal, but would suggest that the Administration should be prudent in planning and implementing the proposed support programmes in order to enhance cost-effective use of the proposed grant of \$5.5 billion. He considered that flexibility in the implementation of the support programmes and in the use of the grant should be allowed. Mr CHEUNG agreed that the proposed University-School Support Programmes would provide the expertise and additional capacity to help schools to implement education reform. He cited the programmes offered by the Chinese University of Hong Kong to illustrate that proven programmes offered by reputable tertiary institutions could be tailored to address the needs of schools in different areas of education reform.

48. DS(EM)5 responded that the school-based professional support teams would collaborate with universities in the provision of quality support programmes to help schools to implement education reform. The Administration would also commission school support services through universities and other institutions with proven track record.

49. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that it was unlikely that schools would be willing to release their excellent principals and teachers to participate in PSN and SSPS for a period of three years. It was also unlikely that many schools would take the initiative to invite the professional support teams to assist in the implementation of education reform. Mr CHEUNG pointed out that given the existing heavy workload, it was doubtful whether teachers would like their schools to be identified as professional development schools which would serve to act as a locus of support and professional learning for an associated network of schools.

50. DS(EM)5 responded that the Administration would aim to provide differentiated on-site support to schools by building on existing programmes and services, and to relieve workload and release energy by helping schools to prioritise their improvement goals. He pointed out that the success of the PSN and SSPS would rely heavily on the availability of sufficient principals and teachers with an outstanding track record to participate in the implementation of the support programmes. In this connection, EMB proposed to offer schools adequate compensation for release of their staff, and to draw on support from other external sources such as tertiary institutions, mainland teachers and overseas expertise.

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Implementation

51. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong suggested that to facilitate implementation, the Administration should adopt an incremental approach in launching the proposed support programmes, save the University-School Support Programmes with proven records.

52. DS(EM)5 agreed that implementation of the professional support programmes should be incremental in order to avoid creating additional workload for principals and teachers in schools. He added that EMB would make use of the expertise and programmes offered by tertiary institutions in planning the provision and implementation of the professional support programmes for teachers.

53. Principal Education Officer (Curriculum Development)2 supplemented that the proposed support programmes were modelled on the successful experience in the provision of support to primary schools on development of school-based curriculum by the Curriculum Development Institute. He also pointed out that many principals would like to share the experience of outstanding principals with demonstrated achievements in the implementation of education reform.

54. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong cautioned that secondment of serving principals and teachers to participate in PSN and SSPS should be arranged on a voluntary basis. He suggested that the Administration should provide more flexibility over the use and scope of the proposed grant by incorporation of more support programmes in its proposals to be submitted to the Finance Committee for consideration. Mr SZETO Wah suggested that the Administration should carefully plan the scale and pace of the implementation of individual support programmes to meet the needs of the schools.

55. The Chairman agreed that the Administration should be cautious in the implementation of the proposed support programmes. He requested the Administration to consider members' views and concerns expressed at the meeting.

56. DS(EM)5 responded that an internal cross-divisional working group chaired by a Deputy Secretary would oversee, monitor and evaluate the progress of the proposed school-based professional support programmes according to the approved plan. The working group would consult colleagues in the education sector on the detailed implementation of the programmes. The Administration would provide timely update to the Panel on the progress of the delivery of the programmes.

VII. Information Technology in Education - Way Forward

[LC Paper No. CB(2)2786/03-04(04)]

Retention of Information Technology Coordinator (ITC)

57. Mr SIN Chung-kai expressed support for the funding proposal on the implementation of the next information technology in education (ITEd) strategy. He considered that the retention of the post of ITC was important for the on-going development of the use of information technology (IT) in teaching and learning, given the role differentiation between ITC and teachers in the use and applications of IT in school education.

58. Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (4) (DS(EM)4) responded that the results of the consultation had indicated that there were divided views on the retention of ITC in the next ITEd strategy. He pointed out that while some schools agreed that provision for ITC should continue, other schools considered that the resources should better be used in other needy areas such as enhancing e-leadership in schools and helping teachers with the use of digital resources. He explained that in the next ITEd strategy, the Administration would put in place a range of multi-faceted and comprehensive support measures to help schools integrate the use of IT in learning and teaching. To provide flexibility in the use of resources on IT in education, the Administration planned to merge existing IT grants to schools amounting to \$190,000 to \$280,000 per school per year depending on class structure into a composite IT grant. In addition, the Administration would continue to provide schools with a Capacity Enhancement Grant in the range of \$150,000 to \$500,000 for primary and secondary schools in the next three school years. Depending on individual circumstances and needs, schools were allowed to deploy the funds to employ full time or part-time ITC.

59. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong and Dr YEUNG Sum expressed support for the continued provision of ITC in schools. They considered that teachers should not be expected to perform the role and functions of ITC in the maintenance of computer hardware and software, as well as in the application of new IT developments in learning and teaching on an on-going basis.

60. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that the merged IT grant of \$190,000 to \$280,000 would not be sufficient to meet the different needs of schools in enhancing the use of IT in education, including the employment of ITC, upgrading computer hardware and software, etc. He considered that the Administration should not delete the post of ITC in the name of re-deploying resources to upgrade IT equipment for enhancing teaching and learning in school. He suggested that apart from a recurrent allocation for schools to upgrade computer hardware, EMB should collaborate with the Quality Education Fund (QEF) to provide a one-off grant for replacing or upgrading IT equipment and

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facilities in each school in the light of the progress of IT developments in a period of time, say three to five years.

61. DS(EM)4 explained that the ITC grant was meant to be time-limited when it was disbursed, and in the next ITED strategy, the Administration would aim at developing a multi-faceted and comprehensive support system to help schools integrate the use of IT in education. Schools could make use of the flexibility in deployment of the merged IT grant and the Capacity Enhancement Grant to employ ITC to meet their individual needs.

62. Dr YEUNG Sum asked whether the Administration was of the view that teachers were able to perform the functions of an ITC so that there was no longer the need to provide ITCs in schools.

63. DS(EM)4 responded that the Administration had trained teachers in the use of IT in education during the implementation of the five-year ITED strategy from 1998-99 to 2002-03 school years, and all teachers had now completed basic IT training and many of them had achieved the intermediate and upper intermediate level in the use of IT in education. Under the next ITED strategy, a recurrent provision of \$12.26 million was allocated for the provision of subject-based and school-based training for empowering teachers to integrate the use of IT in learning and teaching. He reiterated that there were divided views on the continued need for ITC, and schools were advised to make use of the merged IT grant or Capacity Enhancement Grant to employ ITC as appropriate.

Non-recurrent allocation for improving IT infrastructure and pioneering pedagogy

64. Mr SIN Chung-kai suggested that instead of a one-off non-recurrent budget, recurrent allocations should be provided for improving IT infrastructure and pioneering pedagogy by the application of new technology developments in school education on an on-going basis. He considered that the non-recurrent allocation of \$171.5 million for replacement or upgrading of IT hardware would be sufficient to meet the needs of schools for the current school year. He pointed out that according to research studies, the optimal life-span of computer hardware should be four years. He suggested that to enhance the use of IT in education, recurrent budget should be provided for replacement or upgrading of IT hardware.

65. DS(EM)4 agreed that the non-recurrent allocation of \$171.5 million might not be sufficient for improving IT infrastructure and pioneering pedagogy in school education in the next three years. He pointed out that EMB would liaise with QEF with a view to formulating collaborative schemes to help schools tackle computer upgrading and replacement issues which were capital intensive. Subject to justified needs, QEF would provide a matching grant for

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schools to upgrade or replace their computer hardware to improve learning and teaching.

66. Mr SIN Chung-kai pointed out that according to the Administration, the capital investment on the procurement of computer hardware during the five-year strategy was about \$900 million. It was apparent that the non-recurrent allocation of \$171.5 million would be insufficient for all primary and secondary schools to replace their IT hardware in the next three years. He pointed out that in the light of rapid IT developments, recurrent allocation should be provided for replacing or upgrading computer hardware in schools to enhance learning and teaching.

67. DS(EM)4 responded that according to an earlier investigation, less than 30% of the IT hardware in schools had been in operation for a period of five years or over. He pointed out that instead of replacement, most computer hardware could be upgraded at moderate costs. He believed that schools would make flexible use of the merged IT grants and the Capacity Enhancement Grant to meet their different IT needs.

68. In summing up the discussion, the Chairman said that members in general supported the Administration to submit the proposal on funding for the next IT strategy to the Finance Committee for consideration at its meeting on 2 July 2004.

VIII. Any other business

69. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 7:05 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
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