

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2762/07-08
(The minutes have been seen by
the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/ED

Panel on Education

**Minutes of special meeting
held on Thursday, 17 July 2008, at 9:00 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung

Members absent : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon LI Kwok-ying, MH, JP
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP

Public Officers attending : Mr Michael SUEN
Secretary for Education

Mr Raymond WONG
Permanent Secretary for Education

Ms Priscilla TO
Administrative Assistant to Secretary for Education

Ms Bernadette LINN
Deputy Secretary for Education (2)

Ms IP Ling-bik
Principal Assistant Secretary (Education Commission
and Planning), Education Bureau

Mr Sheridan LEE
Principal Education Officer (Curriculum Development)1,
Education Bureau

Attendance by invitation : Grant Schools Council

Mr George TAM Siu-ping
Chairman

Ms MAU Kwok-kwong
Treasurer

Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union

Mr WONG Hak-lim
Vice-President

Hong Kong Parents Association

Ms CHAN Siu-wan
Vice-Chairman

Mr TAM Lai-sum
Treasurer

Federation of Parent-Teacher Association of Yuen
Long District Ltd.

Ms Elizabeth LIU Wai-chi
President

Mr LEE Chung-kuen
Advisor

Civic Party

Ms Annie KI
Vice Chairman of Hong Kong Island Branch

Committee on Home-School Cooperation

Professor WONG Po-choi
Chairperson

Ms Connie AU
Vice-Chairperson

The Chinese Language Society of Hong Kong Ltd

Mr YAO Te-hwai
Chairman

Mr HUI Yiu-chee
Member of Board of Directors

Coalition of Education-Concerned Parents

Mr Simon CHAN Yuk-keung
Chairman

Mr Gilbert TAM Yiu-chung
Spokeman

Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers

Mr WU Siu-wai
Vice Chairman

Mr FOONG Nim-yee
Deputy Secretary

Tseung Kwan O Parents Association

Mr CHIEH Shiu-kau
President

Ms KAM Mi-hing
Vice-President (Internal)

Hong Kong Subsidized Secondary Schools Council

Mr LIU Ah-chuen
Vice-Chairman

Ms YAU Oi-yuen
Area-Representative

The Joint Council of Parent-Teacher Associations of
the Shatin District

Mr LEE Chun-min
Chairman

Ms Margaret PUI
Vice-Chairman

The Association of Hong Kong Chinese Middle
Schools

Mr YIP Chee-tim
Chairman

Ms Enian TSANG
Member

Hong Kong Association of Heads of Secondary
Schools

Mr Michael WONG Wai-yu
Chairman

Mr HO Ki-to
Hon Treasurer

Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations of the
Central and Western District

Mrs Rita CHEUNG
President

Mr David LEUNG
Vice-President

Federation of Parent-Teacher Association, Tai Po
District

Mr HO Chu-ping
Vice Chairman

Federation of Parent-Teacher Association of Hong Kong Eastern District

Mr YAN Chi-hung
Chairman

Mr JAO Ming
Vice-Chairman

Centre for Advancement of Chinese Language Education and Research, Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong

Dr KI Wing-wah
Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong

Mr LAM Wai-ip
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong

Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations (Kwai Tsing District) Ltd.

Mr Kevin CHENG
Vice Chairman

Ms Hazel WONG
Executive Committee Member

Hong Kong Private Schools Association

Dr LEUNG Ping-wa
Individual Member

Hong Kong Aided Primary School Heads Association

Mr LEE Siu-hok
Member

Federation of Parent Teacher Associations of the Northern District

Ms Ivy CHEUNG
Chairman

Clerk in attendance : Miss Odelia LEUNG
Chief Council Secretary (2)6

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

Miss Carmen HO
Legislative Assistant (2)6

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I. Medium of instruction for secondary schools
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)2605/07-08(01) and (02)]

Members noted the background brief on the subject prepared by the Legislative Council (LegCo) Secretariat.

Oral presentation by deputations

Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2667/07-08(02)]

2. Mr WONG Hak-lim said that the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union (HKPTU) considered that a good policy on medium of instruction (MOI) should provide schools with a reasonable and stable teaching and learning environment, maximise the benefits of mother-tongue teaching (MTT), enhance the quality of English teaching and learning, and tie in with the abilities and needs of students. The current bifurcation of secondary schools into schools adopting English as MOI (EMI schools) and Chinese as MOI (CMI schools) at junior secondary levels had created labelling effects against CMI schools and their students. HKPTU was concerned about the effectiveness of the three fine-tuning proposals in enhancing the English proficiency of students at junior secondary levels and the increase of teachers' workload.

3. Mr WONG Hak-lim highlighted that HKPTU urged the Administration to abandon the consolidation policy for secondary schools to provide a stable learning environment; allocate additional resources for English teaching and learning; use Chinese to teach Liberal Studies; accept internationally recognized English assessment tests; provide students of CMI schools with reasonable opportunities for university admission; and introduce measures to assist Primary Six (P6) students to transit to EMI schools.

Hong Kong Parents Association

4. Mr TAM Lai-sum said that the Hong Kong Parents Association welcomed the proposal to allow schools to determine their MOI for different

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classes and subjects. The Association considered it necessary for secondary schools to enhance transparency by providing information on their MOI arrangements including the number of EMI and CMI classes and the academic qualifications of their teachers to facilitate parents in selecting schools for their children. The Association also considered it important to develop students' biliterate and trilingual proficiency from the primary level.

Federation of Parent-Teacher Association of Yuen Long District

5. Ms Elizabeth LIU said that according to the survey conducted by the Federation of Parent-teacher Association of Yuen Long District, parents supported MTT but were disappointed with the labelling effects arising from the bifurcation of EMI schools and CMI schools. The Association did not dispute the importance of English but considered that learning good English was not the primary objective of education. While welcoming the proposals to fine-tune the MOI policy, parents expressed concern about possible labelling within schools. In the Association's view, the Administration should uphold MTT while allowing flexibility for schools to use different MOI for different classes and subjects. The Association considered that CMI school students should be provided with sufficient opportunities for university education. The Association requested the Administration to brief parents on the details of the fine-tuning proposals and arrangements.

Civic Party

[LC Paper No. CB(2)2656/07-08(01)]

6. Ms Annie KI said that the Civic Party welcomed the proposals to fine-tune the MOI policy to enhance students' proficiency in English. The Civic Party considered that the Administration should uphold the prescribed criteria of student ability, teacher capability and support measures in providing flexibility to schools to adopt EMI for certain class and subjects. The Administration should also set up a monitoring mechanism to ensure schools' compliance with the prescribed criteria, including the requirement for disclosure of information on EMI teaching and a penalty system. The Civic Party also suggested that the Education Bureau (EDB) should mobilize retired persons proficient in English to teach students English at a lively and relaxed environment on a voluntary basis.

Grant Schools Council

[LC Paper No. CB(2)2667/07-08(01)]

7. Ms MAU Kwok-kwong said that the Grant Schools Council considered that the strict demarcation of schools by their MOI for junior secondary classes was neither productive nor educationally justifiable. The Council believed that the best policy was to provide schools with autonomy on MOI and entrust them with the professional responsibility for evaluating the preferred MOI according to the demography and background of student cohorts and the schools'

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educational philosophy. To remain a world city, Hong Kong must uphold the stated goals of biliteracy and trilingualism. English and Chinese co-existed in both the educational and wider community. The Council supported that schools should be given the freedom of choice in MOI.

Committee on Home-School Cooperation
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2667/07-08(03)]

8. Professor WONG Po-choi said that the Committee on Home-School Cooperation had coordinated a series of discussions with the Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations in the 18 Districts, six Schools Councils and some major educational bodies and schools, and summarised their views and suggestions on MOI in its submission. He highlighted that it was high time to change the existing bifurcation into EMI and CMI schools. However, the change should not be drastic and should proceed in a cautious manner. The Committee supported the Administration's proposals including the adoption of "by-subject", "by-session" and "by-class" in MOI arrangements. He added that a good MOI policy should aim to equip students with sufficient language skills for employment purpose and daily living. It should provide an English-rich environment for secondary school students to learn English in a progressive manner.

The Chinese Language Society of Hong Kong Ltd
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2605/07-08(03)]

9. Mr YAO Te-hwai said that in the light of the policy objective to upgrade students' biliterate and trilingual abilities, the Administration should work out the direction for promoting the use of Putonghua in teaching and learning in schools. He was concerned about the lack of efforts on the part of LegCo and the Administration in this regard. He stressed that in view of the improved relationship between Taiwan and the Mainland, Hong Kong was worried about being marginalized. In his view, the concern should not be on economic aspects alone but also on language and cultural levels. He urged the Administration to put in more resources and efforts to promote the use of Putonghua in the community.

10. Mr HUI Yiu-chee supplemented that the Administration had adopted a laissez-faire policy concerning the use of Putonghua in schools. The Chinese Language Society of Hong Kong supported MTT and the prescribed criteria of student ability, teacher capability and support measures for students to learn through English. The Society called on the Administration to consult extensively the stakeholders on the proposals to fine-tune the MOI policy.

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*Coalition of Education-Concerned Parents
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2615/07-08(01)]*

11. Mr Gilbert TAM said that the Coalition of Education-Concerned Parents supported the proposals to fine-tune the MOI policy including the "by-subjects" and "by-class" arrangements to remove labelling against CMI schools and their students. The Coalition considered that parents should be invited to participate in the discussion and formulation of MOI policies at an early stage, having regard to the basic elements of education including teaching pedagogies and the morale and dynamic of the teaching workforce. Students starting at pre-primary and primary levels should be trained to attain biliterate and trilingual proficiency. He added that according to a survey conducted under the Public Opinion Programme of the University of Hong Kong (HKU), parents had given 38.3 scores in assessing the effectiveness of MTT in the past decade.

*Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2667/07-08(04)]*

12. Mr WU Siu-wai said that the Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers supported the adoption of MTT, and would not accept any fine-tuning proposals if the prescribed criteria of student ability, teacher capability and support measures for EMI teaching were not upheld. The Federation was concerned about the pressure on non-language teachers arising from the fine-tuning proposals, and considered it essential to provide sufficient training and support for teachers to teach in English or Chinese for different classes and subjects. Given the decline of Secondary One (S1) student population from around 80 000 in the 2008-2009 school year to 58 000 in the 2012-2013 school year, the Administration should consider implementing the MOI fine-tuning arrangements in 2012 and implement the revised MOI policy in the 2010-2011 school year. To upgrade students' English proficiency, the solution should not rest with the MOI policy in junior secondary education but enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning of the subject of English Language in schools.

*Tseung Kwan O Parents Association
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2605/07-08(04)]*

13. Mr CHIEH Shiu-kau said that the Tseng Kwan O Parents Association considered it essential for schools to make public their MOI arrangements and measures to enhance students' biliterate proficiency in January 2009. The Administration should allocate sufficient resources to CMI schools to enable the operation of more extended learning activities in English and assist parents to decide the appropriate MOI for their children. In the long run, the Association considered it appropriate to discard the bifurcation of EMI and CMI schools to remove labelling against the latter.

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Hong Kong Subsidized Secondary Schools Council
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2605/07-08(05)]

14. Mr LIU Ah-chuen said that the Hong Kong Subsidized Secondary Schools Council all along considered that MTT was the most effective MOI and the MOI policy should aim to enhance students' biliterate proficiency. The Council supported the fine-tuning proposals and considered that schools should be given the autonomy to decide the suitable MOI for different levels, classes, groups, subjects or sessions in accordance with the prescribed criteria of student ability, teacher capability and support measures. As professional educational bodies, schools should be accountable to the stakeholders in accordance with the established mechanisms. The Council was ready to discuss with the Administration the proposals to fine-tune the MOI policy.

The Joint Council of Parent-Teacher Associations of the Shatin District
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2667/07-08(05)]

15. Mr LEE Chun-min said that parents welcomed the proposals to fine-tune the MOI policy, but were concerned about the labelling arising from the adoption of different MOI arrangements within a school. In general, parents were concerned about the arrangements and support measures for students to transit from EMI to CMI learning or vice versa. In addition, the operation of EMI and CMI classes within schools would necessitate the preparation of bilingual teaching materials, examination papers, etc. The additional workload arising might adversely affect the quality of teaching. The Joint Council called on the Administration to carefully plan the arrangements and support for schools and students to facilitate smooth and successful implementation of the fine-tuning proposals.

The Association of Hong Kong Chinese Middle Schools
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2615/07-08(02)]

16. Mr YIP Chee-tim said that the Association of Hong Kong Chinese Middle Schools was convinced of the effectiveness of MTT and strongly opposed the bifurcation of EMI and CMI schools. The Association supported the adoption of flexibility for schools to decide the MOI arrangements for different classes, subjects, sessions, etc and the implementation of the MOI arrangements gradually in the light of the abilities and needs of students. The Association considered it necessary to maintain the three prescribed criteria of student ability, teacher capability and support measures for EMI teaching, but objected to a simple division of EMI and CMI classes within a school.

Hong Kong Association of Heads of Secondary Schools
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2667/07-08(06)]

17. Mr Michael WONG said that the Hong Kong Association of Heads of

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Secondary Schools affirmed the effectiveness of MTT and the need to provide opportunities for students with the ability to learn in English or Chinese for different subjects. The Association opposed the bifurcation of EMI and CMI schools as well as any systems and measures that would create labelling. Based on this principle, the Association considered that any proposals to fine-tune the MOI policy should aim to remove labelling and allow schools flexibility to determine their MOI arrangements by class, subject, session, etc. The Administration should allocate sufficient resources for schools adopting MTT. The Association supported the diversification of MOI arrangement. The Association strongly objected to the adoption of only "by class" arrangement within schools as such an arrangement would reinforce labelling of schools on the basis of the number of EMI classes and labelling of CMI class students, as well as create operational difficulty for schools to differentiate students into EMI and CMI classes.

*Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations of the Central and Western District
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2667/07-08(07)]*

18. Mrs Rita CHEUNG said that given the decline of students' proficiency in English and Chinese, the Administration should review the effectiveness of MTT and adjust the MOI policy to allow flexibility to schools to determine their MOI arrangements for different classes. Schools should provide students with opportunities to learn in English or Chinese in accordance with students' academic abilities and performance, and establish a quality assurance mechanism to ensure the quality of teaching and learning. The Administration should allocate resources to schools and teachers to prepare for the progressive implementation of the fine-tuning proposals in six years, and reinforce parent education on the benefits of MTT and the appropriate ways to support their children to learn through English. To facilitate students' transition from senior secondary to university education, schools should consider using English textbooks for non-language subjects in CMI classes.

Federation of Parent-Teacher Association, Tai Po District

19. Mr HO Chu-ping said that the Federation of Parent-Teacher Association of Tai Po District supported the proposals to fine-tune the MOI policy with a view to allowing schools flexibility to decide the appropriate MOI for students with different levels of proficiency in English and Chinese. The Federation considered that additional resources should be allocated to support schools and teachers for the implementation of the refined MOI policy. Given the decline in S1 student population, EDB should work out measures to allocate students to schools fairly and assist parents to select schools appropriate to their children's abilities.

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*Federation of Parent-Teacher Association of Hong Kong Eastern District
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2615/07-08(03)]*

20. Mr YAN Chi-hung said that despite the benefits of MTT, parents considered the English proficiency of their children most important as it facilitated their pursuit of further education and employment, hence their preference for EMI schools. The findings of a recent survey also showed that more graduates of EMI schools than CMI schools had been admitted to local universities. The failure of the MTT policy was largely attributed to the permission of 112 schools to operate as EMI schools with the result that CMI schools and their students were being labelled as second class. The proposals to fine-tune the MOI policy to allow schools flexibility to adopt EMI would be a further blow to the MTT policy unless with the right attitude to MTT. The Federation supported MTT and called on the Administration to use resources effectively to remove the distinction between EMI and CMI schools to eliminate labelling and to create an enriching environment in schools for language learning.

*Centre for Advancement of Chinese Language Education and Research, Faculty
of Education, The University of Hong Kong
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2615/07-08(04)]*

21. Dr KI Wing-wah said that the introduction of the English-medium extended teaching activities in content subjects for S1 to S3 in CMI schools in 2006 was already a fine-tuning measure to reduce the disparity between CMI and EMI schools. The Centre considered that the direction of the MOI policy should not be changed, and the only change needed was the ceiling of the total lesson time for English-medium extended teaching activities. The Administration should concentrate resources and efforts to improve the quality of language education and bridging programmes for students switching from CMI to EMI at senior secondary levels, and remove labelling against CMI schools and their students. Dr KI considered that with the development of China, the importance accorded by the community to English over Chinese would change gradually. How to improve the Chinese proficiency of EMI school students would become an issue of concern.

*Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations (Kwai Tsing District) Ltd
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2605/07-08(06)]*

22. Mr Kevin CHENG said that parents welcomed the provision of more EMI learning opportunities to raise students' English proficiency and supported the giving of flexibility to schools to decide MOI for different classes and subjects. The Federation considered that the implementation of the fine-tuning proposals should be progressive, and the Administration should provide sufficient support to schools and teachers in the implementation. Schools should make known to parents their MOI policies, implementation details and quality assurance

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mechanisms. Given the impending implementation of the new academic structure, the focus should not be tilted towards the MOI policy.

*Hong Kong Private Schools Association
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2667/07-08(08)]*

23. Dr LEUNG Ping-wa said that while MTT was most effective to enhance student learning at junior secondary levels, the policy to bifurcate schools into EMI and CMI schools had created labelling against the latter and their students. It was high time to review the MOI policy. The Administration should set up a task group for this purpose and should not introduce changes hastily. The MOI policy should aim to enhance the quality of language education to nurture students' biliterate and trilingual proficiency, having regard to individual diversity and abilities. He called on the Administration to clarify the existing misunderstanding about MTT and review the reliability of the existing mechanism for assessment of students' ability to learn through English.

Hong Kong Aided Primary School Heads Association

24. Mr LEE Siu-hok said that the Hong Kong Aided Primary School Heads Association supported MTT and the proposals to fine-tune the MOI policy. The Association considered it appropriate to abolish the bifurcation of EMI and CMI schools and allow schools to decide their MOI arrangements in accordance with the prescribed criteria of student ability, teacher capability and support measures, having regard to the abilities and needs of students. In his view, schools should be professionally capable of determining their MOI for different classes, subjects, sessions, etc for effective learning, taking into account their individual circumstances. EDB should monitor the implementation of the fine-tuning proposals and the school management committees should regularly report the progress to parents and EDB.

Federation of Parent Teacher Associations of the Northern District

25. Ms Ivy CHEUNG said that the bifurcation of schools into EMI and CMI was inappropriate. While parents felt happy and proud of their children admitted to EMI schools, their children were worried about learning through English. On the other hand, both parents and students felt disappointed and frustrated should the latter be allocated to CMI schools. She suggested that students should be given opportunities to learn in English and Chinese at junior secondary levels. The proportion of classes and sessions conducted in English or Chinese should be determined by schools in the light of the abilities and needs of their students.

The Administration's response

26. Secretary for Education (SED) said that the education policies had to be constantly reviewed in the light of the changing needs of the community and the

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expectation of parents. The Administration noted the concern of the community about the English proficiency of local students. SED stressed that enhancement of students' English proficiency should not be taken as the MOI policy, although the MOI policy had an impact on junior secondary students' exposure to English during lesson time. SED pointed out that many parents had a misperception about the standard of CMI schools being inferior to EMI schools in terms of quality of education and students. The proposals to fine-tune the MOI policy aimed to address the concern of the stakeholders. Indeed, there was no dispute on the direction to take. The question rested with the implementation details. The Administration would consider the deputations' views and suggestions raised at the meeting such as the MOI arrangements by class and by session as well as the support measures to reduce teachers' workload, etc. The Administration would continue to discuss with the stakeholders with a view to further developing the proposals during the summer holidays, and firming up the schedule of implementation taking into account the commencement of the new academic structure in the 2009-2010 school year.

The fine-tuning proposals to the MOI policy

27. Mrs Selina CHOW said that she had expressed objection to the adoption of the within school approach in previous discussions on the MOI policy. In her view, the proposals to fine-tune the MOI policy were in effect a fundamental change to the MOI policy. While she acknowledged the aspiration of the community for higher English proficiency and the wish of parents for their children having more exposure to English, she considered it necessary to distinguish between the MOI policy and the English proficiency of students. She was concerned about teacher capability to teach in English and the additional workload arising from the need to teach in English and Chinese for different classes and subjects.

28. SED responded that around 25% of the Government expenditure was used for education and the overall qualification of the teaching workforce had been progressively upgraded over the years. He considered it inappropriate to assume the language proficiency of teachers remaining unchanged over the years. The Administration recognized the importance of student ability and teacher capability for EMI teaching, and was considering support measures to assist teachers to implement the fine-tuning proposals.

29. Ms Emily LAU noted with concern the diversity of views expressed by the deputations on the MOI policy. She was disappointed at the poor English proficiency of local students including university students, notwithstanding that around 25% of the Government expenditure was used for education. She was given to know from universities that it was not the responsibility of universities to teach students English. In her view, the objective of the language policy to achieve biliteracy and trilingualism had hardly been achieved. She considered teacher capability most crucial in enhancing teaching and learning outcomes.

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She was also concerned about the requirement that might be imposed by schools for non-language teachers to adopt EMI under the fine-tuning proposals. She asked whether the current resources allocated to education was sufficient to attract talents to join the teaching profession.

30. Ms MAU Kwok-kwong responded that universities should not pass the buck to secondary schools in teaching students English. By the same token, secondary schools should not shift their responsibility to primary schools.

31. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong shared the view of Mrs Selina CHOW that the fine-tuning proposals were more than a refinement to the MOI policy. While agreeing with the view of many parents on the need to raise the English proficiency of students, Mr CHEUNG stressed the importance of adopting the right method. He noted the objective of the fine-tuning proposals to remove labelling and upgrade students' ability to bridge over to the use of EMI at higher levels. However, in his view, the result would intensify labelling within schools and among students. He cautioned that the fine-tuning proposals should be considered in the context of the declining secondary student population from about 80 000 to 50 000 in the next five years. Some 50 secondary schools were expected to close down in the coming years because of insufficient enrolment. To avoid closure, CMI schools would endeavour to operate more EMI classes to attract students and to meet parents' expectation. He shared the view of Dr KI Wing-wah that the proper way to raise the English standard of students was to improve the teaching of the subject of English Language. For this purpose, he suggested the adoption of small class teaching for English Language at primary and secondary levels. To remove labelling against CMI schools, the results of Use of English attained in the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination should not be the only acceptable qualification for university admission and other internationally recognised English Language qualifications such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) should also be considered. Mr CHEUNG stressed the importance of working out appropriate proposals to fine-tune the MOI policy which should not be decided hastily.

32. Ms Audrey EU agreed that teacher capability was most crucial to the successful implementation of the fine-tuning proposals to allow schools to adopt EMI for individual subjects. She invited views from the deputations on the readiness of teachers to teach in English.

33. Mr YAO Te-hwai responded that apart from teacher capability, students' ability including motivation to learn was also crucial to the teaching and learning outcomes. According to feedback from teachers, students were not enthusiastic to learn Putonghua, and some even slept during the lesson time. As a result, despite the teaching of Putonghua from primary to university levels, the Putonghua proficiency of students was not up to the standard. Mr HUI Yiu-chee supplemented that there were feedback from teachers and students that even in EMI schools, some teachers were not competent to teach in English.

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34. Mr HO Ki-to responded that teachers in CMI schools were worried about using EMI for non-language subjects. If teachers holding a Grade C in English Language in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) were regarded as being capable to teach in the English medium, teachers were concerned whether they had to acquire such qualification. Even if they did, he queried whether it was effective to adopt EMI for teaching some subjects, such as Mathematics.

35. SED responded that the Administration was consulting the stakeholders on the possible options to fine-tune the MOI policy, including the by-session and by-class arrangements. He reiterated that it was inappropriate to assume that teachers were not capable to teach in English. The Administration hoped that a consensus could be reached on the best model and timing for fine-tuning the MOI policy. SED pointed out other considerations such as the impact of the implementation of the revised MOI arrangements for secondary schools including the review of MOI status for individual schools in 2010, as recommended in the Report on Review of MOI for Secondary Schools and Secondary School Places Allocation published in December 2005. The Administration should consider the related issues as early as possible, to enable steady development of schools. . If no consensus was reached on the fine-tuning proposals, the status quo would mean implementation of the revised MOI arrangements, promulgated in 2005, as scheduled.

36. Dr YEUNG Sum said that it would be ideal without classification of EMI and CMI schools and without labelling, and all schools were given the discretion to make professional decision on the MOI arrangement. However, in reality, in the face of a declining student population, CMI schools would have to struggle for survival by way of operating more EMI classes to attract students without due regard to student ability. The preference for EMI schools was intensified after the release of the findings of a research conducted by Professor TSANG Wing-kwong that students in EMI schools had a far better chance to receive university education than their counterparts in CMI schools. Dr YEUNG was concerned about the monitoring mechanism and the quality assurance mechanism should schools be given the flexibility to decide MOI.

37. SED responded that he shared Dr YEUNG Sum's concern. The Administration was consulting the stakeholders on feasible options to refine the MOI policy and the establishment of a fair, open and transparent mechanism to monitor the implementation of the fine-tuning proposals without compromising the quality of education and the interests of students.

38. Mr Tommy CHEUNG described his experience in learning English and teacher capability and student ability to learn English in the past. He was concerned about the existing capability of teachers to adopt EMI, the effectiveness of the monitoring mechanism, if any, to ensure teacher capability

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and the possible impact of the fine-tuning proposals on the quality of junior secondary education. Mr CHEUNG shared the concern of Mrs Selina CHOW that the fine-tuning proposals would fundamentally change instead of refine the existing MOI policy. He considered that the way forward should be upgrading the English standard of all teachers to the level of being capable to adopt EMI.

39. Mr Albert CHAN said that the MOI policy had been an issue of contention for so many years but a solution had yet to be worked out. He shared the view that the fine-tuning proposals were more than a refinement. As a parent, he was concerned about the capability of teachers to adopt EMI. He expressed disappointment on the quality of language education in Hong Kong. He was told that the English proficiency of local students even from popular schools was lagging behind their overseas counterparts by four to five grades. He requested the Administration to address the problem.

40. SED responded that the Administration had been implementing various measures to raise the English proficiency of students starting from the primary level such as the Native-speaking English Teacher Scheme in primary schools. The Administration agreed on the important role of teachers in enhancing the quality of English teaching, and had been disseminating effective pedagogies and practices among schools for reference. SED stressed that Hong Kong students compared favourably with their overseas counterparts in academic performance. Under the Programme for International Student Assessment 2006, Hong Kong students ranked second in Scientific Literacy and third in Mathematical Literacy and Reading Literacy. He also clarified that the existing MOI policy and the fine-tuning proposals under discussion were applicable to junior secondary education only.

41. At the invitation of the Chairman, the deputations responded to members' views.

42. Ms MAU Kwok-kwong said that there was indeed animosity among schools. She considered it important for the parties concerned to lay aside differences and unify to work together. She agreed that the English standard was falling not just among students but also among teachers probably because of a low motivation to learn and teach. The Grant Schools Council supported the fine-tuning proposals as it would reduce animosity among schools. Ms MAU called on all the stakeholders in education to collaborate as partners to upgrade the quality of language education.

43. Professor WONG Po-choi said that the Committee on Home-School Cooperation, the Federations of Parent-teacher Associations in the 18 Districts and six Schools Councils had discussed the proposals to fine-tune the MOI policy and supported the extension of the English-medium teaching activities and the use of English to teach different classes or subjects, subject to the prescribed criteria of student ability, teacher capability and support measures.

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He considered that to be proficient in English, it was important to develop reading habit at primary schooling and to teach English Language in an effective way.

44. Mr YAO Te-hwai said that it was necessary to work out the long-term plan on language education policy. In his view, should the Chinese University of Hong Kong give priority to CMI school students for university admission, the labelling against CMI schools could be reduced.

45. Mr HUI Yiu-chee said that he was a teacher in an EMI school in Shatin which had adopted small class teaching for English Language. He stressed that language teachers were working under extreme pressure. He considered it necessary to reduce the workload of teachers and supported the implementation of small class teaching for English Language and Chinese Language to enhance the quality of language education.

46. Mr YIP Chee-tim said that the essence of the fine-tuning proposals should allow schools flexibility to use appropriate language and materials to teach different subjects. The purpose should not aim at improving the English standard of students but enhancing their learning of various subjects, with the goal of attaining biliteracy and having achievement in the subjects concerned. He pointed out that CMI schools had been allocated with additional resources to enhance the quality of teaching and learning of English Language and implement English-medium extended teaching activities for subjects other than English. However, the performance of students in CMI schools in HKCEE was not duly recognized by the community.

47. Mr David LEUNG allayed the concern of some members that schools might operate EMI classes indiscriminately in order to attract students. He said that as a parent, he would choose a school for his children with regard to its reputation and track records and not solely its MOI policy. He considered that students were currently provided with too many pathways after secondary schooling to the extent that some did not take a serious attitude in study or preparation for HKCEE.

48. Mr YAN Chi-hung shared the concern about the increase in teachers' workload arising from the implementation of the fine-tuning proposals as teachers had to prepare bilingual teaching materials and assessment papers. He pointed out that teachers in CMI schools had already prepared materials in both languages to facilitate their S5 students to proceed to S6 and take the HKALE. He was concerned that should teachers in CMI schools be required to adopt EMI for different subjects, they might lose their jobs.

49. Dr KI Wing-wah said that the language education policy, so far, had not succeeded in equipping students with biliterate skills. Many people were not biliterate or capable to express their thoughts and ideas logically in Chinese, not

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to mention in English. The responsibility rested with teachers who should raise the Chinese proficiency of students and assist them to transit smoothly from the use of Chinese to English for learning through appropriate means. Dr KI considered it inappropriate to aim at learning English through content subjects. In his view, the fine-tuning proposals could not address the existing concerns over the MOI policy and the language proficiency of students.

50. Mrs Selina CHOW shared Dr KI Wing-wah's view. She said that how to learn better language should be separated from the MOI policy. In her view, the way forward should be how to learn Chinese and English in a better way. She considered it inappropriate to change the existing MOI policy for the purpose of addressing the concern over the implementation of the revised MOI arrangements for secondary schools in September 2010 and resolving the problem of under-enrolment as well as closure of secondary schools in the coming years. She sought views from the deputations on ways to resolve these two matters.

51. Ms Connie AU did not share Mrs Selina CHOW's concern. She said that the proposed fine-tuning of the MOI policy did relate to the implementation of the revised MOI arrangements and the closure of schools. She believed that the fine-tuning proposals could reduce labelling against CMI schools and raise the effectiveness of teaching and learning in CMI schools. As a result, parents would have more confidence in CMI schools.

52. Ms Emily LAU said that there was no consensus among the deputations on the fine-tuning proposals, and the Administration should adopt a cautious approach in proceeding with the proposals. She noted the comments of the Grant Schools Council on the unsatisfactory English proficiency of teachers and students, notwithstanding that language teachers had to meet the Language Proficiency Requirement for Teachers, and invited suggestions from the deputations on ways to improve the situation.

53. Mr WONG Hak-lim responded that he did not agree that the existing ability of teachers was an issue. He considered that the capability of a non-language teacher to teach a non-language subject in English should not be equated as his ability or otherwise to teach the subject. Provided that a teacher could master the subject and teach in a lively way with regard to student diversity, that teacher was a capable teacher.

54. Ms YAU Oi-yuen said that the quality of teachers was paramount to enhancing the quality of education. She did not deny that the English and Chinese proficiency of some teachers were unsatisfactory. She pointed out that nowadays, students had lesser exposure to language. She considered that the Administration should review the language education policy and adopt small class teaching for language subjects at different levels of schooling.

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55. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong reiterated his suggestion of small class teaching for language subjects in primary and secondary schools to raise the quality of language education. He said that other internationally recognized examinations on English Language should be recognized for university admission purpose. He agreed with the view of some deputations that a good teacher in non-language subjects such as Mathematics was not necessarily proficient in English. It was unreasonable to expect non-language teachers in CMI schools to switch to EMI. Should this be the case, there would be a serious shortage of teachers for certain subjects, notably Mathematics.

56. Mr Albert CHAN said that the Administration should critically examine the language education in schools given the existing great variations and identify ways to improve the situation.

57. SED responded that there was a consensus on the direction of the MOI policy and the Administration was consulting the stakeholders on the implementation details. The Administration noted the views expressed on the anticipated problems on implementation of the fine-tuning proposals and would explore ways to resolve them. He assured members that any change in policy would have to be approved by the Executive Council and should funding be required, LegCo's approval had to be sought as well. SED clarified that the Administration had no intention of requiring CMI schools to adopt EMI for different content subjects; the proposed fine-tuning aimed at giving schools greater flexibility in making professional judgment to choose an appropriate MOI under the prescribed criteria.

58. Dr YEUNG Sum invited the deputations to indicate their stance on the fine-tuning proposals by a show of hands. The outcome was: 24 representatives indicated support for, and three objected to the proposals; and four abstained.

59. Responding to Dr YEUNG Sum's enquiry about the reasons for objecting to the fine-tuning proposals, Mr HO Ki-to explained that MTT was commonly adopted in developed countries for the provision of basic education and the benefits of MTT in enhancing the quality of education were apparent. He considered that the best way forward was to enhance the quality of language education at junior secondary levels. He was concerned that the fine-tuning proposals, if implemented, would create confusion in language education and most teachers in some 300 CMI schools could not cope with the pressure and requirements arising from the switch to EMI.

60. Dr KI Wing-wah said that the deputations might have different understanding of the fine-tuning proposals. He reiterated that the MOI arrangements had already been refined by allowing the conduct of English-medium extended teaching activities up to a certain percentage of the total lesson time for subjects other than English. This should be the direction for any further refinement. In his view, the fine-tuning proposals should not change

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the fundamentals of the MOI policy. Instead, MTT should be reinforced to enhance effective learning and the quality of junior secondary education.

61. Mrs Selina CHOW and Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong requested SED to explain the meaning of fine-tuning of the MOI policy.

62. SED responded that the Administration had set out in its paper the need for refining the MOI Policy and progress of the consultation [LC paper No. CB(2)2605/07-08(01)], and had just shared the views at the meeting. While recognizing the benefits of MTT, the Administration was prepared to address the concerns of the stakeholders by exploring ways to refine the MOI policy in consultation with the stakeholders. The views and suggestions raised by members and deputations at the meeting would also be taken into consideration.

63. The Chairman asked whether CMI schools were allowed to adopt EMI for subjects without meeting the three prescribed criteria. SED responded that schools would be required to meet the three prescribed criteria of student ability, teacher capability and support measures for EMI teaching. However, in response to the view that all students should be given an opportunity to learn in English at junior secondary levels, and in so doing to alleviate the labeling effect on individual students and give them greater incentive to learn, the Administration was examining the justifications for allowing all schools, irrespective of student intake, the flexibility to adopt EMI for individual subjects within a certain limit, subject of course to the teachers concerned fulfilling the relevant criterion.

64. SED further said that he personally acknowledged the effectiveness of small class teaching in enhancing the quality of language education in schools. He would examine the feasibility and financial implications of the suggestion. He also undertook to relay to the University Grants Committee and the UGC-funded institutions the suggestion of accepting alternative English qualifications for admission to their undergraduate programmes while recognising autonomy in university admission.

65. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong remarked that the UGC-funded institutions had recently agreed to accept alternative Chinese qualifications for admission to their undergraduate programmes under specified circumstances. Similar consideration should be given for admission of CMI students under specified circumstances.

66. Mrs Selina CHOW expressed reservations about the view that by allowing students to learn a limited number of subjects in English and thereby increasing their exposure to English, the labeling effect might be further minimized and the students better motivated in learning.

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67. Ms Emily LAU and Mr Albert CHAN requested the Administration to work out the details of the fine-tuning options and report to the Panel for further discussion.

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68. In response, SED said that the Administration would revert to the Panel on the fine-tuning proposals as soon as practicable in the new term.

II. Any other business

69. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:05 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
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