

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)192/08-09
(The minutes have been cleared
with the Chairman)

Ref : CB2/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Tuesday, 14 October 2008, at 4:20 pm
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan (Chairman)
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king
Hon CHAN Tanya
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP
Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP
- Member attending** : Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
- Member absent** : Hon WONG Sing-chi
- Clerk in attendance** : Miss Odelia LEUNG
Chief Council Secretary (2)6

Staff in attendance : Mrs Vivian KAM
Assistant Secretary General 2

Mr Stanley MA
Senior Council Secretary (2)8

Miss Ivy LEONG
Council Secretary (2)3

Miss Carmen HO
Legislative Assistant (2)6

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I. Election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman
[Appendices II and III to LC Paper No. CB(2)28/08-09]

Election of Chairman

Mr LEE Cheuk-yan, the member present who had the highest precedence, presided the meeting. He called for nominations for the chairmanship of the Panel.

2. Ms Cyd HO was nominated by Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong and the nomination was seconded by Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung. Ms Cyd HO accepted the nomination. As there was no other nomination, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan declared Ms Cyd HO elected as the Chairman of the Panel for the 2008-2009 session. Ms Cyd HO then took the chair.

Election of Deputy Chairman

3. The Chairman called for nominations for the deputy chairmanship of the Panel.

4. Dr Priscilla LEUNG was nominated by Mr Abraham SHEK and the nomination was seconded by Professor Patrick LAU. Dr Priscilla LEUNG accepted the nomination. As there was no other nomination, the Chairman declared Dr Priscilla LEUNG elected as the Deputy Chairman of the Panel for the 2008-2009 session.

II. Schedule of meetings for the 2008-2009 session

5. Members agreed that the regular meetings of the Panel for the 2008-2009 session be held on the second Monday of each month at 4:30 pm, except for April 2009. The regular meeting for April would be held on 16 April 2009 at

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4:30 pm. Members also agreed that the date of the regular meeting for July 2009 would be decided nearer the time.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[LC Paper No. CB(2)52/08-09(01) and (02)]

6. Members noted the list of issues suggested to be considered and the list of follow-up actions which were tabled at the meeting.

7. Members agreed to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration at the next regular meeting scheduled for 10 November 2008 -

- (a) Development of the new Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination system and further improvement to the examination processes; and
- (b) Baptist University Road campus development, phase 1 and 2, Hong Kong Baptist University.

8. The Chairman invited members' views on the items for discussion at the next regular and future meetings.

Implementation of the Education (Amendment) Ordinance 2004

9. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong pointed out that the Education (Amendment) Bill 2002 was enacted in July 2004 (the Amendment Ordinance). Under the Amendment Ordinance, aided schools were required to establish an Incorporated Management Committee (IMC) before 1 January 2010 and for this purpose, submit a draft constitution of the proposed IMC to the Permanent Secretary for Education (PSED) on or before 1 July 2009. The Amendment Ordinance also provided that the Legislative Council (LegCo) might, by a resolution passed after 1 October 2008 but before 1 July 2009, extend the deadline for the submission of draft constitutions to PSED by up to two years, i.e. 1 July 2011. Mr CHEUNG suggested discussion on the implementation of the Amendment Ordinance, in particular whether the Administration would extend the deadline. Should the Administration have no intention to do so, members could then consider the need to move a motion to that effect. He added that he had given a notice to raise a written question on the subject at a Council meeting but had yet to be allocated a question slot.

10. The Chairman said that the Education (Amendment) Bill 2002 was enacted after heated debate on a number of controversial issues. She suggested that the Panel should first seek information from the Administration on the progress of the implementation of the Amendment Ordinance as well as its intention to extend the deadline for submission of draft constitutions to PSED. Members agreed.

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[*Post-meeting note* : Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong was allocated a slot to raise the question at the Council meeting on 22 October 2008. He considered it not necessary for the Secretariat to write to the Administration.]

Education for students with special educational needs (SEN)

11. Mr Abraham SHEK expressed appreciation of the efforts made by Dr Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung, member in the Third LegCo, in the promotion of education for students with SEN. He considered that the Panel should continue to follow up the subject.

Grievance and complaint mechanisms for University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions

12. Dr Priscilla LEUNG suggested discussion on the establishment of an independent inter-institutional redress mechanism for handling complaints from staff of the UGC-funded institutions.

13. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong pointed out that the Panel had discussed the subject at its meeting on 17 July 2008, and passed a motion urging the councils and the administrative arms of the UGC-funded institutions to, among others, establish an elected independent inter-institutional complaints committee. He considered that the Panel should revisit the subject after receipt of the responses from the UGC-funded institutions on the motion and other issues raised at the meeting. Mr CHEUNG suggested and members agreed that the Clerk should write to the UGC-funded institutions in this regard.

[*Post-meeting note* : A letter dated 16 October 2008 was sent to each of the councils of the UGC-funded institutions.]

Refinement of medium of instruction policy for secondary schools

14. Dr Priscilla LEUNG considered that priority should be given to the discussion of the Administration's proposals to fine-tune the medium of instruction policy for secondary education. She was given to know that the Administration had not consulted the UGC sector on the fine-tuning proposals.

15. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong pointed out that the Panel had discussed the subject at its meeting on 17 July 2008, and the Administration had undertaken to revert to the Panel on the outcome of its consultation with the stakeholders on the fine-tuning proposals as soon as practicable. He considered it appropriate for the Panel to revisit the subject after receipt of the Administration's information. Mr CHEUNG suggested and members agreed that the Clerk should write to the Administration in this regard.

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[*Post-meeting note* : A letter was sent to the Administration on 15 October 2008.]

Development of Hong Kong into a regional education hub

16. Professor Patrick LAU proposed discussion on the Government measures in facilitating the development of Hong Kong into a regional education hub. Related issues including the provision of hostels for non-local students and the use of vacant school premises for such purpose should be included.

Review of the student financial assistance schemes

17. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan suggested discussion on the financial assistance schemes administered by the Student Financial Assistance Agency for primary and secondary students. He was concerned that the criteria for applying for the various schemes had remained unchanged despite the change in social and economic circumstances. In his view, a comprehensive review was necessary.

Closure of secondary schools

18. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung considered it necessary to discuss urgently the subject of closure of secondary schools and special schools with insufficient student enrolment as a result of the implementation of the new senior secondary academic structure. Members agreed to include the subject for discussion at the next regular meeting.

Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS)

19. Miss Tanya CHAN proposed discussion on the eligibility criteria for PEVS. She considered that both non-profit-making and private independent kindergartens should be covered by PEVS and pre-primary education should be free.

Neutrality of academics in politics

20. Mrs Regina IP proposed discussion on policies concerning political neutrality of academics in universities. She said that she had received two complaints from undergraduates about restriction of internship in organisations with certain political affiliation. There were also complaints against lecturers lobbying for certain political parties in class. She pointed out that academics should be politically neutral, and such practice was not allowed in universities in the United States.

21. The Chairman said that any issue of public concern could be discussed by the Panel. However, the Panel should focus on the policy aspect. In her view,

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the two complaints mentioned by Mrs Regina IP should be referred to the Complaints Division of the LegCo Secretariat for follow-up. Should it be established that policy issues were involved, the Panel could then follow up.

22. Mrs Regina IP did not agree that the issue raised by her concerned individual cases only. She considered that policy aspect was involved. Nevertheless, she would examine how best to follow up the issue.

Liberal Studies

23. Mrs Regina IP said that parents were concerned about the teaching and learning of the subject of Liberal Studies under the new senior secondary academic structure. The curriculum design and capability of teachers were issues of concern. She noted that in overseas universities, the subject of Liberal Studies was taught by several teachers. Some principals were concerned that it would be unrealistic in Hong Kong to expect a teacher to be well-versed in the various areas of Liberal Studies and to take on the teaching duty alone. She added that the Administration should carefully plan the implementation of the new senior secondary curriculum to avoid adverse impact as in the case of the implementation of mother-tongue teaching.

Critical thinking skill

24. Mrs Regina IP said that she would provide a paper on critical thinking to the Panel. She had reservation about the Chinese translation of critical thinking as "批判性思考" which had negative connotation. The Chairman said that the matter would be further considered upon the receipt of Mrs IP's paper.

Sub-degree education

25. Miss Tanya CHAN suggested discussion on issues relating to sub-degree education.

International school places

26. Miss Tanya CHAN also proposed discussion on the supply of places in international schools.

27. The Chairman said that the suggested items would be included in the list of outstanding issues for discussion, and in consultation with the Administration, the timing for discussion on the various items would be proposed for members' consideration.

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IV. Any other business

28. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:43 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
3 November 2008