

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(2)1424/10-11  
(The minutes have been seen by  
the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/ED

**Panel on Education**

**Minutes of meeting**  
**held on Monday, 14 February 2011, at 4:30 pm**  
**in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

**Members present** : Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP (Chairman)  
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan  
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 WONG Kwok-hing, MH  
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, GBS, JP  
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP  
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH  
Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, BBS, JP  
Hon Paul CHAN Mo-po, MH, JP  
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun  
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che  
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP  
Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP  
Hon Tanya CHAN  
Hon WONG Yuk-man

**Public Officers attending** : Agenda item IV

Mr Kenneth CHEN, JP  
Under Secretary for Education

Miss Linda SO  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Further Education)

Agenda item V

Mr Kenneth CHEN, JP  
Under Secretary for Education

Ms Mable CHAN, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Education (2)

Mr Raymond SY  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Infrastructure &  
Research Support)

**Attendance by invitation** : Agenda item V

Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union

Mr CHAN Hung  
Rights and Complaints Director

LANTAUPOST

Ms HO Loy  
Director

Mr CHAN Chung-yau

Ms HUI Lai-shan  
South Lantau parent

Lantau Associations Consortia

Mr NG Cheuk-wing  
Chairman

Association of School Heads of Islands District

Mr CHUNG Chuen-ming  
Chairman

South Lantau Education Concern Group

Dr Rosa MA  
Convenor

Ms YEUNG Hung-shuen  
Parent representative

Parent-Teacher Association of Holy Family School,  
Peng Chau

Mr Kelvin HAU  
Parent Secretary

Mr POON King-man  
Parent Member

Mui Wo School Parent-Teacher Association

Ms KAM Wai-ling  
Parent representative

Bui O Public School Parent-Teacher Association

Ms Elizabeth Hemmings  
Parent representative

Mrs Waleerst Schnell  
Parent representative

Mr Paul Dodds  
Parent representative from Lantau International School

Ms Jacqueline Sharp

Ms Maria Consuelo Domingo Currie

Ark Eden Foundation

Ms Jenny Quinton  
Director

Mr WONG Fuk-kan  
Island District Councilor

Living Islands Movement

Ms Louise Preston  
Secretary

Mr John Schofield  
Member

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

**Staff in attendance** : Ms Amy YU  
Senior Council Secretary (2)3

Ms Catherina YU  
Senior Council Secretary (2)7

Ms Judy TING  
Council Secretary (2)6

Ms Carmen HO  
Legislative Assistant (2)6

Action

---

**I. Confirmation of minutes**  
[LC Paper No. CB(2)907/10-11]

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2010 were confirmed.

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

2. Members noted that no information paper had been issued since the last meeting.

### **III. Items for discussion at the next meeting**

[Appendices I and II to LC Paper No. CB(2)974/10-11]

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for 14 March 2011 at 4:30 pm -

(a) Progress of support measures for non-Chinese speaking students;  
and

(b) Report on the Higher Education Review 2010.

Regarding (b), members had agreed at the meeting on 10 January 2011 that deputations should be invited to the meeting to give views.

4. Noting recent media reports on resources allocation to universities, Dr Priscilla LEUNG suggested that deputations from universities and parents' representatives should also be invited to the meeting.

5. The Chairman referred members to the list of organizations proposed to be invited to the meeting which was tabled at the meeting. She explained that the list was drawn up on the basis of the organizations which had been granted Start-up Loans for Post-secondary Education Providers. She suggested that subject to members' view, the representatives of the management, staff unions/associations and students' unions of these organizations be invited to the meeting to give views. A notice would also be posted onto the Legislative Council ("LegCo") website to invite views from members of the public. Members could suggest any other organisations to be invited to the meeting. Members agreed to the proposed arrangements.

#### Debundling of textbooks and teaching and learning resources for pricing

6. Ms Cyd HO was given to understand that the Administration was working on the debundling of textbooks and teaching and learning resources for pricing. As textbook price would usually be fixed in June, she suggested that the matter be discussed at a Panel meeting in April or May 2011 and textbook publishers, school representatives and relevant stakeholders be invited to the meeting.

7. The Chairman suggested and members agreed that the Administration should be requested to provide a paper reporting on the progress of the matter to facilitate members' consideration of the timing for discussion.

### Review of Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme

8. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that the Working Group on Review of Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme ("the Working Group") had submitted its report to the Secretary for Education in December 2010 and the Administration should be able to implement some of the recommendations in the Report in the 2011-2012 academic year. He considered it necessary for the Panel to discuss the matter.

### Direct Subsidy Scheme Schools

9. The Chairman said that the Panel had agreed earlier to discuss matters relating to the Direct Subsidy Scheme ("DSS") schools as soon as practicable. She informed members that the Public Accounts Committee would submit its report on the Administration of the Direct Subsidy Scheme and Governance and Administration of Direct Subsidy Scheme Schools to the Council on 23 February 2011. A motion debate on the Report had been scheduled for the Council meeting of 2 March 2011. She suggested that after Members had expressed their views at the motion debate, the Panel could discuss the way forward for following up matters relating to DSS schools in about 10 minutes at the next regular meeting. The Panel might discuss the subject at its regular meeting in April 2011. Members agreed.

## **IV. Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund**

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)974/10-11(01) and (02)]

10. Members noted the background brief entitled "Development of self-financing post-secondary education" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat.

11. The Chairman drew members' attention to Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure concerning personal pecuniary interest to be disclosed which provided that, in the Council or in any committee or subcommittee, a Member should not move any motion or amendment relating to a matter in which he had a pecuniary interest, whether direct or indirect, or speak on any such matter, except where he disclosed the nature of that interest. She reminded members to declare interests in the matter under discussion, if any.

### Briefing by the Administration

12. Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the proposal to establish a Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund ("the

Action

Fund") of \$2.5 billion to support the further development of the self-financing post-secondary education sector as detailed in the Administration's paper.

Self-financing Post-secondary Scholarship Scheme

13. Noting that the estimated investment income of \$125 million generated from the Fund would be shared out by the three schemes, namely, the Self-financing Post-secondary Scholarship Scheme ("SPSS"), the Quality Enhancement Support Scheme ("QESS") and the Quality Assurance Support Scheme ("QASS"), Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong considered the amount insufficient for the award of scholarships to qualified students under the SPSS. He pointed out that according to the Administration's projection, the total number of students who would attain the minimum qualification for university education in the 2012-2013 academic year was 40 000 students. This figure comprised two cohorts of students, i.e. the 17 000 students taking the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination and the 23 000 students sitting the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination in 2012. Given that the total intake of local students by the publicly-funded universities was about 12 000 students for each of the cohorts, there would be some 16 000 students who could not get publicly-funded university places in the 2012-2013 academic year notwithstanding their attainment of the minimum qualification for university education. With such an unprecedented large number of students, the limited number of scholarships to be awarded under the SPSS could not address their grievances. He called on the Administration to assess the political consequences of the crisis created.

14. US(Ed) explained that the number of publicly-funded first-year-first degree places would be doubled in the 2012-2013 double cohort year. Students enrolled in self-financing or publicly-funded degree programmes were eligible for the same kind of financial assistance from the Government. The administration of the SPSS would take reference from the \$1-billion HKSARG Scholarship Fund which was established in 2008 to provide government scholarships to outstanding students enrolled in publicly-funded full-time degree or above level programmes. Should there be a need to increase the number of scholarships to be awarded under the SPSS in a particular year, the Administration might, where necessary, seek advice from the Steering Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund ("the Steering Committee") to draw a small part of the principal of the Fund.

15. Dr Priscilla LEUNG declared that she was an associate professor of the City University of Hong Kong which offered sub-degree programmes. She enquired whether scholarships would be awarded to the outstanding students enrolled in self-financing degree programmes offered by publicly-funded

Action

universities under the SPSS and whether students pursuing second Bachelor degree courses could also apply for the scholarships.

16. Principal Assistant Secretary (Further Education) ("PAS(FE))" responded that outstanding students pursuing full-time locally-accredited self-financing sub-degree or bachelor degree programmes offered by both the self-financing and publicly-funded institutions would be eligible for the scholarships under the SPSS. The consideration was whether the programmes offered by the institutions were eligible and not whether the applicant students had pursued sub-degree or bachelor degree programmes previously.

17. Referring to paragraph 8 of the Administration's paper, Ms Audrey EU noted that the parameters and operational guidelines of the SPSS and the amount and number of scholarships to be awarded each year had yet to be confirmed. She was concerned whether the scheme aimed to assist students who were not admitted to publicly-funded universities but could not pursue self-financing programmes due to a lack of means, or outstanding students who had already been enrolled in self-financing programmes. In her view, the scheme should aim to help the former students.

18. Mr Albert HO shared Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's concern about the inadequate amount allocated to the SPSS. He also echoed Ms Audrey EU's view that the Administration should set a clear objective for the scheme. He enquired whether the objective of the SPSS was to award outstanding students who had no financial difficulties, or to help those average academic-performers who were qualified for admission to self-financing post-secondary institutions and were in need of financial assistance. Should the latter be the case, the Administration should state clearly the amount of fund required and the parameters of the scheme for members' consideration. In his view, as various scholarships offered by private organizations or affluent individuals had already been available, the Administration should use the SPSS to help the needy students to receive self-financing post-secondary education.

19. US(Ed) shared the view that the Administration should help the needy students eligible for university education to receive university education. Indeed, the Administration had provided different financial assistance schemes for students. Under the existing financial assistance schemes, needy students enrolled in publicly-funded or self-financing post-secondary programmes could apply for Government grants or loans. The objective of the SPSS was to award outstanding students enrolled in full-time self-financing sub-degree or bachelor degree programmes. The Administration would consult the Steering Committee on the criteria for awarding the scholarships and the mode of



Action

operation of the Fund. Same as the HKSARG Scholarship Fund, the post-secondary institutions would nominate students for the scholarships for consideration by the Steering Committee.

20. US(Ed) further said that the Administration considered it appropriate to adopt a two-pronged approach in promoting the parallel development of the publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary education sector in the long run. The development of the higher education sector should be diversified to provide more choices to students.

21. PAS(FE) supplemented that the SPSS and the student financial assistance schemes served different purposes. The Administration had gauged the views of the post-secondary institutions on the SPSS. They considered that the establishment of the SPSS was not only an award to but also recognition of the outstanding students enrolled in self-financing programmes. This would boost recognition of the self-financing sector and students enrolling in such programmes. It would in turn help enhance the quality of the self-financing post-secondary education for the well-being of students, which was the main objective of the Fund.

22. In response to Ms Audrey EU's enquiry, PAS(FE) explained that the eligible institutions and organizations mentioned in paragraph 12 of the Administration's paper mainly referred to the institutions which offered self-financing programmes and federations of these institutions. Project proposals which were beneficial to the self-financing post-secondary education sector as a whole would also be considered by the Steering Committee.

23. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung supported the objective of enhancing the quality of the self-financing education sector and considered it important for the Administration to adopt a right approach in order to achieve the objective. He pointed out that many students who had financial hardships needed to take up part-time jobs in order to pay for the tuition fees. This would inevitably affect their academic performance and in turn the quality of the post-secondary education sector. Many students were unwilling to apply for government loans because the repayment could last long. While he had no objection to award outstanding students with scholarships, he stressed the need for the Administration to provide more opportunities for students with fair academic performance to pursue higher education and to provide financial assistance to the needy students so that they did not have to take part-time work and could concentrate on their studies.

Action

24. US(Ed) reiterated that both scholarships and financial assistance schemes were available for different students. Subject to the availability of resources, the Administration reviewed the financial assistance schemes from time to time with a view to better meeting the needs of students. The review on Non-means-tested Loan Schemes was underway. Phase I of the public consultation had been completed and the Administration was working on phase 2 of the public consultation. The Administration would seek members' views on the improvements to the schemes in due course. He hoped that members would support the setting up of the SPSS so that outstanding students enrolled in self-financing post-secondary programmes would also be awarded. US(Ed) further said that the QESS and the QASS were of no lesser importance. The former aimed at supporting projects or initiatives which would enhance the quality of the self-financing post-secondary education sector, whereas the latter was to ensure the quality of learning programmes by providing financial support for the related quality-assurance activities.

Self-financing post-secondary education sector

25. The Chairman questioned how the proposed \$2.5 billion could enhance the quality of the self-financing post-secondary education sector having regard to the proliferation of self-financing post-secondary institutions in the near future. She pointed out that compared with the University Grants Committee ("UGC")-funded institutions, self-financing post-secondary institutions received little subsidies from the Government. The average student unit cost for publicly-funded degree programmes was about \$200,000 a year and the total student cost for completing a four-year degree programme was about \$1 million. However, the Government provided only lands and loans to the self-financing post-secondary institutions. These institutions relied on the tuition fees received to repay the loans and it would be difficult for them to survive with the current level of tuition fees. Given the difficult financial position of the self-financing post-secondary institutions, she queried how the Administration could ensure quality education provided by the self-financing post-secondary education sector.

26. While supporting the proposal to establish the Fund, the Chairman was concerned that the Administration had not progressed with time in respect of the monitoring and mode of subvention for the entire self-financing post-secondary education sector. She opined that instead of proposing piece-meal initiatives, the Administration should have thorough planning and conduct a holistic review of the self-financing post-secondary education sector.

Action

27. US(Ed) responded that the student unit cost of publicly-funded degree programmes was higher compared with that of the self-financing post-secondary programmes because the former comprised subjects with high operation costs, such as medical programmes and included research element which accounted for about one fourth of the student unit cost.

28. US(Ed) further said that an effective mechanism had been put in place to assure the quality of the programmes offered by both the self-financing and publicly-funded post-secondary institutions. The programmes offered by non-UGC-funded post-secondary institutions were accredited by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications. The UGC-funded institutions had self-accrediting status, and the quality of their self-financing programmes was audited by the Joint Quality Review Committee and the Quality Assurance Council.

29. US(Ed) added that there would be a clearer picture of the way forward for the self-financing post-secondary education sector in the course of its development. In the long run, there should be parallel development of the publicly-funded and the self-financing post-secondary education sector. The Government would continue to support the development of the self-financing post-secondary education sector by land grants and the provision of loans. The establishment of the Fund was one of the latest measures to enhance quality.

30. The Chairman called on the Administration to conduct a holistic review of the self-financing post-secondary education sector taking into account the UGC's recommendations in the Report of the Higher Education Review 2010.

31. Mr WONG Yuk-man said that the self-financing post-secondary institutions had their own ways to survive which had proven to be effective in the absence of Government subsidies in the past. The self-financing post-secondary institutions were worse off financially after they had borrowed loans from the Government. In his view, it was unnecessary for the Government to provide half-hearted support for the self-financing post-secondary education sector. He echoed the Chairman's view that the Administration should have a thorough review of the self-financing post-secondary education sector with a view to providing a wider choice to students and enhance the education quality.

32. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that the students enrolled in the publicly-funded universities received about \$1 million subsidy for the whole duration of the university programmes, but the students enrolled in self-financing post-secondary institutions received no subsidy from the Government but only grants and loans. Many of them were in heavy debt and

Action

had to take a long time to repay the loans. They had great financial pressure and had difficulties in making ends meet. He criticised the Administration for being unfair to these students who were discriminated.

33. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong stressed that the SPSS was insufficient to help the 16 000 students to be enrolled in self-financing post-secondary institutions in the 2012-2013 academic year notwithstanding their attainment of the minimum requirement for university education. It was also unfair to the self-financing post-secondary education sector as the Fund was inadequate to help enhance its quality. He considered that the Administration had attempted to cover up the discrimination to the students enrolled in self-financing post-secondary programmes by the establishment of the Fund.

34. Ms Audrey EU pointed out that only 18% of the school age population in Hong Kong was admitted to publicly-funded universities and a large number of students who were eligible for university education had to enrol in self-financing post-secondary institutions. The Administration should endeavour to help these students to receive university education. Given the small amount, the SPSS could not achieve good results if it had the dual purposes of providing financial assistance to needy students as well as awarding outstanding students. In her view, the SPSS should aim at providing financial assistance to students who had fair academic performance to pursue post-secondary education. She reiterated that the Administration should set a clear objective for the SPSS at its establishment instead of leaving it to the Steering Committee to decide.

35. Concluding the discussions, the Chairman said that the Panel supported the submission of the funding proposal to the Finance Committee for consideration. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed reservations about the effectiveness of the SPSS to help the students enrolled in self-financing post-secondary programmes.

**V. Provision of school places in South Lantau**  
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)974/10-11(03) and (04)]

36. Members noted the updated background brief entitled "Provision of school places in the Islands District" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat.

37. The Chairman drew members' attention to the letter dated 14 February 2011 from Mr WONG Kwok-hing, which was tabled at the meeting, expressing his views on the subject. Mr WONG was not able to join the discussion of this agenda item owing to other commitments.

Action

38. The Chairman said that at the request of South Lantau Education Concern Group, information leaflets concerning an English-Medium Secondary School for South Lantau and Peng Chau and origami cranes would be distributed to members.

Oral presentation by deputations

*Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union*  
[LC Paper No. CB(2)992/10-11(01)]

39. Mr CHAN Hung presented the views of Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union as detailed in its submission.

*LANTAUPOST*  
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1038/10-11(01)]

40. Ms HO Loy presented the views of LANTAUPOST as detailed in its submission.

*Mr CHAN Chung-yau*

41. Mr CHAN Chung-yau called on members to support the relocation of the drug treatment and rehabilitation centres ("DTRCs") of the Christian Zheng Sheng Association ("CZSA"). He said that the Lands Department should be able to help identify a suitable site for the relocation.

*Ms HUI Lai-shan*  
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1143/10-11(01)]

42. Ms HUI La-shan presented her views as detailed in the submission.

*Lantau Associations Consortia*

43. Mr NG Cheuk-wing said that as Lantau Associations Consortia had yet to discuss the subject, he did not have any view to express at this stage.

*Association of School Heads of Islands District*  
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1143/10-11(02)]

44. Mr CHUNG Chuen-ming presented the views of Association of School Heads of Islands District as detailed in its submission.

Action

*South Lantau Education Concern Group*  
*[LC Paper No. CB(2)1020/10-11(02)]*

45. Dr Rosa MA presented the views of South Lantau Education Concern Group as detailed in its submission.

*Parent-Teacher Association of Holy Family School, Peng Chau*  
*[LC Paper No. CB(2)992/10-11(02)]*

46. Mr Kelvin HAU presented the views of Parent-Teacher Association of Holy Family School, Peng Chau, as detailed in its submission.

*Mui Wo School Parent-Teacher Association*  
*[LC Paper No. CB(2)974/10-11(07)]*

47. Ms KAM Wai-ling presented the views of Mui Wo School Parent-Teacher Association as detailed in its submission.

*Bui O Public School Parent-Teacher Association*  
*[LC Paper No. CB(2)1038/10-11(02)]*

48. Ms Elizabeth Hemmings presented the views of Bui O Public School Parent-Teacher Association as detailed in its submission.

*Parent representative from Lantau International School*  
*[LC Paper No. CB(2)974/10-11(05)]*

49. Mr Paul Dodds presented the views of parents of Lantau International School as detailed in his submission.

*Ms Jacqueline Sharp*  
*[LC Paper No. CB(2)1020/10-11(01)]*

50. Ms Jacqueline Sharp presented her views as detailed in the submission.

*Ms Maria Consuelo Domingo Currie*

51. Ms Maria Consuelo Domingo Currie said that the provision of school places in South Lantau was inadequate and inappropriate for non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") children. She pointed out the three main problems in the Administration's calculation of student number in South Lantau. First, NCS children studying in the local international schools had not been counted. Second, NCS children attending schools outside South Lantau due to a lack of

Action

local places had not been included. Third, while local school places were available, they were not suitable for NCS children to meet their learning needs as the medium of instruction ("MOI") of these schools was in Chinese.

52. Ms Maria Consuelo Domingo Currie considered that the solution was to provide a school using English as the MOI in South Lantau. The school should adopt flexible teaching and learning in both Chinese and English, use English as MOI to ensure proper understanding of academic subjects, promote Chinese-English immersion for non-academic subjects, and incorporate different cultural activities as "Other Learning Experience" to promote multicultural respect and harmony. She believed that a large number of local students would attend the proposed school to avoid travelling a long distance to school.

*Ark Eden Foundation*

*[LC Paper No. CB(2)992/10-11(03)]*

53. Ms Jenny Quinton presented the views of Ark Eden Foundation as detailed in its submission.

*Mr WONG Fuk-kan, Islands District Councillor*

*[LC Paper No. CB(2)974/10-11(06)(revised)]*

54. Mr WONG Fuk-kan presented his views as detailed in the submission.

*Living Islands Movement*

*[LC Paper No. CB(2)1038/10-11(03)]*

55. Ms Louise Preston presented the views of Living Islands Movement as detailed in its submission.

The Administration's response

56. US(Ed) thanked the deputations for presenting their views on the subject. He stressed that the provision of secondary school places was planned on a territory-wide basis and the sustainable operation of a school to provide a broad and balanced curriculum was of paramount importance. The Administration had taken various measures to address the concerns of residents of South Lantau. The Working Group on Review of School Nets had been deliberating on different proposals for reviewing school nets. It was of the view that before completion of the school net review, the existing demarcation of the 18 school nets should remain unchanged. Nevertheless, the Administration had provided more school choices from Hong Kong Region in

Action

the netting arrangements for students in Islands District. In the 2009-2010 school year, a total of 43 school choices were provided for selection by all Primary ("P") 6 students in the Islands Net. In addition to the seven participating secondary schools physically located in Islands District, 36 schools in other districts with 27 in Hong Kong Region were included.

Handling of motion

57. The Chairman informed members of Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung's intention to move a motion and Ms Audrey EU's intention to propose amendments to the motion. She sought members' agreement to extend the meeting for not more than 30 minutes. Members agreed.

58. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung moved and Mr LEE Cheuk-yan seconded the following motion -

"That this Panel requests the SAR Government to reopen in the near future the former New Territories Heung Yee Kuk Southern District Secondary School, for the purpose of providing a secondary school to students in South Lantau and Peng Chau so that they can receive schooling in the local district."

59. Ms Audrey EU proposed amendment to the motion which was seconded by Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che as follows -

"That this Panel requests the SAR Government to *solve in the near future the problem concerning the relocation of the drug treatment and rehabilitation centres of the Christian Zheng Sheng Association and to reopen* the former New Territories Heung Yee Kuk Southern District Secondary School, for the purpose of providing a secondary school to students in South Lantau and Peng Chau so that they can receive schooling in the local district."

60. The Chairman sought members' views on the proposal of Mr LEE Cheuk-yan for dealing with the motion immediately.

61. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong did not agree to the proposal. He explained that the usual practice was for members to deliberate on the subject matter before voting on the relevant motion, as issues of concern might arise during the discussion which might affect members' stance. He cautioned that the proposal would set a precedent for dealing with motions in future. He suggested that members should at least be allowed to express their initial views on the subject matter.



Action

62. Echoing the views of Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong, Mr Albert HO said that unless there were exceptional reasons, deliberations should take place before voting on a motion. Ms Cyd HO expressed a similar view that members should deliberate first before voting on the motion. Mr Abraham SHEK stressed that all members were concerned about the matter and he was open-minded on the proposal.

63. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that while he appreciated the usual practice of voting on a motion after members' deliberations, he supported the proposal as some members might not be able to attend the whole meeting, which had been extended. Professor Patrick LAU considered it not necessary to further deliberate on the matter as it had been thoroughly discussed by members on many occasions.

64. Having regard to members' views, the Chairman proposed that the motion be dealt with after the first round of questions from members had been completed. Members agreed.

Provision of school places in South Lantau

65. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that the needs of the three disadvantaged groups, namely, local children and NCS children residing in South Lantau as well as students of the DTRCs of CZSA were not mutually excluded. Based on the principle of attending school in the vicinity and given the remoteness of South Lantau, the Administration should be flexible in its policy and allow the operation of a school, which would adopt both Chinese and English languages as MOI, in South Lantau when the student population reached a certain level. The Administration should not adhere to its policy stringently of requiring the minimum number of 61 students at each level. Mr CHEUNG added that he had no specific view on the site for a secondary school in South Lantau.

66. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong further said that he supported the proposed amendment to the motion as he shared Ms Audrey EU's view that the relocation of CZSA's DTRCs and the education needs of South Lantau children should not be mutually exclusive. He asked whether the Administration would exercise flexibility in dealing with the request for a secondary school in South Lantau.

67. In response, US(Ed) said that the Administration had no plan to change the existing policy on the provision of public sector schools.

Action

68. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan expressed disappointment that the Administration had not shown any regard to the education needs of South Lantau children. He proposed that members and the Administration should accompany South Lantau children to go to school in order to experience their difficulties. Mr LEE said that South Lantau offered a quality living environment. Should there be a local secondary school, many people might be attracted to live there and the student population would increase. In his view, a local secondary school would help enhance social bondage.

69. US(Ed) replied that education was integral to community services and the population distribution should be taken into account in deciding whether a school should be provided in a district.

70. Ms Cyd HO said that many South Lantau children did not join extra-curricular activities because of inconvenient transport. She supported the amendment to the motion proposed by Ms Audrey EU as CZSA was in urgent need for a new site for the relocation of its DTRCs. She did not consider that the Administration would have difficulty to identify another site for a secondary school should the former New Territories Heung Yee Kuk Southern District Secondary School ("ex-SDSS") site be allocated to CZSA. In her view, even if another site would not be available, consideration could be given to expanding the ex-SDSS site to house both the DTRCs and a secondary school. She considered that the Administration should implement a school policy tailored to remote areas having regard to its huge fiscal surplus. The provision of a feature school in South Lantau could be the way forward. She also pointed out that a school sponsoring body was running a small private school in South Lantau and the Administration should provide resources to the school. Ms HO expressed support for the visit proposed by Mr LEE Cheuk-yan.

71. Ms Audrey EU said that the ex-SDSS site had been idling for many years but the Administration was indecisive on its allocation. She criticized the Administration for lacking flexibility in adopting different policies to address different situations and foresight in its formulation of policy to meet the education needs of South Lantau children. She sought information on the latest position of the relocation of CZSA's DTRCs.

72. US(Ed) said that the Administration was still awaiting the provision of the requisite information from CZSA to allay public concern about its accounts.

73. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that the ex-SDSS site should be used for the operation of a secondary school, and CZSA's DTRCs could be relocated to

Action

another site. He pointed out that the long travelling time taken by South Lantau children should be well known without the proposed visit. South Lantau children woke up early in the morning and went home late because their school journey took several hours. They could hardly participate in extra-curricular activities because they were too tired and could not afford the time. As the subject under discussion was the provision of school places in South Lantau, he had not covered the issue of relocation of CZSA's DTRCs in his motion.

74. Mr Abraham SHEK said that he supported both the motion and the proposed amendment to it. He stressed the education right of every child and the importance of meeting the education needs of children, regardless of their background and length of stay in Hong Kong. He considered it grossly unfair to the South Lantau children to be burdened with the inconvenience of travelling an unacceptable long distance to school. This was in violation of the principle of equal opportunity. Given the financial capability of the Government, he could not accept the lack of a secondary school in South Lantau.

75. Mr Albert HO expressed disappointment that the Administration did not consider the provision of a secondary school for South Lantau children necessary and had not shown any regard to the concerns of South Lantau parents. While the Administration claimed that it attached great importance to community-based services, it had refused to adjust its policy to cater for the needs of residents of remote areas and had turned down the request for a secondary school in South Lantau on the grounds of population distribution. He cautioned that the Administration might have violated the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child concerning the provision of education. He called on the Administration to reconsider its policy. Mr HO stressed that while he considered that the ex-SDSS site should be used by the local community, the relocation of CZSA's DTRCs should be addressed at the same time.

76. Mr KAM Nai-wai said that the Administration refused to implement small class teaching and provide 15-year free education and a secondary school in South Lantau notwithstanding the huge fiscal surplus. He considered that a local secondary school in South Lantau would not only provide education opportunities for local children but also a natural environment for the learning of astronomy as part of the liberal studies curriculum, as pointed out by one of the deputations.

77. US(Ed) stressed the importance of providing a broad and balanced curriculum for secondary students under the new senior secondary curriculum.

Action

He explained that under the existing policy, 61 students at each level were the minimum threshold. In the 2010-2011 school year, around 1 200 students in Islands District participated in the Secondary School Places Allocation ("SSPA") System and it was projected that the number would drop to about 800 in the 2015-2016 school year. The number of P6 students in South Lantau participated in the SSPA System was projected to be less than 50 annually. Since the 2010-2011 school year, schools were allowed to adopt the appropriate school-based MOI with regard to students' learning ability and circumstances of individual schools. There was no longer pure bifurcation of schools using Chinese or English as MOI. US(Ed) assured members that there were three designated schools for NCS students in the Islands District. The Administration would continue to closely monitor the demand and supply of school places in South Lantau to ensure adequate provision of public sector school places.

78. Professor Patrick LAU said that the planning criteria adopted by the Administration for the provision of schools in individual districts and the reasons for requiring 61 students at each level as the acceptable minimum were unfounded. If justified, a school might have one class at each level only. He stressed the need for the Administration to take into consideration the geographical constraints and the transport network in the provision of schools in a district.

79. Miss Tanya CHAN considered that the provision of a local secondary school was more than a community service and access to education was a basic right for children. In her view, the operation of a secondary school with a small student population in South Lantau could serve as a pilot scheme. Citing her experience of encountering a group of Islands students returning home from school in late hours and in cold weather, she said she would join the proposed visit to better understand the difficulties of South Lantau students.

Motion

80. Ms Audrey EU explained her proposed amendment to the motion. She said that the relocation of CZSA's DTRCs had been delayed for a long time and should be addressed. She was open-minded on whether the ex-SDSS site should be used by CZSA for its DTRCs or South Lantau residents for operating a secondary school, as reflected in the wording of her proposed amendment to the motion. She stressed that the relocation of CZSA's DTRCs and the need of South Lantau residents for a local secondary school were not mutually exclusive.

Action

81. The Chairman put to vote the amendment to the motion moved by Ms Audrey EU, as detailed in paragraph 59 above. Eleven members voted for and no members objected to the motion, and no members abstained. The Chairman declared that the motion as amended by Ms Audrey EU was carried.

82. In response to the views expressed by members, US(Ed) said that flexibility was provided for the operation of public sector primary schools in very remote areas with allocation of students less than the threshold for operating P1 classes. As for secondary schools, consideration had to be given to maintaining 61 students being the minimum threshold for the operation of Secondary ("S")1 classes in order to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for students. In considering whether a public sector secondary school should be set up in South Lantau, the sustainability of the school having regard to the threshold for operation of S1 classes should be taken into account in order to maintain the healthy development of the school and to safeguard the prudent use of public resources.

83. US(Ed) further said that the Administration attached great importance to the education needs of NCS children in South Lantau. He reiterated that schools adopted the appropriate school-based MOI with regard to the learning needs and ability of their students. For the purpose of assisting NCS students to integrate in public sector schools, US(Ed) said that communication between the Administration and the parents of NCS children should be enhanced through the relevant parent-teacher associations.

84. Concluding the discussions, the Chairman said that it was not necessary to maintain the policy of having 61 students at each level and the Administration should be open-minded on the provision of schools in remote areas.

**VI. Any other business**

85. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 7:02 pm.