

For discussion  
on 13 June 2011

## **Legislative Council Panel on Education**

### **After-school Learning Support Partnership Pilot Scheme for economically disadvantaged primary school students with academic needs**

#### **Purpose**

This paper seeks Members' views on the Administration's proposal to launch the After-school Learning Support Partnership Pilot Scheme (the Scheme) for economically disadvantaged primary school students with academic needs.

#### **Background**

2. As announced in the 2011-12 Budget, we have earmarked \$110 million to launch a three-year pilot programme to provide after-school homework guidance for primary students with financial and academic needs. The Education Bureau (EDB) will collaborate with local tertiary institutions to encourage and enlist tertiary students, especially those full-time students interested in joining the teaching profession, to provide after-school homework guidance for students from low-income families and help them with their studies from the 2011/12 school year.

#### **Objectives of the Scheme**

3. The proposed Scheme is intended to complement rather than replace other prevailing programmes offering after-school support<sup>1</sup>. It is

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<sup>1</sup> These programmes include the School-based After-school Learning and Support Programme which provides about \$65 million and \$110 million for school-based activities and community-based projects, in the 2010/11 school year respectively. The Programme includes a wide spectrum of activities such as tutorial services, cultural and art activities, sports activities, adventure activities, self-confidence development training, social and communication skills training, leadership training, voluntary services, outdoor activities and visits, etc.

unique in that it is intended to benefit not only the needy primary school students but also the tutors themselves. To the students, the Scheme will help enhance their learning effectiveness and establish a sound foundation at an early stage. To the tutors who are primarily prospective teachers, the Scheme will deepen their understanding of the educational needs of students, help inform their studies at teacher education institutions (TEIs) with practical experience to facilitate reflective and interactive learning, and give them a foretaste of a teaching career. The Scheme will also give these students an opportunity to serve the community, especially the economically disadvantaged sector.

## **Details of the Scheme**

### ***Target primary schools***

4. EDB will identify primary schools with a higher concentration of economically disadvantaged students and invite them to consider whether to join the Scheme. Building on the experiences of other support schemes for primary schools, we propose to use the percentage and number of students receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) or Student Financial Assistance Scheme (SFAS) full grant as an objective criterion in identifying eligible schools. We may also consider according priority to schools that demonstrate capacity, competence and readiness in joining the Scheme such as those schools that attach importance to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in their school development plans. To ensure the effectiveness of the Scheme at the outset, we envisage that it will initially cover around 50 schools.

### ***Target student beneficiaries***

5. Not all financially needy students would require homework guidance. On the other hand, some academically needy students may come from low-income families which for various reasons choose not to apply for CSSA or SFAS full grant. We will therefore entrust the participating schools to identify the target student beneficiaries who are both economically disadvantaged and academically needy using a school-based approach as in other school-based after-school support programmes. Beneficiaries should normally be recipients of CSSA or SFAS full grant, but schools will also have the discretion to offer up to 30% of places for economically disadvantaged students with learning

difficulties who are not receiving CSSA or SFAS full grant.

### ***Source of tutors***

6. Given the objectives of the Scheme as outlined in paragraph 3 above, priority of tutor selection will be accorded to the students in full-time teacher education programmes in participating TEIs. Currently, there are five institutions offering pre-service teacher training programmes including Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong Institute of Education, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the University of Hong Kong and the Open University of Hong Kong. In the 2010/11 academic year, there are about 4 000 students in full-time teacher education programmes in these institutions. We will enlist the assistance of TEIs in inviting their students to join the Scheme. After consultation with the TEIs, our target is to recruit around 800 tutors in the first year.

7. Tutors are expected to provide around four to six hours of tutorial service per week for 12 weeks in a school term, and be capable of handling all subjects at primary level. Tutors will be provided an allowance, initially set at around \$130-\$170 per hour of service.

8. To ensure effectiveness in the delivery of tutorial service, we intend to invite TEIs to provide induction / training for tutors so as to give them a better understanding of the education needs of target student beneficiaries and to solicit feedback from tutors. TEIs will be provided with grants for providing the induction/ training.

### ***Service provision***

9. Assuming that TEIs are successful in recruiting 800 tutors, we will be able to provide around 96 000 hours of tutorial service a year. Participating schools will be provided an indicative share of tutorial service hours based on their number of students receiving CSSA and SFAS full grant. Schools can then make school-based decisions on the arrangement of guidance sessions to meet the needs of their students (e.g. time, duration, broad content, distribution of contact hours among target students in light of individual differences). The requirements of the schools will be disseminated through TEIs to tertiary students who have joined the Scheme, and these tertiary students may apply to participating schools that suit their circumstances.

10. For illustration purpose, if schools arrange 4 hours of learning support per week for each participant in groups of around 8 students, we expect that the Scheme will benefit around 8 000 students at a time.

11. Schools will be provided with grants according to the amount of tutorial services arranged. They will be responsible for managing payment to tutors at prescribed rates upon delivery of service. In view of the objectives of the Scheme, schools should not use the grants to engage tutors who are not enlisted by TEIs. In addition, schools will be provided funding to cover their administrative overhead. Schools will have flexibility in deploying the funds for covering administrative overhead, e.g. it may engage its own staff or third party agencies in providing the necessary administrative and management support. Schools will be allowed to carry over unexpended balance of the provision with a view to spending the balance within the next school term. The Scheme will run at least till the end of 2013/14 school year. In case there are unexpended funds at the end of the pilot scheme, we intend to extend the Scheme until funds are exhausted.

### ***Monitoring and evaluation***

12. Schools are required to keep a separate ledger account to record all expenditure chargeable to the Scheme and ensure that all receipts and payments in respect of the Scheme are properly and timely recorded. Schools are also required to keep a clear record of the beneficiaries of the Scheme, tutors' attendance and performance.

13. The Scheme is launched on a pilot basis and we will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Scheme, in consultation with schools and TEIs. EDB will provide an evaluation proforma to schools to review the Scheme and reflect the outcome, including improvement in motivation for learning, study skills or performance of students. Feedback from tutors through TEIs will also be solicited.

### **Financial Implications**

14. The Government has earmarked \$110 million for the three-year pilot Scheme.

## **Advice Sought**

15. Subject to Members' views, we plan to seek the funding approval of the Finance Committee (FC) in July 2011. Subject to FC's approval, the Scheme will roll out in the 2011/12 school year.

Education Bureau  
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