

For discussion on 11 June 2012

Legislative Council Panel on Education

Use and Disposal of Vacant School Premises

PURPOSE

This paper informs Members of the latest position on the use and disposal of vacant school premises, including the planned allocation of vacant school premises for international school development.

BACKGROUND

2. We last reported to the Legislative Council Panel on Education (the Panel) on the use and disposal of vacant school premises vide the Education Bureau (EDB)'s letter of 7 May 2010 and provided an updated position vide LC Paper No. CB(2)2494/10-11(01) on 8 August 2011. In view of the various requests made by members of the community for early identification and disposal of vacant school premises to meet educational and other community needs in recent years, we have, in the past year or so, strengthened our existing mechanism with a view to planning ahead on the use of to-be-vacated premises so that they may be recycled as soon as possible after the school has ceased operation. Moreover, we have enhanced our liaison with various policy bureaux and departments concerned in order to facilitate early identification of those premises that may not be required for educational use and hence could be released for other uses.

3. In gist, EDB has an established mechanism for handling vacant school premises. We will consider if the size, location and physical conditions of the premises would render it suitable for re-allocation for school or other educational uses. Under normal circumstances, for school premises which are considered suitable to be so re-cycled, we will confirm the re-allocation of those premises for further school or other educational uses upon consultation with relevant bureaux and departments. Under the established arrangement, if there is any vacant school premises that would be available for recycling and for application

by school sponsoring bodies for school use, we will allocate the premises through the School Allocation Exercise after considering a basket of factors including the relevant lease conditions of the land where the premises is located, quality of the school proposals and track records of the school sponsoring bodies etc.. As regards the premises that are not suitable for further school or other educational uses, EDB would inform the Planning Department and return these school premises to relevant departments for their consideration on alternative uses in accordance with the prevailing established arrangement. Should individual bureaux or departments indicate interest to use any of these premises, they have to consult relevant departments and the Planning Department and apply for use.

DISPOSAL OF VACANT SCHOOL PREMISES

Latest position

4. In the past three years (i.e. from the 2009/10 to 2011/12 school years), 16 primary schools ceased operation under the policy on “Consolidation of Under-utilized Primary Schools”¹ and another three secondary schools ceased operation due to various reasons and one secondary school merged with another school during the same period. The districts in which these school premises are located and the year in which these schools ceased operation are set out at **Annex 1**. Among these 20 school premises that have become vacant as at May 2012, eight of them have already been deployed or re-allocated for further educational uses (see **Annex 2**). As for the other 12 premises, eight of them have been provisionally earmarked for further educational uses (see **Annex 3**) and action is underway to put the premises into operation in accordance with the earmarked uses. The remaining four premises were found not suitable for educational purpose owing to their limited size and remote locations. EDB has informed the Planning Department and returned these four premises as listed at **Annex 4** to the Government for consideration for disposal to meet other development needs.

5. In determining whether and how the vacant school premises suitable for school or other educational uses should be earmarked, we would in general accord higher priority to school use (e.g. primary

¹ The policy on “Consolidation of Under-utilized Primary Schools” has been implemented since the 2003/04 school year.

schools, secondary schools, international schools and special schools) should the premises be required for such purpose as school premises are purpose-built buildings designed for school operation. In addition, we would take into account the conditions and location of the school premises, demand for school places in the district, reprovisioning needs of schools in the district and the need to provide diversity in the school system to meet various educational needs in the territory and in support of relevant policy initiatives, e.g. international schools, special schools etc.. The ensuing paragraphs would provide details of our plan to deploy a few vacant school premises for long-term international school use.

Proposed use of vacant school premises for international school development

6. When we briefed the Panel (LC Paper No. CB(2)968/11-12(03)) regarding the measures taken and progress made in facilitating the provision of international school places in February 2012, we mentioned about our plan to allocate a few vacant school premises for international school development with a view to addressing the increasing demand for international school places, meeting the more immediate development needs of international schools and putting vacant school premises into gainful use.

7. After considering the site area and location of the vacant premises available, we have identified four vacant school premises that are suitable for long-term international school use. They are namely the ex-premises of St. Mark's School (Eastern district), FDBWA Yan Kow School (Kwun Tong district), Sing Yin Secondary School (Kwun Tong district) and HKCCGA Cheng Jack Yiu School (Southern district)². Among these four premises, St. Mark's School and FDBWA Yan Kow School have already been deployed for international school use on a short-term basis (e.g. for decanting use by two international schools).

² FDBWA Yan Kow School and HKCCGA Cheng Jack Yiu School ceased operation under the policy on "Consolidation of Under-utilized Primary Schools" in the 2007/08 and 2008/09 school year respectively. Ex-premises of Sing Yin Secondary School is vacated due to reprovisioning to a new school premises. Ex-premises of St Mark's School has been used for decanting of two international schools since 2009.

8. We have engaged the relevant District Councils³ in May 2012 to gauge their views and solicit their support to the proposed use mentioned in paragraph 7 above. We would continue to liaise with relevant parties to balance the interests between the local communities and the incoming overseas families and to iron out the detailed arrangements for the use of vacant school premises for international school development. In addressing the views from the District Councils on whether there are alternative premises suitable to meet local educational needs or other community needs in the districts concerned, we have responded that we have reserved a number of vacant school premises for use by public sector schools to meet local educational needs in the long run. Separately, under the established mechanism, EDB would return any vacant school premises that are no longer suitable for educational use to the Planning Department for consideration of alternative uses, including community use. According to the available information in hand, a number of the returned/ to-be-returned vacant school premises have been/ would be redeployed for community or welfare uses, including one in Shamshuipo and one in the North for welfare use, as well as nine ex-rural school premises (in Tai Po, Yuen Long, Islands, Kwun Tong and Southern) for various types of community use.

Expression of Interest and School Allocation Exercise

9. We plan to launch an Expression of Interest (EoI) exercise for vacant school premises in mid-2012 to ascertain the development needs of the international school sector and their interests in the premises. The EoI exercise will be open to all existing non-profit-making⁴ international school operators in Hong Kong and other interested parties which meet the relevant prescribed requirements. Bidders would be required to assess the potential demand for the curriculum they propose to offer and how the curriculum would meet the needs of their students. Subject to responses received in the EoI exercise, we will proceed with a School Allocation Exercise later in the year and invite detailed proposals from interested operators for consideration under an open and competitive bidding process.

³ We have briefed Members of the relevant committees of Eastern District Council, Southern District Council and Kwun Tong District Council respectively on 18 May, 21 May and 29 May 2012 regarding the proposals to redeploy vacant school premises for international school use.

⁴ Non-profit making organizations are those exempted from tax under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112).

10. Members are invited to note the latest position of vacant school premises and the proposed use of vacant school premises for international school development.

Education Bureau
June 2012

**A Breakdown of the 20 Premises by District and
by Year of Cessation of School Operation**

| District | School Year in which the Relevant Schools Ceased Operation | | |
|-------------------|---|---------|---------|
| | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
| Central & Western | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Eastern | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Islands | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Kowloon City | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Kwai Tsing | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Kwun Tong | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| North | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sai Kung | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sham Shui Po | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sha Tin | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Southern | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Tai Po | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Tsuen Wan | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Tuen Mun | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Wan Chai | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Wong Tai Sin | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Yau Tsim Mong | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Yuen Long | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total: | 10 | 7 | 3 |

Annex 2

School Name, District and School Cessation Year of 8 Vacant School Premises Re-deployed/Re-allocated for Educational Uses

| School Name | District | School Year in which the Relevant School Ceased Operation | Current Uses |
|---|---------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Hung Hom Government Primary School | Kowloon City | 2009/10 | Decanting use ⁵ |
| Lok Sin Tong Chan Cho Chak Primary School | Sha Tin | 2009/10 | School use |
| Buddhist Bright Pearl Primary School | Sha Tin | 2009/10 | School use |
| The Church of Christ in China Kei Kok Primary School | Sha Tin | 2009/10 | School cum other educational use |
| Sheung Kwai Chung Government Secondary School | Kwai Tsing | 2009/10 | School use |
| Ha Kwai Chung Government Secondary School | Kwai Tsing | 2009/10 | Other educational use |
| Sheng Kung Hui All Saints' Primary School | Yau Tsim Mong | 2010/11 | School use |
| TWGHs Lee Chi Hung Memorial Primary School (Chai Wan) | Eastern | 2011/12 | Other educational use |

⁵ Decanting use is occupation by schools undergoing in-situ redevelopment or awaiting availability of permanent premises.

Annex 3**School Name, District and School Cessation Year of
8 Vacant School Premises Earmarked for Educational Uses**

| School Name | District | School Year in which the Relevant School Ceased Operation | Earmarked Uses |
|---|-----------------|--|-----------------------|
| TWGHs & LKWFS Mrs Fung Yiu Hing Memorial Primary School | Eastern | 2009/10 | Decanting use |
| Five Districts Business Welfare Association Mrs Fung Ping Shan Primary School | Sha Tin | 2009/10 | Other educational use |
| Chai Wan Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School | Eastern | 2010/11 | Decanting use |
| Tsuen Wan Lutheran School | Tsuen Wan | 2010/11 | School use |
| Buddhist Lau Tin Sang Primary School | Tuen Mun | 2010/11 | Other educational use |
| Salvation Army Sam Shing Chuen Lau Ng Ying School | Tuen Mun | 2010/11 | School use |
| St. Teresa's School | Southern | 2011/12 | Other educational use |
| Buddhist Tai Kwong Middle School | Tai Po | 2011/12 | Other educational use |

Annex 4**School Name, District and School Cessation Year of
4 Vacant School Premises Returned to the Planning Department for
Disposal**

| School Name | District | School Year in which the Relevant School Ceased Operation |
|---|-----------------|--|
| Cheung Chau Fisheries Joint Association Public School | Islands | 2009/10 |
| Sir Ellis Kadoorie Secondary School (Shatin) | Sha Tin | 2009/10 |
| The Church of Christ in China Kei Ching Primary School | Tai Po | 2010/11 |
| Sheng Kung Hui Kei Sum Primary School | Wong Tai Sin | 2010/11 |