

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(4)275/12-13  
(The minutes have been seen by the  
Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

**Panel on Education**

**Minutes of meeting**  
**held on Monday, 12 November 2012, at 4:30 pm**  
**in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** :
- Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, SBS, JP (Chairman)
  - Hon IP Kin-yuen (Deputy Chairman)
  - Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
  - Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
  - Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
  - Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
  - Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
  - Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
  - Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
  - Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
  - Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP
  - Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
  - Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
  - Hon WONG Yuk-man
  - Hon Claudia MO
  - Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP
  - Hon Charles Peter MOK
  - Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok
  - Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
  - Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
  - Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP
- Members absent** :
- Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
  - Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, JP

**Public Officers** : Agenda item IV  
**attending**

Mr Kevin YEUNG  
Under Secretary for Education

Ms Jessie WONG  
Deputy Secretary for Education (2)  
Education Bureau

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

Dr CHEUNG Kwok-wah  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Curriculum Development)  
Education Bureau

Ms Teresa CHEUNG  
Deputy Controller 2  
Student Financial Assistance Agency

Agenda item V

Mr Kevin YEUNG  
Under Secretary for Education

Ms Jessie WONG  
Deputy Secretary for Education (2)  
Education Bureau

Ms Wendy CHUNG  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Infrastructure & Research  
Support)  
Education Bureau

Agenda item VI

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP  
Secretary for Education

Mrs Cherry TSE, JP  
Permanent Secretary for Education  
Education Bureau

Dr K K CHAN  
Deputy Secretary for Education (5)  
Education Bureau

Dr CHEUNG Kwok-wah  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Curriculum Development)  
Education Bureau

Dr Thomas CHEUNG  
Director — Development and Educational Assessment  
Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority

Agenda item VII

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP  
Secretary for Education

Mrs Cherry TSE, JP  
Permanent Secretary for Education  
Education Bureau

Mrs Michelle WONG  
Deputy Secretary for Education (4)

Ms Jessie WONG  
Deputy Secretary for Education (2)  
Education Bureau

**Clerk in attendance** : Miss Polly YEUNG  
Chief Council Secretary (4)4

**Staff in attendance** : Mr KWONG Kam-fai  
Senior Council Secretary (4)4

Ms Esther CHEUNG  
Council Secretary (4)4

Ms Sandy HAU  
Legislative Assistant (4)3

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**I. Confirmation of minutes**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)110/12-13 – Minutes of meeting on 16 October 2012)

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2012 were confirmed.

**II. Information paper 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**

(Appendix I to LC Paper No. – List of outstanding items for  
CB(4)111/12-13 discussion

Appendix II to LC Paper No. – List of follow-up actions)  
CB(4)111/12-13

3. The Chairman informed members that the Administration had proposed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Monday, 10 December 2012, at 4:30pm –

- (a) Review of Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320) and Post Secondary Colleges Regulations (Cap. 320A);
- (b) Education (Amendment) Bill 2013; and
- (c) Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions.

4. Dr Fernando CHEUNG remarked that in principle, members would have no objection to including the discussion items proposed by the Administration on the agenda. However, given the recent incidents of over-enrolment by self-financing tertiary institutions, he considered it more appropriate for the Panel to discuss item 3(a) above together with the subject of "Self-financing post-secondary education" (i.e. item no. 5 on the Panel's "List of Outstanding Items for Discussion").

5. Noting Dr Fernando CHEUNG's suggestion, the Chairman said that in order to allow sufficient time to cover four agenda items, he might need to extend the duration of the next regular meeting. He sought members'

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views on the arrangements for the next regular meeting.

6. Ms Cyd HO was of the view that it was not practicable for the Panel to cover all the proposed discussion items at one regular meeting. She proposed to hold an additional meeting to discuss item 3(a) above and "Self-financing post-secondary education". She was particularly concerned about over-enrolment for self-financing degree and sub-degree programmes and the need to safeguard students' interests. Dr Kenneth CHAN agreed with Dr CHEUNG's suggestion. He said that the Panel should first examine the development of the self-financing post-secondary sector before proceeding to review the relevant legislation as proposed by the Administration.

7. Summing up, the Chairman confirmed that the Panel would discuss the following items at the next regular meeting –

- (a) Education (Amendment) Bill 2013; and
- (b) Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions.

8. The Chairman also advised that he would work out with the Deputy Chairman the timing for holding a special meeting for discussion of the following two items –

- (a) Self-financing post-secondary education; and
- (b) Review of Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320) and Post Secondary Colleges Regulations (Cap. 320A).

9. Members had no objection to the aforesaid meeting arrangements.

**IV. Extension of Examination Fee Remission Scheme for Needy Non-Chinese Speaking Students**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)111/12-13(03) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)111/12-13(04) -- Background brief entitled "Proposal to extend the Examination Fee Remission Scheme for

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needy non-Chinese  
speaking students"  
prepared by the LegCo  
Secretariat)

10. Members noted the background brief on the subject prepared by the Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(4)111/12-13(04)].

Briefing by the Administration

11. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the Administration's proposals set out in its discussion paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)111/12-13(03)] –

- (a) to enhance the coverage of the "subsidized examination fee" for non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") students at senior secondary level who participated in the International General Certificate of Secondary Education ("IGCSE") (Chinese) Examination, the General Certificate of Education ("GCE") Advanced Subsidiary ("AS")-Level (Chinese) Examination and GCE Advanced ("A")-Level (Chinese) Examination; and
- (b) to expand the ambit of the Examination Fee Remission Scheme ("EFRS") to cover the aforementioned three non-local Chinese Language examinations for needy NCS students.

US(Ed) said that subject to the Panel's comments, the Administration would submit the proposal on EFRS to the Finance Committee ("FC") for consideration on 30 November 2012, instead of 16 November 2012 as mentioned in the discussion paper.

Discussion

*Non-local Chinese examinations*

12. Mr TAM Yiu-chung expressed support for the proposed extension of EFRS and enquired whether the qualifications of these non-local Chinese Language examinations would be recognized by local universities when considering NCS students' applications for admission. He also sought information on the total number of candidates and the number of NCS students taking these non-local Chinese Language examinations.

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13. US(Ed) responded that the University Grants Committee ("UGC")-funded institutions required applicants under the Joint Universities Programmes Admissions System to attain a Level 3 in the Chinese Language subject in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination. The UGC-funded institutions would also consider the results in the General Certificate of Secondary Education ("GCSE") (Chinese) Examination, IGCSE (Chinese) Examination, GCE AS-Level (Chinese) Examination or GCE A-Level (Chinese) Examination as an alternative qualification for admission. The minimum admission requirements differed among individual institutions and applicants were generally required to obtain at least grade E or above in these non-local Chinese examinations.

14. As regards the number of candidates/NCS students sitting for these examinations, Principal Assistant Secretary (Education Commission & Planning) ("PAS(EC&P)") advised that no more than 1 000 NCS students had sat for the GCSE (Chinese) Examination, IGCSE (Chinese) Examination, GCE AS-Level (Chinese) Examination and GCE A-Level (Chinese) Examination last year. However, information on the total number of local candidates taking these examinations was not available.

*Curriculum and assessment for Chinese Language subject*

15. Mr Albert HO was of the view that since both Chinese and English were the official languages in Hong Kong, Chinese Language should not be made a mandatory subject for NCS students. He considered this requirement unfair for NCS students, as NCS students from overseas were not required to take Chinese Language examinations when applying for admission to local universities. Mr HO said that as he understood, many NCS students were proficient in English and their mother-tongue language. He opined that NCS students should be given the option to choose either English or Chinese as the mandatory language subject, and either English, Chinese or their mother-tongue language as the second language.

16. Mr Abraham SHEK shared Mr Albert HO's views and considered the prevailing language policy unfair to NCS students. In this connection, he referred to the motion moved by him and amended by other Members which was passed in early 2012. Pursuant to the motion, the Government was urged to review the education policy for students of ethnic minorities ("EM"). Mr SHEK expressed support for the proposed extension of EFRS for needy NCS students.

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17. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung was of the view that the Administration should consider waiving the requirement on NCS students to attain specified results in Chinese Language examinations when applying for admission to local universities.

18. US(Ed) responded that the views raised by members on mandatory subjects would have implications on the admission policies of universities, which was a broader issue in addition to the provision of support to NCS students.

19. While expressing support for the proposed extension of EFRS, Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered it necessary to formulate a long-term plan on the learning of Chinese Language by NCS students. He said that according to a report published by the Equal Opportunities Commission in 2011, EM students accounted for 3.2% of the total student population at pre-primary level. The percentage of EM students at the upper secondary level dropped to about 1.1%, and fell to about 0.59% at the post-secondary level. Dr CHEUNG considered that as revealed from these statistics, it was very obvious that the low attainment by NCS students in Chinese Language had adversely affected their opportunity for receiving higher education. He also drew members' attention to the pledge of the Chief Executive ("CE") in his Manifesto for the CE Election to develop a curriculum and assessment criteria for "Chinese as a Second Language". Dr CHEUNG urged that a separate curriculum and assessment for "Chinese as a Second Language" should be developed as early as possible.

20. Dr Kenneth CHAN expressed support for the proposed extension of EFRS and its early implementation which would benefit NCS students. He noted that pursuant to the motion moved by Mr Abraham SHEK and passed earlier this year, one of the issues that the Government had been urged to address was the provision of an alternative Chinese curriculum and qualification. He enquired whether the Administration had any timetable to develop the curriculum as pledged in CE's Manifesto.

21. US(Ed) explained that NCS students had all along been encouraged to learn the Chinese language and study in local mainstream schools so as to facilitate their integration into the community. The Administration had been providing support to schools admitting NCS students through various measures, such as encouraging schools to organize after-school classes, adapting the Chinese Language curriculum, etc. A comprehensive review on the support measures provided to NCS students was being conducted. While the proposal for "Chinese as a Second Language" would also be looked into in the review, the Administration did not have a timetable on



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this issue at this stage. In reply to Dr CHAN, US(Ed) clarified that if the present proposal was approved by FC, the scope of EFRS would henceforth be extended.

22. Regarding the development of a curriculum for "Chinese as a Second Language", Mr Abraham SHEK considered it practicable for the Administration to make use of the Chinese curriculum and teaching materials used by international schools in order to facilitate NCS students to adapt to the mainstream education more easily. The Deputy Chairman considered it necessary for the Administration to provide a timetable to facilitate further discussion by the Panel. He enquired when the Administration would be ready to provide a more substantial response to the Panel.

23. In reply, US(Ed) said that the Administration aimed to report the outcome of the comprehensive review on the implementation of education support measures for NCS students to the Panel by mid-2013. Deputy Secretary for Education (2) ("DS(Ed)2") supplemented that in examining the issue of an alternative curriculum and assessment, i.e. "Chinese as a Second Language" in the comprehensive review, it should be noted that NCS students only accounted for about 3% of the total student population. Careful consideration must therefore be given to whether the future qualification obtained by this small number of students could be widely recognized for the purpose of employment and further studies.

*Education support measures to NCS students*

24. Ms Starry LEE said that she supported the proposed extension of EFRS, but was concerned that some NCS students had difficulties in learning Chinese because their parents were also weak in Chinese. She considered that the comprehensive review should also include measures to help parents of NCS students to be more conversant with Chinese. She also noted that some institutions admitting NCS students to their vocational training programmes had not made appropriate adaptation to the curriculum or teaching method to cater for the needs of NCS students. She enquired whether the Administration was aware of the situation and would look into it in the comprehensive review.

25. In response, US(Ed) said that the adequacy of existing support measures for parents of NCS students would also be considered in the review. PAS(EC&P) supplemented that the mode of support to NCS students was not restricted to adapting the curriculum and the Administration had not received any complaint about schools'

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implementation of adapted curriculum or other school-based support measures targeted at assisting NCS students.

26. Ms Claudia MO expressed support for the proposed extension of EFRS. She said that according to her understanding, the difficulty encountered by NCS students in learning Chinese was mainly caused by the pedagogy of teachers' using English to teach Chinese to NCS students. Ms MO was of the view that the Administration should take effective actions to recruit and equip teachers with the necessary skills and resources to teach Chinese to NCS students starting from the early years of primary education.

27. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung concurred that suitable assistance should be provided to NCS students for learning Chinese in primary and secondary schools so that those who could not get admitted to universities could stand a better chance of finding jobs. Regarding the support provided to schools, Mr LEUNG stressed the importance of resources and training for teachers.

28. In response, US(Ed) said that members' views would be taken into consideration in the review. He reiterated that the Administration would encourage NCS students to learn Chinese language and had all along provided schools admitting NCS students with appropriate support. A school-based approach would continue to be adopted in providing assistance to NCS students. Principal Assistant Secretary (Curriculum Development) supplemented that in 2008, the Administration had issued the Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for NCS students which aimed to cater for the needs of NCS students in mainstream education. In parallel, the Administration had been providing support services to schools to facilitate the learning of Chinese by NCS students.

29. Concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that the Panel supported the submission of the current proposal to FC for consideration.

**V. Proposed creation of one Chief Maintenance Surveyor (D1) post in the Education Bureau**

LC Paper No. CB(4)111/12-13(05) -- Paper provided by the Administration

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Briefing by the Administration

30. US(Ed) briefed members on the Administration's proposal to create a permanent Chief Maintenance Surveyor ("CMS") (D1) post in the Planning, Infrastructure and School Places Allocation Branch under the Education Bureau ("EDB") with effect from 1 April 2013 to oversee the School Premises Maintenance ("SPM") Section in carrying out school maintenance and renovation projects, as detailed in the Administration's paper. Subject to members' comments, the Administration would make a submission to the Establishment Subcommittee ("ESC") of FC on 5 December 2012.

*(Post-meeting note: The proposal was subsequently scheduled for discussion at ESC on 4 January 2013.)*

Discussion

31. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that he had no objection to the proposed creation of the CMS post to cope with the increasing school maintenance and renovation works. Whilst noting the scope of work of the SPM Section, he drew the Administration's attention to the aging conditions of some existing old school premises, in particular special schools catering for students with physical disabilities. Dr CHEUNG referred to two special schools, namely the Spastics Association of Hong Kong ("SAHK") Ko Fook Iu Memorial School and Chi Yun School, which were built decades ago and in urgent need of improvement works. He asked whether improvement works for such schools could be expedited as a result of the creation of the proposed CMS post.

32. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that according to his observation, the Administration was generally inclined to create posts at a higher rank on the ground that there was insufficient expertise at the immediately lower rank to handle the work concerned owing to its complexity and volume. Mr LEUNG shared Dr CHEUNG's concern and stressed the urgent need to speed up the improvement project for the SAHK Ko Fook Iu Memorial School as the provision of barrier free access and related facilities was essential to students with physical disabilities.

33. In reply, US(Ed) said that he would need to check the relevant information regarding the two special schools referred to by members. While he would not comment on a particular case, he highlighted that the main objective of creating the new CMS post was to cope with the increasing day-to-day school maintenance and renovation works for

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non-estate aided schools located outside the boundary of public housing estates. The specific needs of individual special schools to cater for their students might need to be dealt with separately. In this connection, the Chairman requested the Administration to take note of members' concerns and if necessary, to revert to members in respect of the follow-up action on individual cases.

34. DS(Ed)2 supplemented that the present proposal was to strengthen professional supervision at the directorate level over the delivery of major repairs ("MR"), emergency repairs ("ER") and certain renovation projects to improve the teaching and learning environment of non-estate aided schools. Similar works in estate aided schools located within the boundary of public housing estates would usually involve the work of different government departments, including the Housing Department. She further advised that some cases might not merely involve MR/ER and renovation, but also the need for reprovisioning or relocation of school premises. The taking forward of such projects would likely be more complex as it would require the input and collaboration of different government departments.

35. Members raised no further questions on the proposed creation of the CMS post. Summing up, the Chairman concluded that the Panel supported the proposal.

**VI. Review on the implementation of the New Senior Secondary curriculum and assessment**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)111/12-13(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)111/12-13(02) -- Background brief entitled "Implementation of the new senior secondary curriculum and assessment" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat)

36. Members noted the background brief on the subject prepared by the Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(4)111/12-13(02)].

Briefing by the Administration

37. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the review of the implementation of the New Senior

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Secondary ("NSS") curriculum and assessment and highlighted the salient points in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)111/12-13(01)]. He said that recommendations for the short-term stage of the review were expected to be announced in early 2013 and implemented in 2013-2014 school year.

Discussion

*Objectives, scope and timetable of the review*

38. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che said that the paper provided by the Administration to the Panel had not clearly set out the objectives of the review, nor accounted for how the Administration would conduct the review. Referring to paragraphs 10 and 11 of the Administration's paper which were under the heading of "Objectives of the review", the Chairman did not consider that the objectives had been clearly stated to enable the public to gauge the success or otherwise of the NSS curriculum and assessment. Mr WONG Yuk-man disapproved of the Administration's paper and commented that it had merely sought to boast the achievements in the implementation of NSS and the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education ("HKDSE") Examination.

39. The Deputy Chairman considered that the objectives would be crucial to the review but as stated in paragraph 11 of the Administration's paper, the focus of the current stage of review was mainly on refinements. He enquired about the timetable for the subsequent stages of the review and whether the current stage could also take on board issues scheduled to be reviewed later. He took the view that the class size and teacher-to-class ratio under the New Academic Structure ("NAS") were pivotal to the implementation of NSS curriculum and should therefore be included in the current stage of the review. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung considered that a comprehensive review should be conducted with a view to preparing for the implementation of small class teaching in secondary schools.

40. In response, Deputy Secretary (Education)5 ("DS(Ed)5") advised that given the scale of the education reform, it took time for experiences to be consolidated. In the first stage of the review, the Administration would aim at addressing the more immediate and practical concerns that had emerged. It was expected that details about the subsequent stages of the review would be announced when the Administration published its report on the first stage of review. Director — Development and Educational Assessment, Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority ("DDEA/HKEAA") said that the review was being conducted in a

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pragmatic manner rather than boasting of any achievement.

41. Referring to the statistics given in paragraph 9 of the Administration's paper, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che questioned how the Administration had managed to collect the data in some two months' time from more than 50 000 Secondary Six ("S6") graduates. Given that this was the first review on the implementation of the NSS curriculum and that the outcomes of review would have an important bearing on schools, teachers, parents and students, Mr CHEUNG asked whether the Administration would consider engaging independent outside experts such as the universities to undertake a thorough review, instead of conducting the review in-house.

42. In response, SED advised that hundreds of school principals, teachers, university professors and other stakeholders from the community had been engaged to participate in the review of the system. He said that this stage of review had commenced in August 2012 and would continue up to February/March 2013. He also assured members that the whole process would be an in-depth review.

*Curriculum and assessment*

43. Dr Helena WONG declared that she taught Liberal Studies ("LS") courses at the university. She noted from secondary school teachers that after-school classes had to be held throughout the school year and even during weekends and the summer holidays. This was because the lesson time required for covering the curricular contents of different subjects was grossly insufficient. She urged the Administration to address this matter in the review. Dr WONG further said that as School-based Assessment ("SBA") was required for 12 subjects, this had resulted in a very heavy workload on teachers and exerted immense pressure on students. She called on the Administration to consider reducing the number of subjects that required SBA.

44. On the LS subject, Dr Helena WONG noted from paragraph 7 of the Administration's paper that the breadth and depth of contextual analysis and the application of knowledge and concepts on the part of students should be further strengthened. She expressed concern about the support provided to teachers for teaching LS, in particular the independent enquiry study ("IES") which required teachers to give individual attention to students in undertaking their respective studies. Although the purposes of LS were well-intended, Dr WONG was concerned that if secondary school teachers were not given sufficient support in teaching LS, students would

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not be able to acquire the proper research skills and a solid foundation of knowledge which were essential for university education.

45. Dr Kenneth CHAN said that the implementation of NSS curriculum had brought immense pressure to frontline teachers. He was concerned about the resources allocated for the implementation of NAS. He noted that the Administration had provided about \$500 million to schools for the implementation of the Moral and National Education subject which was not a mandatory subject. However, LS was a mandatory subject under the NSS curriculum, but a secondary school could only obtain a support grant of about \$100,000 upon application and after vetting by the Administration.

46. SED responded that under the current review, the Administration would look into the issue of resources allocation. DS(Ed)5 further advised that the most important issue to address in the review regarding the LS subject was to ascertain the depth and breadth of the curriculum. The Administration would assist and coordinate the sharing of experience among teachers to help consolidate their experience. It would further enrich the resources available on the Web-based Resource Platform for LS. DS(Ed)5 also noted that some schools had adopted small groups for the teaching of LS, and said that the Administration would continue to consider how best to strengthen the support to schools in teaching the LS subject.

47. Ms Starry LEE shared the concerns of other members on the pressure on teachers and students arising from the heavy workload under NAS and the LS subject. She noted that the class size of S6 under NAS was greater than that of a Form 6 class before the implementation of NAS. She requested that after completing its review, the Administration should provide the Panel with information on the difficulties encountered by teachers in teaching S6 under NAS, and the measures to address the problems identified.

48. Ms Cyd HO noted from the Administration's paper that about 69% of candidates had obtained level 2 or above in at least five subjects, including Chinese Language and English Language in the 2012 HKDSE Examination. Regarding the remaining 31% of candidates who had not achieved this level of performance, Ms HO questioned whether the Administration had taken any action to assist them. Noting from paragraph 9 of the Administration's paper that 81% of students were studying in degree and sub-degree courses locally, she considered that such a high percentage might well be attributable to over-enrolment by a

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number of post-secondary institutions. Ms HO was of the view that a thorough review of the NSS curriculum and assessment should include a critical review of the competence and proficiency of students in the core subjects and elective subjects of the NSS curriculum.

49. Ms Cyd HO noted from paragraph 23 of the Administration's paper that three pressing issues had been identified, namely the workload exerted on teachers and students by SBA, insufficiency of lesson time and teachers' concern about the depth and breadth of the curriculum of the subjects they were teaching. She stated that these issues had demonstrated the acute need to introduce small class teaching in secondary schools. She considered that the concerns could only be effectively addressed through small class teaching. Ms HO also took the opportunity to urge Permanent Secretary for Education ("PS(Ed)") to come forward and engage in discussion with the Panel and stakeholders.

50. In response, SED advised that having regard to the pressing issues identified by EDB and HKEAA and taking into consideration the depth and breadth of the curriculum of the NSS subjects, the Administration had taken steps to streamline SBA, reduced lesson time and deferred the examination dates so as to allow more time for teaching and learning. These arrangements aimed at relieving the workload on teachers and students. SED also clarified that PS(Ed) had not been able to attend the recent special meetings of the Panel due to prior commitment in another official activity which involved the participation of 70 higher education institutions from the Mainland.

51. Mr WONG Yuk-man criticized the Administration for only mentioning briefly the Business, Accounting and Financial Studies ("BAFS") subject in its paper. He said that according to his understanding, the rate of student withdrawal from this subject exceeded 25%. He also drew the attention of the Administration to the written views of the BAFS Concern Group.

52. In this connection, the Deputy Chairman said that BAFS was a new subject under the NSS curriculum, which had combined and replaced several different subjects in the past curriculum. While teachers and students had encountered great difficulties in teaching and learning this new subject, the support provided to schools in relation to the BAFS subject was relatively small. He considered it necessary for the Administration to review matters related to this subject in the current stage. In response, SED said that the Administration had noted the concerns of stakeholders regarding the breadth of the BAFS curriculum. In the review,



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consideration would be given to how the curricular contents of the subject should be suitably streamlined.

53. Mr MA Fung-kwok was concerned that the number of candidates taking the Visual Arts subject under the NSS curriculum had dropped significantly by some 30% to 40% compared to the number of candidates taking the same subject before the implementation of NAS. He stressed the importance of encouraging students to take Arts-related subjects so as to nurture talents for the development of the creative industry in Hong Kong.

54. In reply, DS(Ed)5 explained that under the NSS curriculum, there was a diversified range of elective subjects. Students could choose two to three elective subjects in addition to the four core subjects. The Other Learning Experiences ("OLE") acquired by students were reflected in the Student Learning Profile, which served as good reference for post-secondary institutions. Elements of visual arts were also found in the Creative Studies subjects under the category of Applied Learning courses. The actual number of students taking Visual Arts under NSS curriculum was higher than the number of students taking some other elective subjects. Nevertheless, the Administration would continue its effort to encourage students to study Arts-related subjects.

55. PS(Ed) supplemented that according to the statistics of HKEAA on the 2012 HKDSE Examination, over 4 500 candidates had sat for the Visual Arts examination, compared to about 240 candidates taking the Music examination. Although the number of students taking Visual Arts was lower than that taking other academic subjects such as Economics, Chinese History and Geography, the number was higher than or comparable to the number of students taking subjects such as Tourism and Hospitality Studies, Design and Applied Technology, and Health Management and Social Care.

56. Notwithstanding the Administration's explanation that the drop in the number of students taking Visual Arts was relative, Mr MA remarked that in 2004, more than 8 000 candidates had sat for the Visual Arts examination. PS(Ed) said that the Administration would provide more detailed statistics for members' reference after the meeting. However, she pointed out that the combinations of subjects under the NSS curriculum exceeded 1 000, which was far higher than that in the past.

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57. Mr Albert HO considered that although knowledge of history was included in LS, Chinese History was an important subject for students. He

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commented that Chinese Language had only focused on the "applied" aspect. In his view, Chinese Language should include more Chinese classics so as to enable students to have a better understanding of the culture and history of China. DS(Ed)5 replied that although Chinese History was not a core subject in the NSS curriculum, it was included as a mandatory subject in junior secondary curriculum. She said that the Administration had also enriched the elements of history and culture in the Chinese Language subject.

58. Mr Albert HO noted that after completion of junior secondary education, some students might not be interested in the senior secondary curriculum of grammar schools. He enquired whether opportunities would be available to these students to receive other forms of vocational or skill training so that they might realize their potentials. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung added that some students would opt for attending sub-degree courses or entering the workforce after completion of S6. In reply, SED advised that under the NSS curriculum, there were over 30 Applied Learning courses to cater for the diversified interests and abilities of students.

59. Ms Starry LEE asked whether parents could have access to information on individual secondary schools that had enabled students to achieve an enhanced level of performance. In reply, PS(Ed) advised that information on NSS subjects offered by schools was available to students and their parents for reference.

*Special education and students with special needs*

60. Dr Kenneth CHAN highlighted that according to a study conducted by Hong Kong Blind Union ("HKBU") and the Faculty of Education, University of Hong Kong ("HKU"), visually impaired students had encountered difficulties in OLE and SBA. The curriculum design had limited their participation and failed to cater for their special needs. He enquired how the Administration would assist students with special needs.

61. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that whilst he supported the implementation of NAS, he was very disappointed with the Administration's paper because the review did not seem to have covered issues related to special education and integrated education under NAS. He said that due to their relatively small operating scale, some special schools could only provide a limited choice of Applied Learning courses to their students. In some cases, students from one school had to go to another school in order to attend lessons for courses of their choice. The

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inconvenience caused by such an arrangement was undesirable. Dr CHEUNG further advised that according to the study conducted by HKBU and HKU mentioned by Dr Kenneth CHAN earlier on, about 55% of the visually impaired students had been refused to join physical development activities which were part of the requirements of OLE under the NSS curriculum. Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered that integrated education was an important aspect under NAS that should be critically reviewed because the differences in learning abilities among students and the class size were impediments to effective teaching and learning.

62. Regarding students with special needs, SED advised that HKEAA had made special arrangements to cater for these candidates, such as extending the time for examination and providing on-site assistance. PS(Ed) supplemented that based on the feedbacks gathered so far, EDB and HKEAA had identified some pressing issues to be addressed, which included learner diversity and students with special educational needs. To cater for students with special educational needs, the Administration would give due consideration to implementing support measures such as the use of assistive devices, allowing more time for SBA, and the possibility of partial or full exemption of SBA in the latter stages of the review. She said that the Administration would report the progress of the review to the Panel in due course.

*LS Examination*

63. Mr WONG Yuk-man recalled that at an earlier Panel meeting, he had raised concern about a "leading" question in the LS paper of the 2012 HKDSE Examination. He was dissatisfied with the information provided by the Administration in its paper, in particular the statement that stringent guidelines and procedures in addition to an internal quality assurance mechanism were in place to ensure the quality and neutrality of the examination questions. He considered that the Administration had not adequately addressed issues over which there was grave public concern.

64. Regarding the 2012 HKDSE LS examination paper, DDEA/HKEAA advised that according to the findings of HKEAA, students' performance in answering the question concerned was not bad. He added that the marking scheme of the LS examination paper did not contain any reference to political stance. Candidates were free to express their views in answering the questions.

65. Mr Albert HO noted that under standards-referenced reporting ("SRR"), there was no "fail" grade. He was concerned that this might

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deprive teachers of a benchmark according to which they might adjust their teaching to cater for the needs of under-performing students. In response, DDEA/HKEAA confirmed that HKEAA had provided clear description and samples of students' work that corresponded to different levels of performance for reference by teachers and students. HKEAA had also posted on its website samples of the 2012 HKDSE marked examination scripts of the 24 NSS subjects.

*Shortfall in post-secondary school places*

66. Dr Kenneth CHAN said that on one hand, there were some 15 150 publicly-funded first-year-first-degree places for students taking the 2012 HKDSE Examination. On the other hand, more than 10 000 students failed to get admitted although their HKDSE examination results could fulfil the general entrance requirements for local undergraduate university programmes. Dr CHAN drew the Administration's attention to the frustration experienced by these students under NAS, and enquired on the assistance, if any, provided to them in furthering their studies.

67. Ms Starry LEE and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung shared similar views. Ms LEE requested the Administration to report to the Panel on how it would tackle the insufficiency of undergraduate places for S6 graduates.

68. In response, SED advised that more than 70 000 candidates had sat for the 2012 HKDSE Examination. About 38% of them had attained results that could fulfil the general requirements for consideration of admission to local undergraduate programmes. SED pointed out that in addition to some 15 150 publicly-funded undergraduate places, students could consider other pathways such as local private universities, higher education institutions in the Mainland and Taiwan.

69. PS(Ed) explained that in the past, the norm referencing reporting method of the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination had graded the performance of students to the effect that it was primarily a tool for screening. The implementation of the HKDSE Examination and its SRR system introduced a paradigm shift in the assessment of students' performance. Henceforth, students' performance would be measured against a set of prescribed standards rather than their relative ability among candidates taking part in the same public examination. Certification was therefore also an important function of the HKDSE Examination. If the quality of education was enhanced under NAS, the number of candidates who could meet the general entrance requirement for local undergraduate programmes, i.e. levels "3-3-2-2" for the four core subjects, could increase

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as a consequence. PS(Ed) further advised that in this double cohort year, there were some 100 000 students who had completed their senior secondary education. Of the 75 000 places offered under locally accredited post-secondary programmes, about 38 000 places were for first-year-first-degree programmes. Among them, about 30 300 places were publicly funded while the other 7 700 were self-financed. In addition, about 7% of the students pursued further studies outside Hong Kong.

**VII. Measures to address issues arising from the drop in secondary student population – Follow-up to special meetings on 2 and 3 November 2012**

(LC Paper No.  
CB(4)128/12-13(01)

-- Letter dated 7 November 2012  
from Hon IP Kin-yuen to the  
Chairman of Panel on Education)

70. The Chairman referred members to the proposed motion set out in the first part of the letter from the Deputy Chairman dated 7 November 2012 which had been issued to members earlier vide LC Paper No. CB(4)128/12-13(01). As the Deputy Chairman's letter comprised two parts, namely a motion and a proposal to appoint a subcommittee under the Panel, the Chairman reminded members that the Panel would deal with the motion first.

71. The Chairman drew members' attention to Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure which provided that a Member shall 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. He reminded members to declare interests, if any, in the matter under discussion.

72. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman moved and spoke on his motion (at **Annex 1**). He said that the decline in Secondary One ("S1") student population should not be treated simply as a transitional issue in the next few years. The accumulated decrease in the number of secondary school students at different levels would reach 35 000. Although the children born in Hong Kong to parents who were not permanent residents of Hong Kong might pursue secondary education locally, the intake of these children could not be accurately gauged. As such, there would still be uncertainty and fluctuation in the number of secondary students enrolling in local secondary schools in the next few years or so. At the recent special meetings held on 2 and 3 November 2012,

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the foremost concern of the majority of deputations was stabilization of the secondary education sector and improvement in the quality of education. To this end, forward planning and vision were both important in devising an effective policy on education. He called on members to support his motion.

73. Ms Starry LEE proposed to amend the Deputy Chairman's motion. Her proposed amendments set out in writing (at **Annex 2**) and seconded by Mr Paul TSE were tabled at the meeting.

74. Speaking on her proposed amendments, Ms Starry LEE said that the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong agreed with the need to stabilize the secondary education sector and was opposed to using "school closure" as the means to cope with the transitional decline in S1 student population. However, she took the view that the reduction in class size should take place in a progressive manner, instead of an immediate and across-the-board reduction as proposed in the original motion. She also urged the Government to consider the proposal for a mechanism which would allow the upward and downward adjustment to the number of students allocated to each S1 class, which was the option supported by educational bodies including the Joint Committee of Hong Kong Secondary School Councils and Secondary School Principals' Association of 18 Districts. She also considered it necessary to reduce the number of teaching sessions of teachers and encourage teachers to participate in on-the-job training.

75. The Chairman directed that there would be a joint debate on the motion moved by the Deputy Chairman and the amendments proposed by Ms Starry LEE to the motion.

76. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed support for the Deputy Chairman's motion. He was not convinced of the amendments proposed by Ms LEE as he considered it necessary to include specific targets to be achieved by the Administration as stated in the original motion. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung shared a similar view. He was of the view that the specific targets in the original motion were justifiable as the accumulated decrease in the number of secondary school students would reach 35 000. He considered that under existing circumstances, it might not be realistic to release teachers to attend on-the-job training, as this would mean that their workload would be absorbed by other teachers not on training.

77. Dr Kenneth CHAN said that the Civic Party was supportive of the Deputy Chairman's motion. He considered that the motion should be supported by the Panel so as to demonstrate that the Legislative Council

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would stand by the education sector in pursuit of a better education system.

78. Dr Helena WONG declared that she was working in the education sector and that she was the Secretary of the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union. She was of the view that the Deputy Chairman's motion was targeted at addressing the urgent need of the sector and she would therefore support his motion. She did not subscribe to the amendments proposed by Ms LEE as they did not contain specific targets that the Administration should strive to achieve.

79. Ms Cyd HO said that she supported the Deputy Chairman's motion because she advocated small class teaching. However, she considered that the issues included in Ms Starry LEE's proposed amendments could be discussed by the subcommittee proposed to be formed under the Panel. She also expected that PS(Ed) would attend the meetings of the subcommittee, if formed.

80. Mr TAM Yiu-chung expressed support for Ms LEE's amendments. He explained that while it was necessary to address the concerns raised by school principals at the special meetings of the Panel, it was also important that the views and concerns of parents should be taken into consideration. As a proper balance should be struck between the interests of different stakeholders, it might not be appropriate to adopt any across-the-board measure without due regard to the circumstances of individual schools and districts. Ms LEE's amendments to the motion would allow flexibility instead of imposing fixed targets.

81. Mr IP Kwok-him declared that he was the deputy chairman of a school sponsoring body that operated a Direct Subsidy Scheme school. He said that the targets specified in the Deputy Chairman's motion were not the conclusion drawn from a thorough study, nor the consensus reached among stakeholders. He would therefore support the amendments proposed by Ms LEE instead of the original motion.

82. The Chairman announced that he would extend the meeting to 6:45 pm to allow time for the discussion.

83. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman thanked Ms LEE for proposing the amendments and other members for expressing their views. He stressed the importance of specifying the targets to be achieved, and pointed out that the proposed reduction in the number of teaching sessions for teachers was enshrined in his motion as he had urged for the reduction in the class-to-teacher ratio. He added that training for

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teachers was not the focus of his motion but might be considered in the context of the professional development of teachers.

84. At the invitation of the Chairman, SED advised that the drop of S1 student population in the next few years was a short-term problem. Therefore, when considering the options to tackle the situation, the Administration had introduced timely and targeted relief measures instead of long-term structural changes. To address the education sector's concern on possible closure of secondary schools as a result of the drop in S1 student population, he reiterated that the various measures implemented by the Administration could achieve the overall objectives of retaining existing secondary schools and sustaining the stability of the teaching force.

85. SED explained that as he had announced last Friday, the retention of surplus teachers would be extended from the prevailing one year to three years in order that no teacher holding a permanent post would be laid off as a result of the drop of the S1 student population. Regarding the proposed reduction in the number of students allocated to each S1 class, SED assured members that the Administration was in the course of holding intensive discussions with different stakeholders including school principals with a view to reaching a consensus as soon as possible.

86. In this regard, PS(Ed) recalled that as early as 2003 when she was Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower, it was reckoned that the drop in Primary One student population would eventually result in the decline in S1 student population. The Administration had engaged the education sector in considering ways to tackle the matter. At that time, no consensus could be reached because the circumstances varied considerably among different school districts. With regard to Ms Cyd HO's remarks earlier on about her non-attendance at recent meetings of the Panel, PS(Ed) explained that as the Permanent Secretary of EDB which also assumed the functions of a government department, she needed to attend a number of meetings each day. She was unable to attend the recent special meetings of the Panel due to prior official engagement, of which SED was fully aware.

87. The Chairman put to vote the amendments proposed by Ms Starry LEE to the Deputy Chairman's motion. Ms LEE claimed a division and Mr IP Kwok-him requested that the division bell be rung to summon members to the meeting.

88. The following members voted for the amendments proposed to the motion:



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Mr Paul TSE, Mr IP Kwok-him, Ms Starry LEE, Mr Christopher CHUNG and Mr TAM Yiu-chung.  
(5 members)

89. The following members voted against the proposed amendments:

Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, Dr Helena WONG, Mr Albert HO, Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che, Ms Cyd HO, Mr Charles MOK, Dr Kenneth CHAN and Mr IP Kin-yuen.  
(9 members)

90. The Chairman declared that the amendments proposed by Ms Starry LEE to the motion were negatived.

91. The Deputy Chairman's original motion was then put to vote. Nine members voted for and four members voted against the motion. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

*(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response to the motion was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)229/12-13(01) on 10 December 2012.)*

92. Owing to time constraint, the Chairman said that the proposal to appoint a subcommittee under the Panel as set out in the second part of the Deputy Chairman's letter would be dealt with at the next meeting. Members agreed.

**VIII. Any other business**

93. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:45pm.

**Motion moved by Hon IP Kin-yuen**

未來 4 年，全港中學各級累減 3.5 萬名學生，本事務委員會促請政府：(1)為了穩定中學制度，並回應教育界的建議，即時減少中學每班學生人數至 30 人，當中照顧弱勢學生的學校立即減至 25 人；長遠而言，應逐步推動全港中學 25 人的小班教學，優化學校環境；(2)為了提升教育質素，應增加常額教席，改善師生及班師比例，以加強照顧學生的學習差異，優化教學條件。

(Translation)

That, given that the accumulated decrease in the number of secondary school students at different levels in Hong Kong will reach 35 000 in the coming four years, this Panel urges the Government: (1) for the purpose of stabilizing the secondary school system and responding to the proposals of the education sector, to immediately reduce the class size of secondary schools to 30 students, and to immediately reduce the class size of the schools catering for disadvantaged students to 25 students; and in the long term, to implement progressively small class teaching with a class size of 25 students in secondary schools across the territory so as to improve the school environment; (2) for the purpose of improving the quality of education, to increase the number of permanent teaching posts and to improve both the teacher-to-student ratio and the class-to-teacher ratio, so as to better cater for learner diversity and enhance teaching conditions.

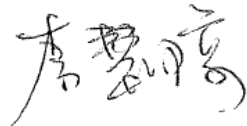
**Hon Starry LEE's proposed amendments  
to Hon IP Kin-yuen's motion**

**修訂葉建源議案措辭**

未來 4 年，全港中學各級累減 3.5 萬名學生，本事務委員會促請政府：

(1) 爲了穩定中學制度，並回應教育界的建議，即時逐步減少中學每班學生人數至~~30~~人，當中特別是照顧弱勢學生的學校立即減至~~25~~人；並積極考慮香港中學議會及十八區中學校長會聯席會議等教育團體的意見，制訂『可加可減』的升中派位機制，適度調整各區派位學生人數；放寬批核中一開班人數準則；長遠而言，應逐步推動全港中學~~25~~人的小班教學，優化學校環境；(2) 爲了提升教育質素，應增加常額教席，刪減教師上課節數，鼓勵教師帶薪進修，改善師生及班師比例，以加強照顧學生的學習差異，優化教學條件。

倡議者：



和議者：

