

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(4)918/12-13  
(The minutes have been seen by the  
Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

**Panel on Education**

**Minutes of meeting**  
**held on Wednesday, 17 April 2013, at 8:30 am**  
**in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** :
- Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, SBS, JP (Chairman)
  - Hon IP Kin-yuen (Deputy Chairman)
  - 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 Cyd HO Sau-lan
  - Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
  - Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, JP
  - Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
  - Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
  - Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP
  - Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
  - 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 Albert HO Chun-yan
  - Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
  - Hon WONG Yuk-man

**Public Officers attending** : Agenda item III

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP  
Secretary for Education

Ms Jessie WONG  
Deputy Secretary for Education (2)

Mrs Michelle WONG  
Deputy Secretary for Education (4)

Agenda item IV

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP  
Secretary for Education

Ms Jessie WONG  
Deputy Secretary for Education (2)

Ms Wendy CHUNG  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Infrastructure and  
Research Support)

Mr YIP Hak-kwong  
Director, Policy 21 Limited

Agenda items V and VI

Mr Kevin YEUNG  
Under Secretary for Education

Ms Wendy CHUNG  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Infrastructure  
and Research Support)

**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

---

Action

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

(LC Paper No. CB(4)558/12-13(01) -- Letter dated 21 March 2013 from Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN concerning selection of Presidents of local universities

LC Paper No. CB(4)558/12-13(02) -- Administration's written response to letter dated 21 March 2013 from Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN concerning selection of Presidents of local universities

LC Paper No. CB(4)560/12-13(01) -- Referral from the Public Complaints Office of the Legislative Council Secretariat regarding School-based After-School Learning and Support Programmes  
(*Restricted to members only*)

Members noted the above paper issued since the last meeting.

**II. Items for discussion at the next meeting**

(Appendix I to LC Paper No. CB(4)555/12-13 -- List of outstanding items for discussion

Appendix II to LC Paper No. CB(4)555/12-13 -- List of follow-up actions)

Action

2. The Chairman informed members that the Administration had proposed to discuss two items at the next regular meeting scheduled for 13 May 2013, namely review of the New Senior Secondary ("NSS") curriculum and assessment, and the Start-up Loan Scheme. The Chairman said that after discussion with the Deputy Chairman, an additional item on "the teacher-to-class ratio in secondary schools" would be included on the agenda of the next meeting as the subject was also related to the implementation of the NSS curriculum.

3. Dr Kenneth CHAN declared that he was a teaching staff at a university. He referred members to two of the papers listed under agenda item I which were his letter stating his concerns about the selection procedures of presidents of local universities and the Administration's response thereto. He suggested the Panel to discuss the selection mechanism for presidents of local universities. The Chairman said that he and the Deputy Chairman would consider the matter.

4. Before proceeding to the discussion items, 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.

**III. Measures to address issues arising from the drop in secondary student population – Follow-up to meetings on 2, 3 and 12 November 2012**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)229/12-13(01) -- Administration's responses to the motion passed by the Panel at the meeting on 12 November 2012

LC Paper No. CB(4)247/12-13(01) -- Administration's responses to the issues arising from special meetings on 2 and 3 November 2012

LC Paper No. CB(4)290/12-13(01) -- Administration's further information on its responses to the issues arising from special meetings on 2 and 3

Action

November 2012

- LC Paper No. CB(4)314/12-13(02) -- Letter dated 13 January 2013 from Hon IP Kin-yuen to the Chairman of Panel on Education
- LC Paper No. CB(4)314/12-13(03) -- Paper on measures to address issues arising from the drop in secondary student population dated 13 January 2013 prepared by Hon IP Kin-yuen
- LC Paper No. CB(4)392/12-13(01) -- Administration's responses to Hon IP Kin-yuen's paper dated 13 January 2013)

Discussion

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman recalled that the Panel had held several meetings in November 2012 to discuss the subject matter and receive deputations' views. The Panel also passed a motion on 12 November 2012 urging the Administration to, amongst others, immediately reduce the class size of secondary schools to 30 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. Afterwards, the Administration had brought up an entirely different proposal for discussion with the school principals without prior consultation with the Panel, nor any subsequent report to the Panel. In this connection, the Deputy Chairman read out the wording of the motion tabled at the meeting which he intended to move under this agenda item.

6. Secretary for Education ("SED") advised that all along, the Education Bureau ("EDB") had maintained dialogue with stakeholders including schools and parents on measures to address the concern arising from the decline of secondary one ("S1") student population. In addition to listening to the views of deputations at the special meetings of the Panel on 2 and 3 November 2012, EDB had held over 20 meetings with stakeholders including professional groups and parents. SED said that it was important for the Administration to strike a balance between the needs of different stakeholders and come up with an option that was acceptable by the school sector and parents.

Action

7. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed his support for the Deputy Chairman's motion. Ms Starry LEE said that the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong ("DAB") would oppose the motion because it was not advisable to advocate for an immediate and across-the-board reduction in class size in the absence of any recognized standard on the optimal class size.

8. The Deputy Chairman referred to the wording of his currently proposed motion and said that no mention had been made of the class size. He invited Ms LEE and other members to re-consider supporting his motion.

*Allocation of S1 places*

9. The Deputy Chairman said that he had understood from school principals that if schools implemented the "2-1-1 option" in the allocation of S1 places, which meant the progressive reduction of S1 class size by two, one and one places in each of the coming three school years respectively, there would be a surplus of about 3 600 S1 places in the 2013-2014 school year. He expressed grave concern that the great number of untaken S1 places would eventually lead to "Band 3" students being allocated to "Band 2" or "Band 1" schools, resulting in a mismatch between the students and the schools and giving rise to adjustment problems. The Deputy Chairman asked the Government to provide more information on the implementation of the "2-1-1 option" and the latest estimate of surplus S1 places.

10. SED said that the decline in S1 student population was temporary and the number would rebound steadily in several years. Hence, the measures introduced by the Administration were not meant to implement structural changes to the current education system, but to provide timely relief which could also cater for the future upward adjustment of student population. The basket of relief measures would address the needs at the levels of schools, teachers and students. SED emphasized that the overall objectives of these measures were to preserve the stability and strengths of secondary schools and the teaching force.

11. Regarding the number of surplus S1 places, DS(Ed)2 advised that as the demand and supply of school places varied among districts, it was an established practice for EDB to arrange, in consultation with the Secondary School Places Allocation ("SSPA") Committee, allocation and transfer of places among the school nets in 18 districts. For example, if there were insufficient places for allocation in a particular school net, places would be borrowed from nearby school nets. The 3 600 surplus S1 places quoted was simply an update of the estimated overall supply and demand situation in November 2012 after taking into account the reduced number of S1 places

Action

available following the adoption of the "2-1-1" and "1-1-1" options by schools. DS(Ed)2 emphasized that the simple division of 3 600 S1 places by the number of students per class (i.e. 36) resulting in the packing of 100 classes in the 2013-2014 school year was a misconception. It should be also noted that as a result of the basket of measures introduced since the 2006-2007 school year and the reduction in the number of students to be allocated per S1 class for most schools, the estimated number of classes to be packed in the 2013-2014 school year should be smaller.

12. Ms Starry LEE expressed reservation on the across-the-board reduction in the number of S1 places because some parents were concerned that the chance of their children being admitted to the schools of their preference, i.e. the first three choices, would be reduced. She sought EDB's explanation on how the parents' concerns in this regard could be addressed.

13. In response, Deputy Secretary for Education(4) ("DS(Ed)4") said that EDB had held a series of meetings with parents. To address the concerns of parents, flexibility was allowed for certain categories of secondary schools, including through-train schools, feeder and nominated schools that met the specified criteria, to be exempted from the phased reduction in S1 places. Regarding the extent of reduction, flexibility was also allowed for schools to reduce two or one places per class in the 2013-2014 school year taking into account the circumstances of the school and the district so as to cater for the concerns of schools and the choices of parents.

14. SED assured members that their views were well noted, and that the Administration had always been striving to work out an option that would be acceptable by and large to all different stakeholders.

15. The Deputy Chairman queried SED's remarks on the anticipated rebound of the student population in three years' time, as according to his understanding, there was no significant increase in the number of primary three students in the current school year (i.e. 2012-2013).

16. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che noted that members' concerns about the upward/downward trend of the student population and the provision of school places had arisen from the absence of relevant official statistics. To achieve more meaningful discussion, Mr CHEUNG opined that the Administration should disclose more information and statistics to the Panel. He further requested EDB to provide the following information:

- (a) a breakdown of the number of children born in Hong Kong from 2000 to 2012;

Action

- (b) a breakdown of the number of students in primary schools by class level and by district for the 2012-2013 school year; and
- (c) a breakdown of the projected number of students in primary schools and secondary schools by class level and by district for the next 10 school years.

*(Post-meeting note: The Administration's written response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)647/12-13(02) on 13 May 2013.)*

17. SED advised that the statistics on the number of students and school places were available. The crux of the matter, however, was the complexity of the allocation system which included the Discretionary Stage and Central Allocation Stage, coupled with parents' choices in these two stages and their decision after the release of the allocation results. In this connection, DS(Ed)2 said that the Census and Statics Department updated regularly the surveyed figures and projected figures of population based on which the projected student-age population was compiled. The allocation mechanism, which allowed parents' choice without restriction to districts and school nets, had made it difficult to accurately project the supply and demand of school places in individual districts. The number of "surplus" S1 places quoted by the Deputy Chairman earlier (i.e. 3 600) was a territory-wide rather than a district-specific figure on the estimated supply and demand situation.

18. Dr Kenneth CHAN remarked that as SED was a member of the Steering Committee on Population Policy ("SCPP"), he should bring up the issue of the declining S1 student population for discussion by SCPP. Dr CHAN asked whether SCPP would study the structural change of secondary student population and its implication on the education system. In reply, SED agreed to convey members' views to SCPP which would examine the population policy, the quality of the population and how to provide an environment conducive to nurturing talents for Hong Kong.

*Small class teaching*

19. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed his support for the implementation of small class teaching and urged for its implementation as soon as practicable.

20. Dr Kenneth CHAN remarked that SED had acknowledged the merits of teaching in small groups; but would not undertake to extend small class teaching to secondary schools. Dr CHAN said that Members of the Civic Party considered that small class teaching should be implemented.



Action

21. Mr MA Fung-kwok recalled that according to the Administration, the effectiveness of small class teaching in secondary schools had not yet been concluded. However, the Administration had also stated that reducing the size of each P1 class to 34 students would enhance teaching effectiveness. In this connection, Mr MA sought the Administration's view on the proposed measures, including reducing the class size, to enhance the quality of education.

22. Mr IP Kwok-him expressed his view that reducing the class size to a certain level (e.g. 25 students per class) might not necessarily be equivalent to small class teaching. It was also dogmatic to assert that a class comprising more than 25 students would not benefit from effective teaching and learning. He considered that since it was not uncommon for schools to sub-divide a class into smaller groups for certain elective subjects under the NSS curriculum, teaching in small groups was already being practised in schools. He said that further study was required before making a decision on the implementation of small class teaching. Mr Tommy CHEUNG also noted that although there was no official requirement of implementing small class teaching, many secondary schools had put in place the arrangement of teaching certain subjects in small groups.

23. SED shared some members' observation that currently, many secondary schools had in fact conducted teaching in groups on a need basis. Group discussion was also commonly practised at senior secondary levels. The arrangement of group teaching/discussion was conducive to more effective teaching and learning.

24. Dr Kenneth CHAN enquired whether EDB would adopt a different terminology of "small group teaching" and implement it accordingly. In response, SED said that small class teaching was a method of teaching rather than a prescribed number of students per class. Teaching methods varied among different subjects. For example, a class would be sub-divided into small groups in English language laboratory to enable more interactive communication, while discussion of topics under the Liberal Studies subject could be conducted without splitting the class into groups. Schools should have more flexibility in adopting the teaching method which best suited the prevailing circumstances.

25. Mr Tommy CHEUNG pointed out that parents might have different views towards small class teaching or reduction of class size. For example, parents whose children were attending secondary schools would support small class teaching as a better teaching/learning method for their children. However,

Action

parents whose children would take part in the S1 allocation might not support the reduction of class size or small class teaching because this would mean a reduced chance of gaining admission to the schools of their choices. Mr CHEUNG also sought information on the teacher-to-student ratios of other countries in Asia, such as Taiwan, Singapore, Korea, as compared to that of Hong Kong

26. In response, SED said that the teacher-to-student ratio in Hong Kong had been lowered from 1:18 in the 2005-2006 school year to 1:13.8 in the 2012-2013 school year, which was lower than those of other Asian countries except that of Japan.

*Measures to sustain existing secondary schools*

27. Ms Starry LEE and Dr Fernando CHEUNG sought the Administration's confirmation that no secondary school would be required to close down due to the decline of secondary student population. SED advised that it was not the Government's policy to close any secondary schools due to the drop in secondary student population.

28. Mr MA Fung-kyok considered that notwithstanding the stance as stated by SED, the Administration should not overlook the need to consider the cost-effective use of resources where the student enrolment of certain schools was very low. Mr IP Kwok-him shared similar concern that schools should cease operation if they could no longer perform their roles.

29. SED reiterated that to balance the needs and interests of different stakeholders, the Administration had adopted a flexible approach of district-/school-based adjustment to the number of students to be allocated per S1 class, underpinned by the principle of reverting to the prevailing S1 class size upon rebound of the S1 student population in the next few years. Subject to certain conditions, individual schools had opted for no reduction, the "2-1-1" or "1-1-1" option starting from the 2013-2014 school year.

30. Dr Priscilla LEUNG said that the Government should consider exploring more flexible options to address the decline of secondary student population. For example, those schools which had admitted very few students should be allowed to implement small class teaching while those well-performing schools should be allowed to maintain a class size of more than 30 students. Consideration should be given to allowing schools with unique and outstanding performance in certain non-academic disciplines to continue their operation despite the low intake of S1 students.

Action

31. Noting members' views, SED concurred with the need to provide flexibility, and highlighted that under the relaxed criterion for approving S1 classes and allowing schools to operate two classes for each level, schools could operate two S1 classes with an intake of only 26 students. Schools which had admitted students with special educational needs ("SEN") might therefore consider reducing their class size so that more attention could be given to these students.

*Measures to sustain the stability of the teaching force*

32. Ms Starry LEE was of the view that the Government should take the opportunity of the decline in secondary student population to proactively consider reducing the teaching sessions of teachers and encourage teachers to participate in on-the-job training. Mr IP Kwok-him shared similar view that the Government should seize the opportunity to relieve the teachers' workload. Mr IP concurred that the current 28 to 30 teaching sessions per week should be reduced so that teachers could have more time to prepare adequately for their lessons.

33. Mr Tommy CHEUNG commented that under prevailing circumstances, the strong call for implementation of small class teaching was primarily a means advocated by teachers' unions to safeguard jobs and retain surplus teachers. He also cast doubt on whether extending the retention period for surplus teachers was the most cost-effective use of public resources.

The motion

34. Concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that he would proceed to deal with the motion (at **Annex**) proposed by the Deputy Chairman, the wording of which were set out in his letter dated 16 April 2013 addressed to the Chairman which was tabled at the meeting. The Chairman also said that as the issues covered in the motion had been discussed at length during this and past meetings, he considered that no further debate on the motion would be necessary.

35. In response to the Chairman, SED reiterated that he and his colleagues were fully committed to implementing effective measures to address issues arising from the temporary decline in S1 student population.

36. The Chairman directed that members would proceed to take a vote. The Deputy Chairman claimed a division.

Action

37. Whilst agreeing with the Chairman that no further debate would be required, Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that he had found it very difficult to retrieve the wording of the motion moved by the Deputy Chairman as it was contained in a document of more than three pages. He considered that the Panel member moving a motion should state clearly the wording of the motion in writing, instead of expecting other members to retrieve the wording of the motion in a lengthy document which also set out the background and arguments relating to the subject matter of the motion.

38. In this regard, the Deputy Chairman pointed out that his motion had been stated in a two-page document tabled at the meeting. The relevant wording was printed in bold type in a different font to facilitate members' perusal. He had also read out his motion at the earlier part of the meeting.

39. Mr Tommy CHEUNG reiterated that according to his experience of discussing/dealing with motions moved at Panel meetings, it had been the usual practice for the member moving a motion to set out clearly the wording of the motion on a piece of paper to facilitate perusal, instead of embedding the wording of the motion in a lengthy document which also contained information on the background and reasoning. To facilitate members in dealing with motions in future, Mr CHEUNG urged the Chairman and other members to follow the established practice as referred to by him, and considered this a very reasonable request.

40. Mr MA Fung-kwok did not subscribe to the Chairman's view that the motion had been discussed, as the motion currently moved was different from the previous version. In response, the Chairman said that the wording of the currently proposed motion had only been slightly revised and was largely the same as the previous version provided by the Deputy Chairman in January 2013. The issues related to the motion had been discussed at this and past meetings although the motion per se had not been dealt with at past meetings due to various reasons. The Chairman advised that had Mr MA raised his concern before conclusion of the earlier discussion, he might be able to deal with it.

41. Mr MA Fung-kwok further said that he disagreed totally with the emotive expressions used in the motion. The Chairman remarked that any member who did not support a motion could exercise his right to vote against it.

42. The Chairman put the motion to vote. Of the members present, the following nine members voted for the motion:

Action

Mr IP Kin-yuen, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, Dr Helena WONG, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che, Ms Claudia MO, Dr Kenneth CHAN, Mr Charles MOK and Dr Fernando CHEUNG.

The following seven members voted against the motion:

Mr MA Fung-kwok, Ms Starry LEE, Dr Priscilla LEUNG, Mr TAM Yiu-chung, Mr IP Kwok-him, Mr Tommy CHEUNG and Mr Christopher CHUNG.

No member abstained. The Chairman declared that the motion was passed.

*(Post-meeting note: The Administration's written response to the motion was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)644/12-13(01) on 10 May 2013.)*

**IV. Provision of international school places and facilitation measures**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)555/12-13(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)555/12-13(02) -- Background brief entitled "Issues related to the provision of international school places" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat)

43. Members noted the background brief on the subject prepared by the Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(4)555/12-13(02)].

44. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the findings of the consultancy study on the provision of international school places at primary and secondary levels in Hong Kong, and the facilitation measures for supporting the development of international schools to meet the demand by highlighting the salient points in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)555/12-13(01)].

45. SED said that according to the findings of the consultancy study, it was projected that there would be a shortfall of 4 203 primary places in the 2016-2017 school year. The Government would implement a number of measures to facilitate the provision of more international school places. He further informed members that last week, three vacant school premises had

Action

been allocated to three operators for international school development. It was expected that these three international schools could provide 1 150 primary places and 210 secondary places by the 2016-2017 school year.

Discussion

*Provision of international school places*

46. The Deputy Chairman said that according to some consuls in Hong Kong whom he had met, their nationals had encountered considerable difficulties in securing international school places for their children in Hong Kong. Some of them had to wait for about two years for an international school place. Similar shortage however was not found in other places. Ms Starry LEE also indicated that she had received similar complaints from some overseas professionals.

47. Mr Tommy CHEUNG declared that he was a board member of a local school. He had been nominated by the Legislative Council to serve as a member of the English Schools Foundation ("ESF") and his children had studied in ESF schools. Mr CHEUNG said that Members of the Liberal Party had all along expressed its concern that without sufficient international school places, Hong Kong would be placed in a disadvantaged position when competing for overseas talents or investments.

48. In reply, SED advised that the consultancy study was the first step to examine the provision of international school places in Hong Kong in a more systematic and scientific manner. EDB had engaged various chambers of commerce in discussion and the communication would continue.

49. Mr Abraham SHEK and Mrs Regina IP welcomed the Administration's recent allocation of vacant school premises to three operators for international schools development, as well as the additional school places available in the coming few years. Mrs Regina IP was of the view that the Administration should take steps to address the needs of SEN students in international schools and to provide special school places for non-local students.

50. Mr Abraham SHEK remarked that some local students would prefer to study in international schools or pursue their senior secondary study overseas partly because they were unable to cope with the Liberal Studies ("LS") subject under the new senior secondary curriculum which was a mandatory subject for consideration of university admission. He considered that the Administration should conduct a review of the LS curriculum and assessment and critically re-examine whether it should remain a mandatory subject.

Action

51. Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that in the light of many parents' preference for non-local curricula, the Administration should actively consider the feasibility of allowing more local secondary schools to offer international (e.g. the International Baccalaureate ("IB") curriculum) and local curricula in parallel. This dual mode of operation could serve the purposes of satisfying the demand for non-local curriculum on the one hand, and alleviating the problem arising from the decline in secondary student population on the other.

52. Regarding the demand of local parents for international school places, Mr MA Fung-kwok and Mr Abraham SHEK shared Mr Tommy CHEUNG's view that local schools should be allowed to provide IB and local curricula in parallel. Mr MA considered that this approach could also enable local schools to serve children of local families which had emigrated overseas but returned to Hong Kong. The pressure on the Government to identify sites for international schools development could also be relieved. In this regard, SED pointed out that a number of local secondary schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme had been approved to provide non-local curriculum in addition to the local curriculum.

53. Dr Kenneth CHAN declared that his children were studying in ESF schools. He asked EDB to provide information on the Direct Subsidy Scheme schools offering IB and General Certificate of Secondary Education curricula, including their names and the respective numbers of students enrolled on these curricula.

*(Post-meeting note: The Administration's written response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)647/12-13(02) on 13 May 2013.)*

*Admission of local and non-local students to international schools*

54. The Deputy Chairman said that the primary role of international schools was to meet the educational needs of students of overseas families. He was of the view that the Administration should require newly established international schools to lower the proportion of local students admitted from 50% to 30% to enable the intake of more non-local students.

55. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung noted that the industrialization and commercialization of education in recent years had resulted in a number of anomalies. For example, there were insufficient post-secondary places for eligible students but tertiary institutions had admitted a large proportion of non-local students so as to boost their tuition fee income. For primary and secondary education, an increasing number of local students preferred to study

Action

in international schools. Mr LEUNG considered that since international schools were not meant to serve local students, he supported the lowering of the proportion local students admitted to these schools.

56. On account of the strong demand for international school places from local parents, Ms Starry LEE had reservation on the suggestion to lower the cap on the proportion of local students which an international school could admit. She considered it necessary for the Administration to critically look into the reasons for local parents' preference to send their children to international schools at high school fees, rather than receiving free education in local schools.

57. Mr MA Fung-kwok considered that having regard to the function and role of international schools, priority should be given to children of overseas families, and a cap on the proportion of the local students admitted was necessary for both existing and new international schools. Mr Abraham SHEK however did not fully agree with Mr MA. He considered that children of local families which had emigrated but returned to Hong Kong should not be given a lower priority for international school places, and should have the options of local mainstream schools or international schools.

58. In this connection, SED said that it was difficult to have a clear-cut definition of "local" or "non-local" students, given that some of them were permanent residents of Hong Kong but were holders of foreign passports or of foreign nationalities.

*Financial aspects of the provision of international school places*

59. Dr Kenneth CHAN remarked that the high level of tuition fees of international schools had become unaffordable for middle-class overseas families living in Hong Kong. He considered that provision of affordable international school places was important for Hong Kong as a metropolitan city. The Deputy Chairman shared similar concern and said that the tuition fees charged by international schools should be subject to a cap.

60. Ms Starry LEE noted with concern that some international schools had used high tuition fees or issued debentures as a means to screen-in students. She considered that as the Government had provided greenfield sites or vacant school premises for the development and expansion of international schools, it should be entitled to play a more active role in regulating the tuition fees or issuance of debentures by international schools.



Action

61. Dr Fernando CHEUNG declared that his daughter was studying in an ESF school and his elder son was an alumnus of an ESF school. Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung expressed grave concern about the Government's granting land at nominal premium and provision of interest-free loans to the operators of international schools which eventually made huge profits from their high tuition fees. Dr CHEUNG remarked that some international schools had become increasingly tilted in favour of affluent families only. The high tuition fees had rendered such schools unaffordable to middle-class overseas families. Dr CHEUNG was of the view that the Administration should consider whether different categories of international schools should be provided to cater for the needs of families of different financial means. Mr Abraham SHEK was of the view that international schools should also offer places for students of ethnic minorities who could not adapt to mainstream local schools.

62. Referring to an oral question raised by him at a Council meeting several months ago, Mr Tommy CHEUNG reiterated his concern about the existing arrangement under which children whose parents had subscribed for the debentures issued by ESF would be given priority placement in an ESF school.

63. Mrs Regina IP shared her concern that some international schools had become increasingly tilted in favour of the affluent and was geared to profit-making. Even young overseas professionals could not afford the subscription of debentures issued by the international schools. She considered that the Government should step up its regulation of the international schools sector. Given the public concern about the operation and level of tuition fees of Harrow International School Hong Kong ("HIS"), Mrs Regina IP requested EDB to provide the number and nationalities of students admitted by HIS for the school year 2012-2013, its levels of tuition fees and financing arrangements (if any, such as issuance of debentures).

64. DS(Ed)2 said that HIS was one of the operators to which greenfield sites had been allocated in 2009. Under the prevailing policy, greenfield sites would be allocated to non-profit-making organizations only. While the level of tuition fees was one of the factors for consideration when vetting applications for vacant premises or greenfield sites, DS(Ed)2 said that other factors such as the quality of education provided, experience and background of the operators, the curricula/services to be offered and the financial position of the operators in supporting the construction projects were also important considerations. The Administration would provide the information requested by Mrs IP after the meeting.

Action

(*Post-meeting note*: The Administration's written response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)647/12-13(02) on 13 May 2013.)

*Release of full report of the consultancy study*

65. Dr Kenneth CHAN considered that the paper provided by the Administration was no more than a brief summary of the findings of the consultancy report. He considered it necessary for the Administration to make available the report of the consultancy study in full for the Panel's reference. Where necessary, he would have no objection if certain information of a confidential or proprietary nature in the report was obliterated. Dr CHAN said that the Panel might re-visit the matter after perusal of the full report. Mr MA Fung-kiwok and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung expressed support for the release of the full version of the consultancy study report.

66. In response, DS(Ed)2 said that Administration's paper aimed to provide for Panel members' reference a summary of the major findings of the study report and the measures proposed by the Administration in response to the findings. EDB would follow up with the consultant to ascertain whether certain information had to be redacted before releasing the full version of the report to the Panel in the next few months.

Admin

**V. A 30-classroom primary school at Site 1A-3, Kai Tak Development, Kowloon**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)555/12-13(03) — Paper provided by the Administration)

**VI. A 30-classroom primary school at Site 1A-4, Kai Tak Development, Kowloon**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)555/12-13(04) — Paper provided by the Administration)

67. The Chairman suggested and the meeting agreed that discussion on items V and VI be combined.

Briefing by the Administration

68. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the proposed construction of two primary

Action

school premises in Kai Tak Development ("KTD") in Kowloon City ("KC") District for the reprovisioning of three schools, i.e. S.K.H. Yat Sau Primary School ("Yat Sau School"), S.K.H. Ching Shan Primary School ("Ching Shan School") and Po Leung Kuk Stanley Ho Sau Nan Primary School ("Ho Sau Nan School") currently accommodated in sub-standard premises in Wong Tai Sin ("WTS") District, as set out in the Administration's papers [LC Paper Nos. CB(4)555/12-13(03) and (04)]. Subject to members' views, the Administration planned to submit the proposal to the Public Works Subcommittee for endorsement on 22 May 2013, and to the Finance Committee ("FC") for approval on 14 June 2013. Members noted that upon funding approval, construction works would commence in the fourth quarter of 2013 for completion in the third quarter of 2015.

Discussion

*Time-frame for completion of the projects*

69. Dr Fernando CHEUNG stressed the need to complete the projects on schedule to dovetail with the housing developments in KTD. He cautioned that any delay would adversely affect the admission of students and operation of the schools concerned, as well as the teachers, students and parents. Noting that the Administration had consulted the Panel on its review of the School Building Programme as early as October 2005, Dr CHEUNG urged the Administration to critically review its efficiency in the planning and implementation of school reprovisioning and redevelopment projects, and take active steps to expedite such projects.

70. In response, US(Ed) reiterated that upon approval by FC, construction works of the projects would commence in the fourth quarter of 2013 for completion in the third quarter of 2015. He took note of Dr CHEUNG's concern, and said that whilst the circumstances of individual projects varied, the Administration would examine whether any processes could be sped up or streamlined with a view to shortening the time required to implement school reprovisioning and redevelopment projects.

71. The Deputy Chairman expressed support for the proposals. He was keen to ensure that the constructions works would be completed in the third quarter of 2015 as scheduled to tie in with the commencement of the new school term in 2015. On the Deputy Chairman's concern about the possibility of delay, Principal Assistant Secretary (Infrastructure and Research Support) ("PAS(IRS)") advised that the reprovisioning projects should be managed by the Architectural Services Department ("ASD"). While there might be external factors such as weather conditions and the progress of works carried

Action

out by the contractors, serious slippage was not envisaged as the projects would be under close monitoring by ASD.

*Supply and demand of primary school places in the districts concerned*

72. Ms Cyd HO noted that Yat Sau School and Ching Shan School currently located in WTS District would be reprovisioned and accommodated in new primary school premises in KTD in KC District. She enquired about the implications, if any, of the reprovisioning arrangements on the schools concerned, such as school closure or redundancy of teachers. Ms HO was also concerned about the inadequacy of primary school places in WTS District following the reprovisioning of the schools to KTD, and the transportation needs of students in WTS District to attend schools in KC District. The Deputy Chairman remarked that after the reprovisioning, the number of primary school places in WTS District would drop. However, there was no corresponding decrease in the number of secondary school places in the district. He sought information on the planning with regard to the supply and demand of primary and secondary school places in WTS and KC Districts.

73. US(Ed) advised that currently, Yat Sau School operated 11 classes while Ching Shan School operated seven classes. The new school could accommodate 30 classes. Hence, no question of school closure would arise from the reprovisioning. The reprovisioning of the three schools from WTS District to KC District would not have any adverse impact on the primary school places available in WTS District because at present, there was a slight surplus in the supply of primary school places in the district. US(Ed) further informed members that more secondary schools would be provided in KTD in view of the large-scale housing projects there, including a proposal to reprovision a secondary school in WTS District to KTD. The Administration would consult members on the proposal in due course. On the need for primary students to cross district, US(Ed) said that parents had already been informed of the reprovisioning of the three schools to KTD starting from the 2011 exercise of the Primary One Admission System. Parents should have taken into account any transportation needs when applying for these schools for their children. He added that despite the change in district, the new school premises were not very far away from their existing locations.

*Proposed use of the sites vacated by the schools*

74. Ms Cyd HO sought information on the future use of the existing sites after the reprovisioning of the three primary schools. She considered that although the current premises could not meet the prevailing requirements for public-sector primary school, consideration might be given to making use of

Action

the sites to accommodate special schools or sheltered workshops. The Deputy Chairman shared Ms HO's concern about the future use of the vacated sites. To safeguard the future development of education, he urged EDB to stand firm and not to give up readily these sites for other uses.

75. Noting the members' concerns, US(Ed) advised that the site areas currently occupied by the three schools were relatively small, with Ho Sau Nan School occupying an area of about 2 000 square metres while Yat Sau School and Ching Shan School each had an area of about 1 800 square metres. After the reprovisioning of the three schools to their new campus, EDB would consider re-using their vacant premises for school or other educational use having regard to the area, location and condition of the premises.

*District Cooling System at KTD*

76. Noting that in future, the three primary schools would be mandated to subscribe to the District Cooling System ("DCS") which was a large-scale centralized air-conditioning system set up by the Government in KTD, the Deputy Chairman enquired whether the anticipated rise in electricity and maintenance charges incurred by the schools would be borne by the Government. In response, US(Ed) said that all public developments in KTD would be served by DCS which was an environmental facility of high energy efficiency. In line with existing policy, where the use of air-conditioning by the school was deemed necessary by the Administration, the relevant electricity and maintenance charges incurred as a result would be subsidized in full by the Government.

77. Dr Kenneth CHAN sought further information on the payment of the DCS tariff and the Administration's confirmation on whether its subsidy would be subject to any upper limit.

78. In response, PAS(IRS) explained that the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department would oversee the operation of DCS in KTD. The Government would be responsible for the maintenance of the infrastructural facilities including the pipes supplying chilled water to the buildings. The tariff payable by the consumers comprised the Capacity Charge and the Consumption Charge. The former covered the capital cost of the DCS plant and the related operation and maintenance cost, while the latter was mainly the cost of electricity used to generate chilled water delivered to the consumer. PAS(IRS) said that the Administration had always adopted the principle of allowing schools the flexibility to keep their windows open for better ventilation so as to avoid using air-conditioning as far as practicable. Where it was not practicable to do so (e.g. for classroom facing roads and subject to

Action

traffic noises) and there was a proven need to install air-conditioners, the aforesaid Charges would be funded in full by the Government.

79. In reply to Ms Cyd HO, the Administration confirmed that the additional air-conditioning costs including the capital cost of the DCS plant incurred by the schools would not need to be offset from the grant/subsidy payable to the schools by the Government.

80. Summing up members' views, the Chairman concluded that the Panel supported the funding proposals in question.

**VII. Any other business**

81. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:30 am.

Council Business Division 4  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
22 July 2013

**Motion passed at the meeting on 17 April 2013**  
**在 2013 年 4 月 17 日會議上通過的議案**

**議案措辭**

本事務委員會對於教育局局長吳克儉先生於 2012 年 11 月 12 日在委員會通過一項議決之後，隨即提出另一個完全不同的方案，而事先既沒有向本委員會申明、解釋，或與本委員會商討，事後也沒有及時向本委員會交代及跟進報告，置本委員會通過的議案於不顧。本事務委員會對此表示極度不滿，認為問責局長在此事上沒有尊重本委員會的議案，漠視民意代表的意見，本委員會對此表示極度遺憾。

本委員會督促當局今後重視本委員會通過的議案和委員發表的意見；同時要求當局信守承諾，講得出，做得到，做好「保學校、保教師、保實力」的措施，穩定教師團隊，不裁員，不殺校。

(葉建源議員動議)

**Wording of the Motion**

(Translation)

That this Panel expresses strong dissatisfaction at the fact that the Secretary for Education, Mr Eddie NG, proposed another completely different option on 12 November 2012 immediately after the passage of a motion by this Panel without any prior exposition and explanation to or discussion with this Panel, nor has he given any subsequent account and follow-up report to this Panel in a timely manner, which showed that he was oblivious to the motion passed by this Panel; this Panel also expresses grave dismay at the disrespect shown by the accountable Director of Bureau for this Panel's motion on this matter and at his disregard for the views of the representatives of public opinion.

That this Panel urges the authorities to attach importance to the motions passed by this Panel and the views expressed by its members in future, and also requests the authorities to uphold their pledges and live up to their words by implementing properly the measures of "sustaining schools, retaining teachers and preserving strength", stabilizing the teaching force as well as not laying off staff and closing schools.

(Moved by Hon IP Kin-yuen)