

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(4)31/13-14  
(The minutes have been seen by the  
Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

**Panel on Education**

**Minutes of meeting**  
**held on Tuesday, 9 July 2013, at 10:00 am**  
**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 TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
  - Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, 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, SBS, JP
  - Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
  - Hon IP Kwok-him, 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 attending** :
- Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
  - Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
- Members absent** :
- Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
  - Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP

**Public Officers** : Agenda item II  
**attending**

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP  
Secretary for Education

Mrs Betty IP, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Education (3)

Miss Hera CHUM  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Special  
Education and Kindergarten Education)  
Education Bureau

Agenda item III

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP  
Secretary for Education

Ms Jessie WONG  
Deputy Secretary for Education (2)

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

Mr Carlson TONG  
Chairman, English Schools Foundation

Mrs Heather DU QUESNAY  
Chief Executive Officer, English Schools Foundation

Agenda item IV

Mr Kevin YEUNG  
Under Secretary for Education

Ms Jessie WONG  
Deputy Secretary for Education (2)

Dr K K CHAN  
Deputy Secretary for Education (5)

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

Agenda item V

Mr Kevin YEUNG  
Under Secretary for Education

Mr Stephen YIP  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Curriculum Development)  
Education Bureau

Mr K K LEE  
Chief Professional Development Officer (Teacher  
Administration)  
Education Bureau

Agenda item VI

Mr Kevin YEUNG  
Under Secretary for Education

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

Mrs Michelle WONG  
Deputy Secretary for Education (4)

Ms IP Ling-bik  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Education Commission  
& Planning)  
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 Sandy HAU  
Legislative Assistant (4)3

---

Action

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

(LC Paper No. CB(4)790/12-13(01) -- Referral from the Public Complaints Office of the Legislative Council Secretariat regarding processing of applications for Financial Assistance Scheme for Post-secondary Students and Non-means-tested Loan Scheme by the Student Financial Assistance Agency (*Chinese version only*)  
(*Restricted to members only*)

LC Paper No. CB(4)814/12-13(01) -- Administration's written response to a letter dated 31 May 2013 from Dr Hon Helena WONG regarding the University Grants Committee-funded research postgraduate programmes)

Members noted the above paper issued since the last meeting.

2. 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.

**II. Progress of work of the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)852/12-13(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration

Action

LC Paper No. CB(4)852/12-13(02) -- Background brief entitled "Issues related to the provision of 15-year free education" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat)

3. Members noted the background brief on the subject prepared by the Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(4)852/12-13(02)].

Briefing by the Administration

4. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the progress of work of the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education ("the Committee") as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)852/12-13(01)]. SED stressed that providing 15-year free education and better quality kindergarten education was a top priority of the current-term Government. The Education Bureau ("EDB") had set up the Committee in April 2013 to examine the various issues relating to the provision of free kindergarten education and make practicable proposals to the Government. The Committee had held three meetings since its establishment in April 2013. Each of the five sub-committees formed under the Committee had already held one to two meetings during the same period. The Committee and its sub-committees would examine issues including the objective of kindergarten education, funding modes, different needs of whole-day and half-day kindergartens, teacher qualification and salary framework, monitoring and governance framework, and home-school cooperation, etc. SED advised that the Committee would take about two years to complete its tasks and make recommendations to the Government. During this period, the Committee would maintain communication with the kindergarten sector, and explore short-term and medium-term measures which could help kindergartens meet the challenges they encountered. The Government would actively consider providing support accordingly.

Discussion

*Membership of the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education*

5. The Deputy Chairman was concerned that only a few principals and teachers from the kindergarten sector had been appointed to the Committee and its subcommittees, while the majority of members were parents and lay members. He enquired about the background and professions of these lay members. The Chairman shared the Deputy Chairman's concern and said that parents and lay members had vastly outnumbered kindergarten teachers, as

Action

there was only one kindergarten teacher on the Committee and each of its subcommittees.

6. In reply, SED said that representatives from relevant professions and sectors had been appointed to the Committee and its subcommittees having regard to their respective expertise and the specific terms of reference of each committee. For example, since the funding modes and operation of kindergartens would be studied, some members came from the finance and property sectors. Representatives from non-government organizations had been appointed to facilitate consideration of issues related to non-Chinese-speaking children and children with special educational needs. Deputy Secretary for Education (3) ("DS(Ed)3") supplemented that members had been drawn from a wide spectrum of sectors including management, accounting and the media. Apart from principals and teachers, other stakeholders of the kindergarten sector such as representatives of school sponsoring bodies had also been appointed to the Committee and its sub-committees.

7. Noting that the Subcommittee on Objectives, Teacher Professionalism and Research would study issues related to the interface between kindergarten and primary education, the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman questioned why there was no representative from the primary school sector. DS(Ed)3 explained that the secondary school principals serving on this subcommittee were representatives of education bodies covering both secondary and primary schools.

8. The Deputy Chairman considered it unsatisfactory that lay members in each subcommittee had outnumbered kindergarten teachers, and stressed that more kindergarten teachers should be appointed to the subcommittees. The Chairman suggested that consideration should be given to appointing more members who could represent frontline kindergarten teachers to serve on the Subcommittee on Objectives, Teacher Professionalism and Research, and the Subcommittee on Catering for Student Diversity.

9. SED said that the participation of kindergarten teachers and other stakeholders was important, but a large membership might not be conducive to the effective operation of a committee. He added that the views of different stakeholders would also be solicited by inviting them to participate in focus group discussion. SED took note of members' views on strengthening the participation of kindergarten teachers in the review.

10. In response to the Deputy Chairman's enquiry about the "EDB Representative" on the Committee and each of its subcommittee, DS(Ed)3

Action

informed members that she was the EDB representative on the Committee and the first three subcommittees listed in Appendix 2 of the Administration's paper. The Principal Assistant Secretary (Special Education and Kindergarten Education) would represent EDB in the other two subcommittees.

*Work of the Committee*

11. Noting that the Committee and its sub-committees had already met several times, Dr Kenneth CHAN expressed his regret that the Administration's paper had not provided any concrete information on the progress of work of the Committee, and sought further details on the deliberations of the Committee and its subcommittees.

12. The Deputy Chairman referred to the terms of reference of the five subcommittees, and considered that it was not clear as to which of these subcommittees had been tasked to study the introduction of a salary framework for kindergarten teachers.

13. In response, SED informed members that the Subcommittee on Objectives, Teacher Professionalism and Research had held two meetings. Discussion had commenced on the objective and direction of kindergarten education, as well as how to formulate the basis for medium-to-long-term development. The Subcommittee on Operation and Governance had decided to focus its study on the operation of kindergartens including the staffing establishment of teaching and administrative personnel, the standard of premises and facilities, as well as the quality assurance mechanism and accountability framework of kindergartens. In addition, the Subcommittee on Funding Modes had been exchanging views on some suggested short-term and medium-term measures, such as the possibility of increasing the voucher value of Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme ("PEVS"), relaxing the cap on tuition fees of kindergartens under PEVS, raising the subsidy for whole-day kindergarten, and the provision of one-off grant to kindergartens, etc. The Subcommittee on Catering for Student Diversity had also commenced its discussion on providing support for kindergarten students, including non-Chinese-speaking children and children with special educational needs.

14. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung asked whether any specific measures would be implemented to assist kindergartens in tenancy matters relating to their school premises. In reply, SED said that the Subcommittee on Funding Modes would collect information on the school premises, facilities and tenancy arrangements etc. of kindergartens to facilitate further study.

Action

15. The Deputy Chairman expressed concern about the transparency of the work of the Committee. He said that as far as he knew, the deliberations of the Committee would be kept confidential. This would render it difficult for individual Committee/subcommittee members to consult their respective group of stakeholders on the proposed way forward due to this confidentiality requirement. The Deputy Chairman sought clarification on whether individual Committee/subcommittee members could seek the views of their stakeholders on the issues under deliberation by the Committee and its subcommittees.

16. SED explained that information on the Committee was available on the Internet. As deliberation on relevant issues was ongoing, it would be premature to disclose the details at this stage. However, where the Committee or subcommittee considered it appropriate, it would issue post-meeting announcements to inform the public of the outcomes, if any, of deliberations. In this regard, DS(Ed)3 supplemented that while members of the Committee and subcommittees had been reminded that the discussion papers should not be made public, they were at liberty to seek the views of stakeholders on particular issues.

17. Dr Kenneth CHAN did not subscribe to the Administration's explanation, and stated his view that the Administration should release as much information as practicable so as to facilitate more informed public discussion. In response, SED highlighted the need to strike a balance between keeping the public informed and ensuring the efficient conduct of the Committee's work. He nevertheless took note of members' concern about the transparency of the work of the Committee.

18. The Deputy Chairman enquired about the detailed timetable of the review by the Committee. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung asked whether the five subcommittees had set specific targets to be achieved by 2015. Ms Claudia MO sought the Administration's confirmation that free kindergarten education would be implemented in this term of Government. In reply, SED said that he was confident that the Committee would be able to complete its study and put forward its recommendations in two years' time as currently envisaged, which would be conducive to the implementation of free kindergarten education in due course by the current-term Government.

19. In response to Ms Claudia MO's enquiry on the difficulties encountered by the Committee in carrying out its work, SED advised that currently, the major challenge was to reach a consensus among different stakeholders of the kindergarten sector on how to implement free kindergarten education in Hong Kong.

Action

20. The Chairman recalled that at the two special meetings of the Panel held earlier this year, over 130 deputations had expressed their views on issues related to the provision of free kindergarten education. A consensus had already emerged among the attending deputations and stakeholders in support of the early implementation of free kindergarten education. The Chairman opined that the issue at stake was how the work of the Committee and its subcommittees could be expedited.

21. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che suggested that to gauge the views of stakeholders, the Committee and its subcommittees should conduct consultations on a regular basis, such as at intervals of three months. He also considered that the progress of the work of the Committee should be reported to the Panel on a regular basis.

22. Dr Kenneth CHAN suggested that the Panel should re-visit this subject in the next session and the Committee Chairman, Dr Moses CHENG, should also be invited to attend the meeting to exchange views with the Panel.

**III. Review on the subvention arrangements for the English Schools Foundation**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)852/12-13(03) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)852/12-13(04) -- Background brief entitled "Issues related to the subvention arrangements for the English Schools Foundation" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat

LC Paper No. CB(4)840/12-13(01) -- Submission from a member of the public dated 16 June 2013  
(*English version only*)

LC Paper No. CB(4)829/12-13(01) -- Submission from a member of the public dated 13 June 2013  
(*English version only*)

23. Members noted the background brief on the subject prepared by the Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(4)852/12-13(04)].

Action

Briefing by the Administration and the English Schools Foundation

24. SED briefed members on the review of the subvention arrangement for the English Schools Foundation ("ESF") and the arrangement for the phasing out of the existing subvention as agreed with ESF, details of which were set out in LC Paper No. CB(4)852/12-13(03). He explained the background, objectives and key parameters for conducting the review, as well as the concerns raised in Report No. 43 of the Director of Audit, which pointed out that the historical reason for the Government's recurrent subvention to ESF had to be re-visited in the present day context. SED informed members that in the last two years, the Administration had been engaging in active dialogue with ESF to take forward the review. After intensive negotiations, the Board of Directors of ESF had formally accepted the arrangement for phasing out government subvention in a "3+13 year" time-frame under which the interest of existing ESF students would not be affected due to changes to the subvention arrangement. Whilst noting concerns about increases in the tuition fees of ESF schools after the phasing-out of government subvention, and, in turn, availability of affordable English education for overseas families coming to work or invest in Hong Kong, SED emphasized that these should be treated as two separate issues. The Administration would continue to implement facilitation measures such as through the allocation of greenfield sites and premises to increase the supply of international school places to meet the demand of these overseas families.

25. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Carlson TONG, Chairman of ESF, said that ESF was disappointed that the Government had not been persuaded to agree to the long-term retention of its recurrent subvention to ESF. However, ESF would accept that the new arrangement would protect the interest of existing and some future students, as well as retain the existing recurrent subvention for ESF's support services to students with special educational needs ("SEN") pending further review; and that it had also committed the Government to making available capital subvention for the redevelopment of Island School. ESF looked forward to the in-depth review on the provision of support for education for English-speaking SEN students. Mr TONG advised that after consulting parents and careful consideration of the phasing-out arrangement, the ESF Board believed that the arrangement was the best that could be achieved because of the protection it offered to parents whose children were currently in the system. Accordingly, after a measured and thoughtful debate, the Board decided to accept the phasing-out arrangement for the existing subvention. Mr TONG also thanked the Panel for its support and EDB for its work done in connection with the review.

Action

Discussion

*Provision of quality and affordable English-medium education*

26. Dr Kenneth CHAN declared that his four children were ESF secondary school students. He stated his objection to the phasing-out of government recurrent subvention to ESF as he was gravely concerned that affordable English-medium education would no longer be available in Hong Kong's education system but would become a privilege of the affluent families. Dr CHAN considered the arrangement highly unfair to ESF notwithstanding that the Administration would continue the existing recurrent subvention for services for SEN students pending further review, and would seek the approval of the Finance Committee to provide a capital grant to ESF for the redevelopment of Island School. He was of the view that the withdrawal of subvention to ESF would affect Hong Kong's competitiveness in attracting overseas talents to Hong Kong, and amply demonstrated the lack of long-term vision on the part of the Administration. Dr CHAN said that the Panel should continue to monitor the phasing-out arrangement, and reiterated his view that the recurrent subvention to ESF should continue.

27. Ms Claudia MO objected to the view that ESF schools should be regarded as no different from other international schools, as ESF schools were much more affordable. Besides, most international schools would primarily serve students of their respective nationality. Regarding the background leading to the current phasing-out arrangement, SED referred to Report No. 43 of the Director of Audit released in November 2004 which pointed out the preferential treatment of the ESF over other similar international schools. He also recapped that at a previous meeting of the Panel on the same subject, members had stressed the need to ensure that existing ESF students should not be affected by changes to the subvention arrangement.

*Concerns about tuition fees*

28. In reply to Dr Kenneth CHAN's enquiry, Mr Carlson TONG said that according to ESF's current estimate, the tuition fees for new students admitted to ESF primary and secondary schools with effect from the 2016-2017 school year might be increased by up to 23%.

29. Noting the possible increase in tuition fees, Ms Claudia MO enquired how the future level of tuition fees at ESF schools compared with those of international schools. She was also concerned whether ESF would follow the practice of other international schools to issue debentures.

Action

30. In response, Deputy Secretary for Education(2) ("DS(Ed)2") said that with the existing government subvention, the tuition fees charged by ESF were relatively lower than those charged by other international schools, which received no recurrent subvention from the Government. After the phased withdrawal of recurrent subvention, it was estimated that any consequential upward adjustment in ESF school fees would still be within the middle stratum of the range of tuition fees charged by international schools. DS(Ed)2 advised that as far as EDB understood, ESF did not have any immediate plan to issue debentures. In case ESF would issue debentures in future, EDB would ascertain whether this was purely a form of private financial arrangement between ESF and the parents concerned for the purpose of financing capital developments and enhancement of school facilities, similar to the prevailing arrangements of other international schools. Nevertheless, DS(Ed)2 said that where necessary, EDB would seek legal advice on whether certain financial arrangement would constitute fees/charges which were subject to approval under the Education Regulations (Cap. 279A).

31. The Deputy Chairman noted that according to paragraph 9 of the Administration's paper, ESF had committed that cohorts already in the ESF primary and secondary schools before the phasing-out started in the 2016-2017 school year would continue to benefit from the government subvention and their tuition fees would not be raised due to the progressive withdrawal of the recurrent subvention. He asked whether ESF had given its undertaking in writing. In reply, DS(Ed)2 advised that ESF had confirmed in writing its agreement with the phasing-out arrangement.

32. The Deputy Chairman was concerned whether the Government had any role in the future adjustments in ESF school fees. On the monitoring mechanism to ensure that government subvention to ESF for existing students and SEN students would not be used to cross-subsidize students not covered by the grandfathering or carving-out arrangement, DS(Ed)2 said that some measures contemplated by EDB included the setting up of separate accounts for income and expenditure for students covered and not covered by the relevant arrangement. She also confirmed that no matter whether there was any phasing-out arrangement for the recurrent government subvention, any increase in tuition fees to be charged by ESF required approval by EDB. In considering any proposed increase, EDB would take into account all relevant factors including the justification for the proposed increase, the prevailing inflation, and the outcome of ESF's consultation with parents etc.

Action

*Services for SEN students*

33. Noting that unlike other mainstream schools which had admitted SEN students, ESF was in receipt of recurrent subvention in respect of its support services to SEN students, the Deputy Chairman asked whether ESF would be under any additional obligation to strengthen its services for SEN students. DS(Ed)2 advised that currently, the ESF Jockey Club Sarah Roe School was the only special school in Hong Kong adopting English as the medium of instruction and communication. ESF also provided support services to SEN students in its 14 primary and secondary schools. ESF had played a pioneering role in providing services to non-Chinese speaking SEN students. The Administration would need to review whether local special and mainstream schools could effectively and fully meet the demand of non-Chinese speaking SEN students before deciding on the way forward on the recurrent subvention to ESF for supporting SEN students.

*Issues related to the governance and use of resources by ESF*

34. Mr Tommy CHEUNG declared that his three children had studied in ESF primary and secondary schools. He said that he had sat on the ESF Board as the representative of Legislative Council ("LegCo") for eight years until the coming into effect of the English Schools Foundation (Amendment) Ordinance 2008 which, amongst others, removed LegCo representation on the ESF Board pursuant to an amendment to the Bill proposed by him. Mr CHEUNG referred to the major areas of concern raised by the Public Accounts Committee Report No. 43 as set out in Appendix II of the background brief and concurred that the governance of ESF and its use of public resources were far from satisfactory at that time. He also expressed his objection to ESF's introduction of a Nomination Rights Scheme which was the subject of an oral question raised by him at a meeting of LegCo last year.

35. Notwithstanding his criticisms on the governance and management of ESF, Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that Members of the Liberal Party did not support the phasing-out of recurrent subvention to ESF. He considered that students should be provided with the opportunity to receive quality and affordable English-medium education in Hong Kong. Mr CHEUNG was of the view that the crux of the matter was not the withdrawal of government subvention, but the effective monitoring of ESF's proper use of such subvention.

Action

**IV. Progress on enhancing the education support for non-Chinese speaking students**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)852/12-13(05) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)852/12-13(06) -- Background brief entitled "Education support for non-Chinese speaking students" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat

LC Paper No. CB(4)875/12-13(01) -- Submission from the Hong Kong Council of Social Service)

36. Members noted the background brief prepared by the Secretariat on the subject [LC Paper No. CB(4)852/12-13(06)] and a submission from the Hong Kong Council of Social Service [LC Paper No. CB(4)875/12-13(01)]. They also noted a submission received from the Hong Kong Unison Limited tabled at the meeting.

*(Post-meeting note: A revised version of the submission from the Hong Kong Unison Limited [LC Paper No. CB(4)881/12-13(01)] was circulated to members on 15 July 2013. On the instruction of the Chairman, the Administration had been asked to provide a written response to the submission.)*

37. The Chairman informed members that he had received the wording of a motion proposed to be moved by Ms Claudio MO under this agenda item. He said that he would deal with the motion after members' deliberations and advised that he would not arrange for a further debate on the motion after the Panel had discussed the item with the Administration. Members noted and raised no objection.

Briefing by the Administration

38. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the enhanced measures to facilitate non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") students' adaptation to the local education system and mastery of the Chinese Language as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)852/12-13(05)]. On the revised mode of funding support to schools to be implemented in the 2013-2014 school year, the

Action

Education Bureau ("EDB") would, based on the existing funding arrangements for the so-called "designated schools", provide an additional grant ranging from \$300,000 to \$600,000 to schools admitting 10 or more NCS students. An estimated 70 schools in addition to the existing 30 so-called "designated schools" would benefit. These schools would be required to adopt the "Chinese Language Assessment Tools" tailor-made for NCS students to set learning targets and develop teaching strategies for their NCS students. As regards the direction in Chinese Language curriculum development, US(Ed) assured members that the existing curriculum policy was in support of equal opportunity, social and economic integration for all students in Hong Kong. The Administration would continue to encourage NCS parents to send their children to local kindergartens for early exposure to an immersed Chinese Language environment for smooth bridging over to mainstream primary schools. US(Ed) informed members that EDB saw the need to facilitate NCS students' learning of Chinese Language in a more systematic manner and was collecting evidence to consider the development of a more systematic Chinese Language curriculum framework with learning objectives alongside the packaged learning and teaching materials pegged to the Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for NCS students.

Discussion

*Issues related to the proposal to develop a curriculum and assessment criteria for "Chinese as a Second Language"*

39. Ms Claudia MO noted the Administration's view of taking into account NCS students' learning targets or objectives in learning Chinese (e.g. for purposes of day-to-day communication, further studies or employment) in curriculum development. She considered this viewpoint unfair when compared with the curriculum and assessment criteria for English Language, as the Administration did not appear to have similar considerations. Ms MO said that many children of ethnic minorities ("EM") had encountered enormous difficulties in learning Chinese, and could hardly reach the same standard as their local counterparts after completion of primary and secondary education. She urged the Administration to seriously consider developing a "Chinese as a Second Language" curriculum and assessment criteria for NCS students.

40. On the Chinese proficiency of NCS students, US(Ed) informed members that based on research findings, given the necessary support and duly empowered, NCS students could learn at a pace and achieve results on par with those of local students. However, individual NCS students' standards and Chinese proficiency varied significantly due to their migration status, family background and support, etc. Deputy Secretary for Education (5) ("DS(Ed)5")

Action

suggested that NCS students should be facilitated to learn Chinese Language in a more systematic manner with a view to addressing their aspirations for articulation to multiple pathways for academic and career advancement. EDB was collecting empirical evidence to consider the development of a more systematic Chinese Language curriculum framework.

41. The Deputy Chairman remarked that it might be easier for NCS children who were born and grew up in Hong Kong to integrate into the mainstream curriculum and become proficient in Chinese. However, NCS students who had settled in Hong Kong at a later age might find it more difficult in mastering the language. He enquired about the proportion, if known, of NCS students who migrated to Hong Kong after reaching school age. The Deputy Chairman considered that if there was a sizable portion of such students, the Administration should seriously consider introducing a "Chinese as a Second Language" curriculum with suitable adaptation of the assessment to cater for NCS students who did not have an early start in learning the language.

42. In response, DS(Ed)5 advised that based on the information of EDB, the majority of NCS students studying in local schools were born in Hong Kong. She added that while the Administration would facilitate the early adaptation of NCS students with the mainstream curriculum for progression to primary and secondary schools, it would be desirable to equip those who had a late start with practical Chinese for employment.

43. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed his regret that so far, there had not been any commitment on the part of the Administration to develop a "Chinese Language as a Second Language" curriculum, contrary to the pledge of the Chief Executive in his election manifesto.

*Support for teaching and learning of Chinese Language*

44. Mr MA Fung-kwok referred to a recent study conducted by the Hong Kong Baptist University which revealed that a vast majority of teachers involved in teaching EM children considered that teaching a class comprising both local and EM students had posed a formidable challenge. They held the view that holding separate classes for local and EM children was more conducive to effective teaching and learning. In this regard, Mr MA asked whether consideration would be given to teaching Chinese to local and NCS students in separate classes. The Chairman remarked that under such an arrangement, the Chinese class for NCS students might only comprise a few students.

Action

45. In response, US(Ed) said that the number of NCS students and their standard in Chinese Language would be taken into account for grouping of students. Where students of comparable standard would normally be taught in the same group/class, additional support such as after-school remedial classes would be provided to cater for students who lagged behind in Chinese Language. EDB considered a school-based approach, instead of requiring all schools to teach local and NCS students in separate Chinese classes, more effective. DS(Ed)5 added that EDB had collected information on the different strategies adopted by schools to support NCS students in learning Chinese Language. EDB had also arranged experience sharing sessions for schools and would continue to strengthen training for Chinese teachers.

46. Ms Starry LEE referred to Question 8 stated in the written submission of the Hong Kong Unison Limited, and sought the Administration's comments on the criticism that EDB had failed to provide adequate support in Chinese learning for EM students. She also enquired about the adequacy of support provided to the so-called "designated schools" and other schools to enhance the teaching and learning of Chinese Language.

47. DS(Ed)5 said that schools with less experience in supporting NCS students might need more support as most Chinese teachers were used to teaching native Chinese speakers. EDB would strengthen support to individual schools through its professional teams.

48. DS(Ed)2 highlighted that in the 2013-2014 school year, funding for schools to provide school-based support to cater for NCS students would no longer be confined to the so-called "designated schools", in order to widen NCS parents' school choice, enhance teaching and learning of the Chinese Language for NCS students and remove the labelling effect on the so-called "designated schools". Schools admitting 10 or more NCS students would be provided with additional funding according to the existing funding levels. Schools receiving the grant would be allowed to deploy flexibly the additional grant to meet their specific circumstances in supporting NCS students in learning the Chinese Language such as procurement of teaching and learning materials, appointment of additional teachers/teaching assistants, etc.

49. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung expressed grave concern about the different arrangements for allocating resources to ESF schools and for providing support to NCS students in local schools. Mr LEUNG commented that the crux of the matter was the need to equip NCS students with basic Chinese literacy to enable them to find jobs. He considered that it was unrealistic to expect NCS students to attain a standard of Chinese comparable to their local counterparts. Instead, the Administration should focus its effort on assisting NCS students to

Action

acquire basic Chinese Language skills to enhance their employability.

50. Noting Mr LEUNG's concern, US(Ed) informed members that since the 2011-2012 school year, the Administration had launched the pilot scheme on Workplace Chinese Language Programme for NCS students pegged at Levels 1 to 3 of the Qualifications Framework.

51. The Chairman agreed that the language environment in schools was very important for NCS students in learning Chinese. He also pointed out that the support from families and parents was equally important, and enquired about measures, if any, taken by the Administration in this respect.

52. In response, US(Ed) informed members that starting from the summer of 2013, the Administration had refined the Summer Bridging Programme for NCS students progressing to Primary 1 and those from Primary 2 to Primary 4 to allow their parents to join the Programme as well. It was hoped that through parent-school collaboration, NCS students would be better supported in learning the Chinese language. NCS parents and their children were also encouraged to participate in diversified Chinese activities at the community level to enhance their exposure to, and use of, Chinese.

53. Dr Fernando CHEUNG was gravely concerned that as far as special education was concerned, NCS students were disadvantaged. The Jockey Club Sarah Roe School operated by ESF was the only special school for English-speaking students. NCS students with SEN who could not afford education in ESF schools would only enroll in local mainstream or special schools where support was grossly inadequate. Dr CHEUNG considered that the Administration should formulate a specific policy and allocate appropriate resources to provide support to NCS students in need of special education in Hong Kong.

54. US(Ed) advised that support provided by the Administration to students with SEN was also applicable to NCS students with SEN. Individual schools could deploy their resources flexibly to meet their specific needs. Where necessary, schools could approach EDB for further assistance.

Motion

55. The Chairman concluded the discussion, and said that as members had agreed earlier on, he would proceed to deal with the motion moved by Ms Claudia MO without further debate. He put the motion to vote. Nine members voted for the motion, no member voted against and one member abstained. The Chairman declared that the motion was passed (wording of motion at **Annex**).

Action

(*Post-meeting note:* A letter was sent to the Administration on 10 July 2013 requesting for a written response to the motion passed at the meeting.)

**V. Native-speaking English Teacher Scheme**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)852/12-13(07) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)852/12-13(08) -- Letter dated 20 February 2012 from Hon Regina IP to the Chairman of Panel on Education (*Chinese version only*))

Papers for reference

The Administration's replies to Members' initial written questions in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2013-2014  
(Reply serial numbers: EDB117, EDB214, EDB238 and EDB258)

Briefing by the Administration

56. At the invitation of the Chairman, US(Ed) briefed members on the latest development of the Native-speaking English Teacher ("NET") Scheme as detailed in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)852/12-13(07)). He highlighted the background and objectives of the Enhanced NET Scheme in Secondary Schools ("ENET Scheme") and the NET Scheme in Primary Schools ("PNET Scheme"), as well as the findings and recommendations of the three evaluation studies conducted during the period from 1998 to 2000, in 2008 and during the period from 2004 to 2006. On the way forward, US(Ed) confirmed that the Education Bureau ("EDB") was committed to supporting and monitoring the implementation of the NET Scheme. A more focused territory-wide evaluation would also be planned for both the PNET Scheme and the ENET Scheme.

Discussion

*Implementation and effectiveness of the NET Scheme*

57. Mr WONG Yuk-man said that he did not object to the implementation of the NET Scheme in primary and secondary schools. However, he

Action

highlighted the need to create an environment in schools which was conducive to motivating students to learn and use English, in addition to the mere provision of NETs. He referred to the letter from Mrs Regina IP (LC Paper No. CB(4) 852/12-13(08)) which indicated that if NETs in primary schools taught English in all Primary 1 ("P1") classes, students would be able to benefit from early exposure to an English language environment and parents might become less anxious to send their children to international schools. Mr WONG did not subscribe to Mrs IP's point of view, as he opined that parents had decided to enroll their children in international schools not because of the use of English as the medium of instruction, but for other reasons such as the articulation to international curricula in future.

58. Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered that in general, the NET Scheme had produced positive outcomes. However, he was concerned that special schools which admitted students with intellectual disability were not provided with NETs on par with other public-sector primary and secondary schools. Dr CHEUNG questioned the policy justifications for excluding these schools from the NET Scheme.

59. Chief Professional Development Officer (Teacher Administration) said that a judicial review against the Administration's decision of not providing NETs for schools admitting students with intellectual disability was in progress. US(Ed) further advised that as the fairness or otherwise of the existing policy might be the subject of the judicial review, it would not be appropriate for the Administration to make comments in this regard in order not to prejudice court proceedings. Dr Fernando CHEUNG did not subscribe to the Administration's practice of using ongoing court cases as a reason for not responding to members' questions.

60. The Deputy Chairman considered that the calibre of the teachers was crucial for the success of the NET Scheme. He also attached great importance to the interaction between NETs and students in stimulating the latter's interest in learning and using English.

61. Ms Claudia MO said that based on the feedbacks she had received during her many visits to primary and secondary schools, the effectiveness of the NET Scheme was questionable. She remarked that as far as those prestigious or reputable schools were concerned, the teachers and students already communicated fluently in English. In other schools where the students were less proficient in English, they were not inclined to use English despite the presence of NETs.

Action

62. Mr Michael TIEN recalled that while he was the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research, he had understood from language experts that the prime time for learning a second language was between six to eight years of age. He concurred with many local teachers' suggestion that there should be a division of labour between NETs and local English teachers. The former should take charge of the English classes of all P1 and P2 students to provide an immersed English-speaking environment while the latter would take over the teaching of English from P3 onwards. Mr TIEN requested the Administration to conduct a questionnaire survey on local English teachers to ascertain whether they were in support of this option. Dr Priscilla LEUNG also considered it useful to conduct such as a survey.

63. Principal Assistant Secretary (Curriculum Development) ("PAS(CD)") said that the Administration had kept the implementation of the NET Scheme under review from time to time. US(Ed) advised that EDB would consider how best to gauge the views of local English teachers when conducting the territory-wide evaluation for the PNET Scheme and the ENET Scheme.

*Employment of NETs by schools*

64. On the employment terms and conditions of NETs, the Deputy Chairman remarked that the remuneration package of an NET was comparable to the salary of a vice school principal. However, the responsibilities and workload of NETs were much lighter than those of local teachers. NETs also had no prospect for advancement. He considered that these issues should be further examined.

65. The Deputy Chairman was concerned about the wastage of NETs and enquired on the duration of the employment contract of NETs and their normal period of stay in Hong Kong. Dr Fernando CHEUNG shared the Deputy Chairman's concern. In reply, US(Ed) informed members that NETs were normally engaged on a two-year contract. They usually stayed in Hong Kong for five to six years. About 16% to 17% of NETS would not renew their contracts.

66. In response to Ms Starry LEE's enquiry on whether schools could be given greater flexibility in engaging NETs, PAS(CD) advised that individual schools could either recruit NETs on their own or entrust EDB to recruit NETs on their behalf. The recruitment was open to eligible applicants, irrespective of whether they were living overseas or currently residing in Hong Kong. Ms LEE further said that as she had understood, some schools had decided to join the Direct Subsidy Scheme in order that they could re-deploy the resources allocated for NETs more flexibly by employing well-qualified local English

Action

teachers instead.

67. Dr Priscilla LEUNG stressed that NETs should not be engaged merely because they were native English speakers. Consideration should also be given to their professional qualifications and experience in language teaching. Dr LEUNG further said that the resources allocated for engaging NETs should also include resources for grooming local English teachers. Ms Claudia MO suggested that while the NET Scheme could be retained, schools should be given the option to engage local teachers specializing in teaching English to assume the functions of NETs.

68. US(Ed) confirmed that for appointment as NETs, applicants had to fulfil requirements relating to professional qualifications and experience. Noting members' concerns about the need to groom local English teachers, US(Ed) said that while every opportunity would be taken to provide training for local English teachers, they could not substitute NETs in providing the necessary English language environment in schools.

69. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that as reflected by many NETs whom he knew, they could not integrate into the local school system and had little sense of belonging. Ms Claudia MO also said that some NETs experienced isolation in schools. Mr LEUNG was of the view that the NET Scheme lacked a clear objective. As a result, the role played by NETs in schools was blurred.

70. The Chairman opined that the NET Scheme had been useful in creating a favourable English language environment in schools. However, as NETs might be engaged by different schools for each two-year contract, the Chairman was gravely concerned about the high turnover of NETs at the level of individual schools and its impact on the teaching and learning of English.

71. Noting members' concerns, US(Ed) advised that NETs were not assigned classes to teach, but were engaged as resource teachers for enhancing the learning and teaching of English at the school level. They mainly supported and collaborated with local English teachers in facilitating the implementation of the curriculum and the development of subject-related tasks.

## **VI. Review on the current arrangements under the Secondary School Places Allocation System**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)852/12-13(09) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

Action

Briefing by the Administration

72. At the invitation of the Chairman, US(Ed) briefed members on the relief measures to be implemented from the 2013-2014 school year with a view to maintaining the stability and strengths of the schools and the teaching force amidst the temporary decline in Secondary One ("S1") student population in the coming few years, as well as the overall situation of public sector secondary schools under the Secondary School Places Allocation ("SSPA") System in 2013, details of which were set out respectively in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)852/12-13(09)] and a supplementary information paper (Chinese version only) tabled at the meeting. US(Ed) highlighted that the decline in S1 student population was temporary and the number of S1 students was anticipated to rebound steadily and annually from the 2017-2018 school year onwards, surpassing the level of the current school year. Against this background, EDB had announced a basket of relief measures to stabilize the teaching force and sustain the development of schools during this transient period.

73. US(Ed) referred to the supplementary information paper which had been prepared shortly upon release of the allocation results of SSPA 2013 with a view to clarifying the misconception arising from some stakeholders' rough estimation that a maximum of 100 S1 classes would be reduced in the 2013-2014 school year resulting in some 170 surplus teachers. As highlighted in the supplementary paper, based on the allocation results of SSPA 2013 on 9 July 2013, 30 classes at S1 level of 27 secondary schools might be reduced when compared with the 2012-2013 school year. Out of these 27 schools, six had to reduce one S1 class in the 2013-2014 school year, while the situation in the remaining 21 schools was subject to the intake of S1 students during the summer holiday. The position in respect of these schools would be available after the headcount in mid-September 2013.

74. Noting that the supplementary information paper was marked "限閱文件" ("Restricted") but the Panel was holding an open meeting to discuss the subject, the Chairman sought the Administration's clarification on the classification of the document. In response, DS(Ed)2 said that the document, which was prepared upon the release of the S1 allocation results for discussion at the Panel meeting on the same day, was under restricted cover prior to its submission to the Panel. In this regard, members agreed that the supplementary paper should be de-classified and handled as an open document provided for the Panel meeting. The Administration had no contrary views.

Action

75. Mr Abraham SHEK remarked that the supplementary information paper tabled at the meeting was in Chinese only, contrary to the established practice that discussion papers submitted by the Administration to the Legislative Council ("LegCo") should be available in both Chinese and English. US(Ed) said that the supplementary information paper had been prepared urgently and in a timely manner to provide updated information immediately upon release of the results of the 2013 SSPA on 9 July 2013. He apologized for not being able to provide the English version of the paper in time, and would provide members with the English version after the meeting.

*(Post-meeting note: The bilingual version of the Administration's supplementary information paper was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)888/12-13(01) on 15 July 2013.)*

Discussion

*Implementation of relief measures and related considerations*

76. Mr WONG Yuk-man noted that the concerns arising from the decline in secondary student population varied among different stakeholders. He remarked that some Panel members were concerned about the quality of education. The Deputy Chairman, as a representative from the teachers' union, was keen to ensure that the rights and benefits of teachers would be safeguarded. Parents were concerned about the chance of admission of their children to schools of their preference. Mr WONG was of the view that in the light of the fluctuations in secondary student population in the next decade or so, the Administration should formulate a long-term plan to maintain the stability of the secondary school sector, instead of introducing measures on an ad-hoc basis.

77. Referring to Mr WONG's remarks, the Deputy Chairman stressed that he was not solely concerned with the interests of teachers, but had serious views and concerns about the betterment and development of education in Hong Kong.

78. The Chairman asked the Administration to explain what was meant by "preserving strengths" as underlined in the objectives of the relief measures. In response, US(Ed) explained that in seeking to preserve strengths, the relief measures did not aim at maintaining the stability of schools and teaching posts only, but also the capability of schools and the teaching force to meet future challenges including coping with the fluctuation of student population in the coming decade.

Action

79. Dr Helena WONG was of the view that due to the lack of a population policy and poor planning, the Administration had not been able to devise any long-term solution but had introduced a basket of relief measures this year to address the decline of S1 student population. She said that as a result of the implementation of relief measures, the teacher-to-student and teacher-to-class ratios might be slightly improved. She further enquired whether such measures would continue in future and whether the surplus teachers could be retained to cope with the rebound in S1 student population.

80. US(Ed) advised that various relief measures had been/would be implemented to address the impact arising from the temporary decline of S1 student population. These relief measures might no longer be appropriate when the S1 student population rebounded. If any measures would remain to be ongoing, they should be considered in a separate context.

81. Ms Cyd HO considered that preserving the stability of the teaching force would be in the best interest of students, as the rapport between teachers and their students could be sustained while ensuring that there would not be any succession gap in the teaching profession. Mr Abraham SHEK opined that teaching was not merely a job, but a vocation as well as a profession. He was concerned that the relief measures implemented by the Administration could not provide teachers with the necessary job security, or the level of respect commensurate with their profession. Eventually, very few talents would be prepared to join the teaching profession. US(Ed) took note of members' views and concerns about the need to sustain the strength of the teaching profession.

*Small class teaching*

82. Mr Abraham SHEK said that education should not be treated as a business activity nor measured solely in quantitative terms. He urged the Administration to seize the opportunity of the decline in S1 student population to implement small class teaching ("SCT") in secondary schools. Dr Helena WONG also expressed support for implementing SCT. Mr Albert HO considered that SCT should be extended to secondary schools in order to enhance the quality of basic education in Hong Kong.

83. The Deputy Chairman recalled that at the Council meeting held on 22 May 2013, a motion had been passed by Members urging the Government, inter alia, to implement SCT in secondary schools. He stressed that implementing SCT was not meant to minimize surplus teaching posts, but was in the interest of students and the quality of education. He urged the Government to provide a proper response to the views of LegCo.

Action

84. In this connection, US(Ed) reiterated that SCT was a method of teaching. Whether SCT would be implemented in secondary schools should be studied thoroughly having regard to the implementation experience in primary schools, the existing conditions of secondary schools, resource implications and overseas experience etc. The Administration did not consider that SCT should be implemented solely on account of the need to alleviate the impact of the temporary decline in S1 student population on secondary schools and to absorb surplus teachers.

*Projected secondary student population*

85. Referring to the statistics of projected school-age population set out in Annex 1 of the Administration's paper, Ms Cyd HO noted that the student population would rebound to about 76 000 in 2024-2025 and steadily decline again in the years afterwards. She urged the Administration to plan in advance for such fluctuations. Mr Albert HO shared similar view and criticized the Government for its lack of planning and its policy regarding babies born in Hong Kong to Mainland women.

86. Mr Christopher CHUNG enquired whether the projected school-age population had included cross-boundary students who were born in Hong Kong to Mainland women. He noted from the Annex to the supplementary paper tabled at the meeting that under SSPA 2013, the overall percentage of surplus S1 places stood at 6%. Meanwhile, the Administration had anticipated that there would be a rebound in the number of S1 students by 2017-2018. He was concerned about the impact of the fluctuations in S1 student population on the provision of S1 places and on the implementation of education policy in the years to come.

87. In reply, DS(Ed)2 informed members that the projected student-age population residing in Hong Kong had taken into account the number of babies born in Hong Kong to Mainland women and who would settle in Hong Kong. The projections had not included cross-boundary students. According to the projections, there would be a steady rebound in the number of S1 students from the 2017-2018 school year onwards, reaching in a few years' time a level surpassing the current school year but similar to that of the 2008-2009 school year. She remarked that according to the Administration's projections, the capacity of the existing secondary schools would be able to accommodate the estimated rebound of the S1 student population.

Action

*Overall situation of public sector secondary schools upon release of the SSPA 2013 results*

88. Noting from the supplementary information paper that 27 secondary schools would face immediate or possible reduction of S1 classes in the 2013-2014 school year, the Deputy Chairman sought further details on the reduction. Mr WONG Yuk-man enquired on the number of surplus teachers resulting from the reduction of S1 classes.

89. US(Ed) informed members that 27 secondary schools were affected by the drop in S1 student population upon release of the S1 allocation results of SSPA 2013. Referring to paragraph 5 of the supplementary information paper tabled at the meeting, DS(Ed)2 highlighted that six schools would have to reduce their S1 classes from four to three in the 2013-2014 school year. Depending on whether the secondary schools could admit sufficient students during the summer holiday, five other schools might operate one S1 class in 2013-2014; while the remaining 16 schools might need to reduce their S1 classes from three to two. The actual number of S1 classes to be reduced from these 21 schools would only be available after the headcount in mid-September 2013. In light of the uncertainty and concerns arising from the rough estimation available in the public domain that 100 S1 classes would be reduced, the Administration had decided to release the information relating to the allocation results showing that 30 S1 classes might be reduced in the coming school year.

90. Regarding the number of surplus teachers, US(Ed) said that according to a rough estimate, about 50 teachers arising from possible reduction of 30 S1 classes would become surplus teachers. However, pursuant to one of the relief measures, the retention period of surplus teachers would be extended from one year to three years. DS(Ed)2 supplemented that the estimated number of surplus teachers had been worked out solely with reference to the teacher-to-class ratio for junior secondary classes at 1.7 to 1 and the estimated reduction of 30 S1 classes in 2013-2014.

91. The Deputy Chairman expressed his concern about the 16 secondary schools that might be required to reduce the number of S1 classes from three to two classes in the 2013-2014 school year if they failed to admit sufficient students during the summer holiday. He considered that although these schools could sustain their operation upon relaxation of the "not less than three classes" requirement, they might not be able to provide a satisfactory teaching and learning environment for the secondary curriculum.

Action

92. The Deputy Chairman noted that currently, individual secondary schools might have a handful of S1 places for admission of students after the release of SSPA results. He considered that discontinuing this arrangement would help reduce uncertainty in student intake by schools and hence minimize the number of surplus S1 places in those schools with under-enrolment.

93. In this regard, US(Ed) said that under the established arrangement which had taken into account views of stakeholders, individual schools were allowed to admit some students at their discretion in the summer holiday after announcement of the SSPA results. Given that the overall satisfaction rate of SSPA 2013 was about 90%, student movement in the summer holiday was not expected to be vigorous. It was expected that the turnover of students in schools during the summer holiday might not be high.

94. Noting the impact of the S1 student population drop on individual schools and the actual number of classes to be reduced would be available after the mid-September headcount, the Chairman said that the Administration should closely monitor the situation in districts like Tuen Mun where as many as eight secondary schools might face class reduction. The Deputy Chairman suggested that the Panel should re-visit this subject in the next session.

*Direct Subsidy Scheme schools*

95. Mr Christopher CHUNG was concerned that as more and more subsidized schools had joined the Direct Subsidy Scheme ("DSS"), this might have an adverse impact on the student intake of public sector secondary schools. He said that the Administration should consider reviewing the existing policy on DSS schools.

96. Ms Cyd HO pointed out that if more students decided to enrol in DSS schools, there would be fewer students participating in the SSPA System, rendering public sector schools more vulnerable to the risk of under-enrolment. She considered that parents might prefer to send their children to DSS schools because of the greater flexibility and autonomy in determining their medium of instruction ("MOI"). Ms HO asked whether consideration would be given to providing greater flexibility and autonomy to public sector secondary schools, such as in the choice of MOI.

97. Mr Albert HO considered that the existing policy, which allowed DSS schools greater flexibility in the admission of students, might have rendered it difficult for the Administration to make plans for the provision of S1 places.

Action

98. In response, US(Ed) said that DSS schools and public sector secondary schools had their respective role and functions in Hong Kong's education system, specifically in diversification to address different needs and aptitudes of students and providing wider choice for parents and students. DS(Ed)2 pointed out that while MOI might be one of parents' considerations in their choice of schools, it was worth noting that upon the implementation of the fine-tuning of MOI for secondary schools since the 2010-2011 school year, the school-based MOI arrangements of public sector secondary schools under the prescribed criteria of student ability, teacher capability and support measures to ensure students' learning effectiveness had been diversified, especially with the extended learning activities conducted in English in non-language subjects in schools.

99. The Chairman noted some members' concern about the different admission arrangements between DSS schools and public sector secondary schools. He remarked that some students who had accepted the S1 places offered by DSS schools would no longer participate in SSPA and this would lead to a further drop in the number of S1 students to be admitted by public sector secondary schools. The Chairman highlighted that DSS schools nonetheless had provided students and their parents with more choices. To avoid any misconception about DSS schools, he advised the Administration to explain its policy on DSS schools to the public and where necessary, review the function and role played by these schools.

100. Ms Cyd HO suggested that the Panel should hold a special meeting, preferably before the summer recess, to discuss issues related to DSS schools, such as the regulation of DSS schools, the operation of DSS schools and public sector schools in terms of student admission and resources deployment etc. The Chairman took note of the suggestion.

**VII. Any other business**

101. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:07 pm.

**Motion passed at the meeting on 9 July 2013**  
**在 2013 年 7 月 9 日會議上通過的議案**

**議案措辭**

本委員會促請當局正視非華語學生學習中文的困難，並積極考慮盡快訂立及在中小學推行「中文作為第二語言」課程和評核標準。

(毛孟靜議員動議)

**Wording of the Motion**

(Translation)

That this Panel urges the authorities to face up to the difficulties encountered by non-Chinese speaking students in learning Chinese and actively consider formulating as soon as possible a "Chinese as a Second Language" curriculum and assessment criteria for implementation in primary and secondary schools.

(Moved by Hon Claudia MO)