



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局  
Education Bureau  
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The People's Republic of China  
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9 May 2013

Clerk to Panel  
Legislative Council Panel on Education  
Room 203E, 2/F  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong  
(Attn: Ms Polly YEUNG)

Dear Ms YEUNG,

**Legislative Council Panel on Education  
Motion Passed at the Meeting on 17 April 2013**

**Response of the Education Bureau**

The Panel on Education passed a motion moved by Hon IP Kin-yuen at its meeting on 17 April 2013. The wording of the motion is as follows:

“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.”

We understand Members’ concern over the handling of issues regarding the decline in Secondary One (S1) student population. Regarding the aforementioned motion, our response is as follows:

The Education Bureau (EDB) has all along been keeping dialogues with the school sector and parents on issues regarding the decline in S1 student population. Subsequent to the two special meetings held by the Panel on Education on 2 and 3 November 2012 to listen to the views of the school sector on the admission of S1 students, the EDB continued to meet, on several occasions, with different stakeholders, including Members of the Legislative Council, school principals, teachers and parent representatives, with a view to consolidating different views of various parties and achieving a consensus to the greatest extent possible. For instance, on 9 November 2012, the Secretary for Education met with the Hon. IP Kin-yuen, the Hong Kong Professional Teachers’ Union, the Joint Committee of the Chairpersons of the Secondary School Councils and the Secondary School Heads Associations of 18 Districts and representatives of other educational bodies. After the meeting, the EDB announced the “retaining teacher” measure to extend the retention period of surplus teachers.

The EDB highly respects the views of various stakeholders and Members. In fact, Members have some different views on how to cope with the decline in S1 student population and the EDB is willing to consider all their views. For instance, at the meeting of the Panel on Education on 12 November 2012, Members proposed to adopt a mechanism which allowed upward and downward adjustment with regard to the number of students to be allocated per S1 class instead of immediately reducing the class size of all secondary schools to a certain level. The Secretary for Education also stressed at the meeting that as the decline in S1 student population in the coming few years would only be temporary, it was not appropriate to make long-term structural changes.

As a matter of fact, the basket of targeted relief measures proposed by the EDB for “sustaining schools, retaining teachers and preserving strength” was implemented after carefully considering, listening to and balancing the views of various stakeholders. As for the option of “reducing the number of students to be allocated per S1 class”, some individual schools and parents expressed to the EDB that they had reservations about reducing across-the-board the class size of all secondary schools. We believe that the needs and interests of school sponsoring bodies, schools, teachers, parents and students can be balanced by adopting a flexible approach of district-based and school-based adjustment to the number of students to be allocated per S1 class.

We announced in an official letter to all secondary schools on 27 November 2012 that we would adopt a district-based and school-based approach to reduce progressively the number of students allocated to each S1 class by year from the 2013/14 to 2015/16 school year. During the period between December 2012 and February this year, the

EDB submitted to the Panel on Education four separate written responses on issues regarding the decline in S1 student population as raised by Members. In our response on 7 January 2013, we explained our considerations for “the option of reducing the number of students to be allocated per S1 class” and the details on the approach of district-based and school-based adjustment to the number of students to be allocated per S1 class. Therefore, not as indicated in the motion, the facts reveal that the EDB has reported the above issues to the Panel on Education and taken follow-up actions.

Indeed, the public may have different views on the handling of the decline in S1 student population. The EDB ought to consider carefully all the views, including those gathered from inside or outside the Council, the school sector or parents, and then seek common ground while reserving differences. The EDB does highly respect the Panel on Education.

With regard to the basket of targeted relief measures, the EDB issued a circular to secondary schools on 25 April 2013, explaining the implementation details and recapitulating the support measures for facilitating school development that are still applicable. We welcome Members to continue to pay attention to the issues regarding the decline in S1 student population. We will keep Members updated on the relevant development.

Yours sincerely,



( Miss P L WU )  
for Secretary for Education