

For discussion on  
10 June 2013

**Legislative Council Panel on Education**

**Teachers Employed on Contract Terms  
in Primary and Secondary Schools**

**PURPOSE**

This paper gives a brief account on the provision of teaching staff in primary and secondary schools and the current situation of teachers with different terms of employment.

**BACKGROUND**

*Provision of teacher manpower in schools*

2. Under the existing policy and practices, public sector (government, aided and caput) primary and secondary schools are provided with teachers through two major means:

- i) regular teacher establishment to be computed mainly according to the number of classes and class-to-teacher ratios; and
- ii) different cash grants for meeting specific policy objectives.

3. Regular teachers employed within the approved establishment are subject to the terms and conditions as set out in the relevant Codes of Aid applicable to secondary schools, primary schools and special schools or the Civil Service Regulations for government schools. Unlike regular teachers, teachers employed by cash grants that are provided for meeting specific policy objectives are under contract terms of respective schools and are required to contribute to mandatory provident fund schemes in the same way as the majority of the workforce. Schools are advised to follow the same salary scales as regular teachers and provide them with similar leave entitlement when appointing teachers on contract terms.

### *Cash grants for employing teachers*

4. At present, several types of cash grants are provided to schools for employment of teachers or ancillary staff, such as teacher assistants and to hire educational services for specific purposes. Examples of cash grants are:

- i) the Capacity Enhancement Grant (CEG) : it aims at relieving teachers' workload so as to enable them to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning and to implement their school-based development plan for the provision of quality education of their students;
- ii) the Learning Support Grant (LSG) for ordinary schools : it aims at helping students with special education needs; and
- iii) the Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant (SSCSG) : it aims at facilitating the implementation of the senior secondary curriculum.

The above grants are provided to schools on a recurrent basis and more details of these grants are set out in the **Annex**.

## **CURRENT SITUATION**

### *Flexibility in resources deployment*

5. Each school is unique with its own vision and mission, as well as school development needs and priorities. Every school has the prime responsibility of taking care of the specific learning needs of its students so as to extend their potentials and to nurture their generic skills, values and attitudes. Furthermore, there are evolving social needs and expectations to which schools are required to respond and cater. Schools ought to be dynamic and be provided with a certain degree of flexibility in deploying their resources to cope with the ever-changing demands in a timely manner. The current practice of providing cash grants in addition to the regular teacher establishment is to allow schools with suitable flexibility in deploying human resources to facilitate the implementation of educational initiatives and strategies, and ultimately providing quality education to every student.

6. The Education Bureau (the EDB) understands that teachers are important assets of schools and maintaining a stable teaching force in schools is one of the success factors to quality education. With this end in view, it is our policy that the provision of teachers are mainly through the regular teacher establishment and provision of cash grants for the appointment of teaching / ancillary staff and acquisition of services is of supplementary nature and needs-driven for meeting specific policy objectives.

#### *Teachers' employment situation*

7. Based on the information provided by schools on the appointment of teachers, in the 2012/13 school year, there are around 14 800 regular teachers in aided primary schools and 19 300 regular teachers in aided secondary schools. Among them, about 5.7% of the total number of regular teachers are employed under defined contract period (DCP). These DCP teachers are regular teachers and are thus entitled to the same set of benefits, such as contributing to the Grant / Subsidized Schools Provident Fund, as other regular teachers. The DCP arrangements facilitate schools to prepare for their future development and to cater for a flexible subject mix under the senior secondary curriculum.

8. As mentioned in paragraph 2 to 4 above, public sector schools can appoint teachers to fill the contract posts created on their own by using various cash grants and other funding (e.g. Quality Education Fund, schools' private funds, etc.). According to the information reported by schools, in the 2012/13 school year, out of the 42 000 teachers employed in public sector schools, there are around 4 000 teachers (1 500 and 2 500 for primary and secondary schools respectively) who are employed using cash grants. The EDB does not have details about their employment terms and duration of service.

9. Within the overall teaching force, a significantly high percentage of the serving teachers are being employed within the establishment and they are regular teachers. The above apportionment of teachers under regular terms and under contract terms is considered appropriate in maintaining teacher stability on one hand and providing flexibility to schools on the other.

### *Career prospect of contract teachers*

10. The EDB attaches great importance to teachers' professional development. A wide range of professional development programmes are offered to the teachers and these programmes are generally open to all teachers, irrespective of their terms of employment. In other words, contract teachers serving on DCP or employed by cash grants are eligible to apply for the programmes as regular teachers. In addition, the teaching experience accumulated by a contract teacher will be duly recognized when the teacher takes up a regular post later. Thus, for salary assessment purpose, his/her teaching experience gained under regular terms or contract terms will make no difference.

11. Most of the cash grants, e.g. CEG, LSG and SSCSG as mentioned in paragraph 4 above are provided on a recurrent basis. Schools are therefore able to plan and deploy these resources strategically to meet their mid to long-term needs and as far as possible offer longer terms of employment to their contract teachers so as to maintain teachers' morale as a whole for the benefit of student learning.

12. Despite the need of the schools to employ regular teachers on DCP as mentioned in paragraph 7 above, schools are reminded in relevant Circular Memorandums issued by the EDB that the employment of regular teachers with DCP must be based on a prudent assessment of the school development needs with cogent reasons. The same message has also been explained to school councils and school sponsoring bodies through our communication platform. Besides, the EDB has been monitoring schools employing regular teachers on DCP terms and taking suitable follow-up actions. For the persistent cases where schools, without valid reason, have employed a high percentage of regular teachers on DCP terms or employed DCP teachers for a prolonged period, the EDB will intervene. Various measures will be taken, such as requiring schools to submit a feasible plan and a timetable for rectifying the problem.

### **CONCLUSION**

13. In this ever-changing and complex society, schools have to be sensitive to the needs and expectations of the various stakeholders and be versatile in coping with all the challenges and changes. Seen under this

light, it is necessary to provide schools with the flexibility to deploy a small portion of their teaching force through the provision of cash grants. As such, schools can employ extra teachers and/or ancillary staff, or hire educational services meeting their specific needs.

## **WAY FORWARD**

14. The EDB will continue to monitor schools in the employment of regular teachers on DCP terms. In our day-to-day contact with the school management, we will draw the schools' attention to the importance of good human resource management. We will also continue to monitor the use of resources in schools and to provide appropriate and timely support to them.

Education Bureau  
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**Cash grants provided for schools to employ additional teaching /  
ancillary staff and/or to hire educational services**

<b>Grant</b>	<b>Purpose and Ambit</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Capacity Enhancement Grant (CEG) (Recurrent)  [Applicable to primary and secondary schools]	To hire outside services and/or employ personnel on a temporary basis outside the permanent staff establishment	The grants for a 24-class secondary school and a 24-class primary school are about \$0.5 million and \$0.6 million respectively in 2012/13.
Learning Support Grant (LSG) (Recurrent)  [Applicable to primary and secondary schools]	To employ teachers or teaching assistants, hire professional services and/or purchase learning and teaching materials to support students with special educational needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic provision of \$120,000 per school per annum for the first one to six student(s) requiring tier-3 support;</li> <li>• A grant of \$20,000 per student per annum for the seventh and each of the other students requiring tier-3 support;</li> <li>• A grant of \$10,000 per annum for each student requiring tier-2 support; and</li> <li>• A ceiling at \$1 million per school per annum<sup>Note</sup>.</li> </ul> <p>For primary schools, eligible academically low achievers will also be counted as students requiring tier-2 support in calculation of the grant.</p>
Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant (SSCSG) (Recurrent)  [Applicable to secondary schools only]	To recruit teachers or teaching assistants, procure services and/or learning and teaching materials to facilitate the implementation of the NSS curriculum	The grant is a cash provision equivalent to the mid-point salary of 0.1 GM per NSS class. The disbursement of the grant had been advanced for one year to 2008/09 and enhanced to 0.15 GM per NSS class for a 4-year transitional period from 2008/09 to 2011/12. Schools with 15 NSS classes would receive around \$1 million (enhanced rate) and \$0.7 million in 2011/12 and 2012/13 respectively.

*Note:* The ceiling will be increased to \$1.5 million per school per annum with effect from the 2013/14 school year.