

**立法會**  
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**Panel on Education**

**Meeting on 12 November 2012**

**Background brief on the proposal to extend the Examination Fee  
Remission Scheme for needy non-Chinese speaking students**

**Purpose**

This paper provides background information on the current arrangements under the Examination Fee Remission Scheme ("EFRS") catering for needy non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") students.

**Ambit of EFRS**

2. The EFRS is one of the means-tested financial assistance schemes administered by Student financial Assistance Agency ("SFAA") to provide examination fee remission to needy secondary students. In September each year, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority ("HKEAA") will issue circulars to schools inviting students sitting for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination ("HKDSEE") to apply for assistance under EFRS. HKEAA will check with SFAA the eligibility of the applicants, so that eligible students would not need to pay the examination fees at the time of registration. SFAA will arrange for payment of the examination fees to HKEAA direct on behalf of the students concerned.

3. With the implementation of the New Academic Structure for senior secondary education from the 2009-2010 school year, HKDSEE has replaced the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination ("HKCEE")<sup>1</sup> and the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination ("HKALE")<sup>2</sup>. Starting from the 2012-2013 school year, HKDSEE will be the only examination to be taken upon completion of senior secondary education under the local curriculum. The ambit of EFRS was therefore

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<sup>1</sup> The last HKCEE was held in 2010 for school candidates.

<sup>2</sup> The last HKALE was held in 2012 for school candidates.

revised to provide support for needy students sitting for HKDSEE from the 2011-2012 school year onwards. The Administration also introduced a number of improvements to EFRS to enhance support for needy students. The relevant funding proposal was approved by the Finance Committee ("FC") on 27 May 2011<sup>3</sup>.

### **Improvement to cater for needy NCS students**

4. Since 2007, the Government has been providing an avenue for students who have had a late start in learning the Chinese Language or have not been given full opportunities to learn the local Chinese Language curriculum to attain an alternative qualification in Chinese Language through taking the General Certificate of Secondary Education ("GCSE") (Chinese) Examination<sup>4</sup> so as to address the aspirations of NCS students for higher education under the local curriculum and for career development. However, as the GCSE (Chinese) Examination is an overseas examination, it was not covered under EFRS.

5. A motion was passed at the Council meeting on 18 November 2009 on "Strengthening and continuously supporting the teaching and learning of Chinese for non-Chinese speaking students". Given the relatively high examination fee for the GCSE (Chinese) Examination and the increase in the number of NCS students sitting for it in recent years, the Education Bureau has been providing a subsidy to HKEAA since 2010 to bridge the difference between the examination fees of the GCSE (Chinese) Examination and the then HKCEE (Chinese) such that NCS students, irrespective of means but meeting the language requirements<sup>5</sup>, only have to pay a subsidized examination fee on par with that of HKCEE (Chinese). This subsidy scheme will continue with the introduction of HKDSEE (Chinese).

6. One of the improvements proposed by the Administration and approved by FC on 27 May 2011 was the extension of EFRS to cover the GCSE (Chinese) Examination with effect from the 2011-2012 school

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<sup>3</sup> See FCR(2011-12)17.

<sup>4</sup> GCSE Examinations are offered by London Examinations, Edexcel International. It is designed basically for students in the United Kingdom. HKEAA introduced the GCSE Chinese Examination in May 2008. The results in the GCSE (Chinese) Examination are internationally recognized and accepted as an alternative Chinese qualification for consideration for admission to University Grants Committee-funded institutions through the Joint Universities Programmes Admissions System since 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Specifically, these NCS students are those who –

- (a) have learned Chinese Language for less than six years while receiving primary and secondary education; or
- (b) have learned Chinese Language for six years or more in schools, but have been taught an adapted and simpler curriculum not normally applicable to the majority of students in local schools.

year. An NCS student will henceforth be eligible to receive full or half fee remission of the subsidized examination fee for taking the GCSE (Chinese) Examination if he/she passes the means test of SFAA, and has been certified by the last attending school to have fulfilled the language requirements stated in paragraph 4 above and footnote 5. An eligible NCS student may receive examination fee remission in respect of the GCSE (Chinese) Examination taken either in place of or in addition to HKDSEE (Chinese) in an academic year, and will be eligible for fee remission for a second examination entry of the GCSE (Chinese) Examination to be taken in the immediate following year as a school candidate.

### **Consideration by Members**

7. Prior to submitting the relevant funding proposal to FC, the Panel on Education had been briefed on the review of EFRS and the package of proposed changes to the Scheme on 11 April 2011. Whilst Panel members made a number of enquiries and sought further information on issues related to HKDSEE and the level of fees set by HKEAA, they had not expressed any view against the proposal to extend EFRS to cover needy NCS students sitting for the GCSE (Chinese) Examination. No contrary view was raised at FC which approved the funding proposal on 27 May 2011.

8. At its meeting held on 14 May 2012 when deliberating on the improvement measures to student financial assistance schemes for post-secondary students, the Panel on Education noted the Administration's stance that it would take into account the views from various sectors on expanding the scope of EFRS to enable needy NCS students in secondary schools to sit for other overseas Chinese Language examinations when mapping out the implementation details to further motivate both schools and NCS students to cross over different learning levels at different stages of development leading to multiple progression pathways.

### **Latest development**

9. The Administration will brief the Panel on its proposal to extend EFRS to cover additional overseas Chinese Language examinations for needy NCS students at the meeting to be held on 12 November 2012, before submitting the funding request to FC.

**Relevant papers**

10. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 4  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
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## List of relevant papers

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Education	12.1.2009 (Item V)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a> <a href="#">CB(2)579/08-09(06)</a>
Panel on Education	14.3.2011	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a> <a href="#">CB(2)1927/10-11(01)</a>
Panel on Education	11.4.2011 (Item V)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a> <a href="#">CB(2)1444/10-11(03)</a>
Finance Committee	27.5.2011 (Item III)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a> <a href="#">FCR(2011-2012)17</a>
Legislative Council	18.11.2009	<a href="#">Motion</a>
Panel on Education	14.5.2012	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">CB(2)1922/11-12(02)</a> (p.15)