

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)276/13-14
(The minutes have been seen by
the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of special meeting
held on Monday, 28 October 2013, at 8:30 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 Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
 - Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH
 - Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
 - Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
 - Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
 - Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP
 - Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
 - Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
 - Hon Steven HO Chun-yin
 - Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
 - Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP
 - Hon Charles Peter MOK
 - Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
 - Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok
 - Hon Dennis KWOK
 - Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
 - Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
 - Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP
 - Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen
- Members attending** :
- Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP
 - Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki

Action

- Members absent** : Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon Claudia MO
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP
- Public Officers attending** : Agenda item I
- Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP
Secretary for Education
- Mrs Cherry TSE, JP
Permanent Secretary for Education
- Mrs Betty IP, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education (3)
- Mr Benjamin YUNG
Principal Education Officer (New Territories)
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
- Mr Ian CHOW
Council Secretary (4) 4
- Ms Sandy HAU
Legislative Assistant (4) 3
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Action

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.

I. Issues related to the supply and demand of kindergarten places

(LC Paper No. CB(4)80/13-14(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)26/13-14(01) -- Letter dated 7 October 2013 from Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun to the Chairman of Panel on Education)

Briefing by the Administration

2. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on issues related to the supply and demand of kindergarten places and the special measures implemented in Tai Po and the North District to improve student admission arrangements as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)80/12-13(01)].

Discussion

Provision of kindergarten places

3. Noting that the Administration had encouraged kindergartens to make full use of their vacant classrooms or to convert existing space into classrooms in order to increase the provision of places, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen was concerned whether kindergartens would be prepared to do so in the face of fluctuations in school age population in the coming years. He enquired about the projected number of places resulting from the re-commissioning of vacant classrooms and the proportion of such places in the overall supply.

4. Dr Helena WONG remarked that given the high rents for their premises, it was unlikely that many classrooms in kindergartens had been left vacant and were available for re-commissioning. Dr WONG was also concerned that conversion of existing activities rooms or music rooms into

Action

classrooms would compromise the provision of quality kindergarten education.

5. Referring to Annex 5 of the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)80/13-14(01)], SED said that over 5 000 places were available in vacant classrooms in the four districts near the border (namely Tuen Mun, the North District, Tai Po and Yuen Long) in the 2012-2013 school year. Regarding the five kindergartens mentioned in the Administration's paper which had agreed to consider converting existing rooms or space into classrooms, the Administration would further discuss the feasibility with them. Deputy Secretary for Education(3) ("DS(Ed)3") advised that under the current arrangement, vacant classrooms were in fact registered classrooms of kindergartens. They had not been used as classrooms due to various reasons such as under-enrolment and as a result, some had been used for other purposes such as playing and music activities. Thus, reverting such rooms to classroom usage would not result in the quality of kindergarten education being compromised.

6. Noting from paragraph 2 of the Administration's paper that the projected supply of about 241 000 kindergarten places in the 2014-2015 school year was inclusive of the number of places in vacant classrooms of kindergartens, the Deputy Chairman said that such information was misleading, as according to his understanding, the actual number of kindergarten places in 2012 was only 184 000.

7. In response, DS(Ed)3 explained that the projected supply of 241 000 places in 2014-2015 had been calculated on the basis that the kindergartens would make full use of their registered classrooms, while the number of places available in the past few years as set out in the Administration's paper was based on the number of classes actually operated by the kindergartens in these years. It should be noted that not all the classes had been fully filled. When the Education Bureau ("EDB") was able to ascertain later this year the actual number of students and the number of places for the 2013-2014 school year, it would be in a better position to make a more accurate estimation on the demand and supply of kindergarten places in the 2014-2015 school year.

8. In this connection, Permanent Secretary for Education ("PS(Ed)") highlighted that the projected supply and demand of kindergarten places was subject to many variable factors. She referred to Annex 1 and Annex 2 of the Administration's paper, and pointed out that there had been an annual increase of only one kindergarten in the North District in each of the 2008-2009 to 2012-2013 school years. However, during the same period, the annual increase in kindergarten places in the district ranged from several

Action

hundred to about 1 000. This clearly showed that the bulk of the increase in places came from existing, rather than new kindergartens. On the demand for places, PS(Ed) said that local parents, in particular working parents, would prefer whole-day kindergartens, while parents of cross-boundary students might prefer half-day kindergartens.

9. The Deputy Chairman requested EDB to provide information on the number of places in vacant classrooms of kindergartens, as well as the projected supply net of the number of these places. SED agreed to provide the requested information after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's written response was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)210/13-14(01) on 6 December 2013.)

10. Noting the figures set out in Annex 2 and Annex 4 of the Administration's paper regarding the number of kindergarten places in the 2012-2013 school year and the projected number of children aged three to five in the 2014-2015 school year, Dr Helena WONG was concerned about the shortfall, if any, in kindergarten places in different districts, including Tuen Mun, Yuen Long, Tai Po and the North District. She considered that the Administration should also explore other means to increase the supply of kindergarten places. She cited the example of the planning of Tin Ping Estate in Sheung Shui where three kindergartens should have been provided. Since one of the kindergartens had been closed, Dr WONG enquired whether the Administration would consider setting up a government-run kindergarten at the premises currently taken up by an office of the Housing Authority.

11. PS(Ed) referred to Annex 2 of the Administration's paper, and said that in all districts including the North District, the number of kindergarten places had exceeded the number of students. Regarding the case in Tin Ping Estate as mentioned by Dr WONG, Principal Education Officer (New Territories) ("PEO(NT)") informed members that two kindergartens and one kindergarten-cum-child care centre were currently in operation in Tin Ping Estate. So far, no school sponsoring body had indicated interest to run another kindergarten in the Estate. SED said that EDB would welcome the establishment of more kindergartens in Tin Ping Estate by school sponsoring bodies.

12. Noting the Administration's explanation, Mr Tony TSE considered that the Administration had little control over the supply of kindergarten places, and had difficulty in making an accurate projection on the demand for kindergarten places from cross-boundary students.

Action

13. Dr KWOK Ka-ki considered that given the increase in the number of children born to Mainland women in Hong Kong in recent years and their likelihood of returning to Hong Kong for education, the Administration should have adequate prior planning, instead of merely adopting a piecemeal approach by implementing special measures in some districts only. Dr KWOK said that some kindergartens had requested students attending whole-day classes to enroll in half-day classes so as to increase the number of available places. He was concerned that the child care needs of working parents and the quality of kindergarten education would be adversely affected by such arrangements. .

14. SED said that both the Administration and the kindergarten sector had paid close attention to the number of new born babies in Hong Kong and the trend of cross-boundary students receiving education in Hong Kong. Given that the cross-boundary students could choose to study in Hong Kong at the time of their choice, there was practical difficulty in making an accurate projection on the demand for school places at different class levels. He pointed out that kindergarten education in Hong Kong was characterized by its flexibility and responsiveness to parents' needs, and had proven its capability over the years in meeting the demand for places resulting from an increase in school age children including cross-boundary students. SED said that the Administration had not requested kindergartens to provide more places by converting whole-day classes to half-day classes, as they were free to decide on appropriate ways of increasing their places.

Special measures to improve admission arrangements

15. Mr IP Kwok-him and Mr WONG Kwok-hing expressed concern about the effectiveness of the special measures implemented in Tai Po and North District to improve the admission arrangements. In this regard, SED advised that the measures had been formulated after extensive discussions with the kindergarten sector and parents, and had been promulgated in clear terms to ensure proper understanding and implementation. The introduction of a centralized sign up date and a centralized registration date would help ascertain the overall student intake and the places available upon completion of the registration procedure in February 2014. EDB would enhance its enquiry and coordination services to provide information and assistance to parents whose children failed to secure a kindergarten place.

16. Mr James TIEN was of the view that the Administration should consider setting up a centralized registration system so that parents would no longer need to queue up overnight for collection and submission of application forms.

Action

17. Noting that about 80% of kindergartens had joined the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme ("PEVS"), Mr Michael TIEN asked whether the Administration would consider making the special measures mandatory for kindergartens under PEVS, while continuing to encourage non-PEVS kindergartens to implement such measures. In reply, SED said that since kindergartens were privately run, it would not be appropriate for EDB to impose compulsory requirements on their admission arrangements.

18. Dr KWOK Ka-ki noted with concern that apart from the North District, there was a sharp increase in the number of cross-boundary students attending schools in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long in recent years. Dr KWOK enquired whether the special measures implemented in the North District and Tai Po would be extended to Tuen Mun and Yuen Long. Dr Helena WONG and Mr CHAN Chi-chuen raised similar concern.

19. SED advised that the six special measures were implemented as contingency measures to deal with the special circumstances in Tai Po and the North District. Whether similar measures should be implemented in other districts would depend on the prevailing supply and demand situation and the consensus, if any, among the stakeholders. He further said that some kindergartens in another district had indicated that they would consider adopting some of the special measures but not all.

20. Dr Fernando CHEUNG enquired whether the special admission arrangements would be adopted next year. In reply, SED said that EDB would closely monitor the situation in the coming months and review the effectiveness of the special measures before considering the way forward.

21. Ms Starry LEE referred to the case of Macao, and asked the Administration to consider including kindergarten education into the compulsory education system in Hong Kong so that the allocation of places and the admission mechanism could be directly regulated by EDB. With a view to improving the admission procedures of kindergartens, Ms LEE said that EDB should consider specifying certain requirements under PEVS for compliance by kindergartens which had joined PEVS.

22. SED informed members that kindergarten education was not compulsory in Macao. While kindergartens under PEVS had to fulfil certain requirements such as the teacher-to-student ratio, the Administration had not imposed specific requirements on their day-to-day operation. He highlighted that the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education ("the Committee") had recently invited five overseas experts to Hong Kong to share their experience

Action

in implementing kindergarten education, and would continue its work in examining issues related to the implementation of free kindergarten education, including admission arrangements.

Issues related to the special measure of one place per child

23. Ms Starry LEE said that the panic of parents over kindergarten places was understandable as competition for admission was very keen. She also enquired about details of the measure of one place per child.

24. SED said that the Administration was fully aware of parents' concern about securing a place for their children. EDB had taken steps to inform parents that there were sufficient kindergarten places to meet the demand. As the simultaneous holding of places in different kindergartens by the same student would reduce the chance of enrolment of other students, the introduction of a centralized registration date would help release some kindergarten places early for take-up by other students.

25. Mr Michael TIEN considered the proposed arrangement for issuing and collecting the Registration Letter too complicated. To safeguard against multiple enrolment at different kindergartens by the same student, he said that a validity period should be specified for the Registration Letter. If the parents did not submit the Registration Letters to the kindergartens of their choice within the specified period, the places offered to them would be released to other applicants.

26. SED said that the setting up a centralized clearing system was the result of extensive discussion with the kindergarten sector and parents. PS(Ed) further explained that all along, kindergartens did not have information on children who had been offered places by more than one kindergarten. A clearer picture of student intake would only be available in summer each year. The implementation of the special measure of one place per child would enable the release of available kindergarten places for admission of other students as early as in February 2014, after the centralized registration date.

27. PEO(NT) explained that kindergartens would submit the students' particulars to EDB for checking after the centralized sign up date. EDB would inform kindergartens of the students who had signed up in more than one kindergarten and the kindergartens would follow up with the students concerned. EDB would issue Registration Letters to students who had signed up in one kindergarten only. Since there was currently no unified application period and date of announcing the application results among kindergartens,

Action

the proposed centralized registration date aimed to tie in with the existing schedule of admission procedures of individual kindergartens. If the kindergarten sector agreed to continue the implementation of these measures next year, steps could be taken to enhance and simplify the arrangements.

28. Mr Tony TSE was concerned about the profiteering activities of intermediaries who claimed to assist parents in making applications. He enquired about the feasibility of putting a cap on the number of kindergartens that a child was allowed to apply. In response, SED said that the measure of one place per child aimed to prevent the holding of multiple kindergarten places by the same student. The introduction of the centralized sign up date and registration date would help ascertain at an early stage the number of available kindergarten places, which would ease parents' worries about insufficient places for their children and reduce the participation of intermediaries. Meanwhile, if it was found that unlawful activities had been carried out by intermediaries, the Administration would take necessary action.

29. On the suggestion of setting a cap on applications, SED stressed the need to respect parental choice in applying for kindergartens that suited their children. In the absence of a centrally administered admission system for kindergartens, it might not be practicable to introduce measures to limit the number of applications submitted by parents.

30. Mr Tommy CHEUNG was gravely concerned that the implementation of the special measures on kindergarten admission arrangements was inconsistent with the environment of free enterprise in which kindergartens operated. In his view, the "one place per child" arrangement would have an adverse effect on the intake of students by kindergartens and their income, in particular those that had not joined PEVS. It would also restrict parents' choice of kindergartens. Mr CHEUNG remarked that in introducing the special measures, the Administration had failed to give due consideration to the importance of maintaining a free business environment, the autonomy of kindergartens in their admission of students and parental choice.

31. Whilst noting Mr CHEUNG's view, SED said that the Administration had to strike a balance between ensuring the provision of sufficient kindergarten places on one hand, and safeguarding parental choice on the other. He reiterated that the special measures had been worked out after extensive consultation with the kindergarten sector and parents to address concerns about availability of kindergarten places.

Action

Principle of vicinity in admission of kindergarten students

32. For the benefit of child care and development as well as home-school cooperation, Dr Fernando CHEUNG stressed that the principle of vicinity should be upheld in the admission of students by kindergartens. He sought confirmation from EDB that sufficient kindergarten places would be available for students who wished to study in their resident or neighbouring district. Dr Kenneth CHAN enquired about the support to be provided to parents in the North District to secure kindergarten places for their children in the district.

33. Ms Starry LEE enquired about the assistance that EDB could offer to help students secure kindergarten places in the vicinity of their residence, such as requiring PEVS kindergartens in various districts to admit students residing in the districts concerned. Given the uncertainty in the projected supply and demand of kindergarten places, the Chairman considered that the Administration should put in place appropriate measures and give an undertaking to assure parents that sufficient kindergarten places would be available in the North District for their children.

34. In this regard, SED said that EDB supported the principle of vicinity in the admission of kindergarten students and would encourage kindergartens to adopt this approach. Unlike the allocation of primary and secondary school places, there was no statutory basis for the Administration to give a general undertaking that each child would be allocated a kindergarten place in their resident district or in a neighbouring district. Nevertheless, he assured members that the Administration would make the best endeavour to assist parents in this regard, such as by organizing seminars for parents, distributing information leaflets to parents and setting up enquiry hotlines, etc. He added that parent seminars originally planned for December 2013 would be advanced to November so that timely information could be provided to parents. DS(Ed)3 supplemented that the district education offices of EDB in Tai Po and the North District would maintain close contact with kindergartens in the districts and collect updated information on the supply of places and student intake after the centralized registration date. Where necessary, appropriate assistance would be provided to parents.

35. Mr Tommy CHEUNG asked whether the principle of vicinity would also be applicable to Hong Kong children currently residing in Shenzhen but applying for kindergarten places in Hong Kong. He was of the view that strict adherence to the principle of vicinity would result in families moving into those districts where prestigious or popular kindergartens were located. As a result, the residential property prices in these districts might be driven up. Mr Michael TIEN shared similar concern.

Action

36. Mr James TIEN said that Members of the Liberal Party supported the principle of vicinity in the admission of kindergarten students. For example, children in the North District should be able to attend kindergartens in their neighbourhood. As far as the provision of kindergarten places in the North District was concerned, Mr TIEN considered that the principle of "putting Hong Kong people first" should prevail.

37. Regarding the principle of vicinity, SED highlighted that it was one of the special measures to be taken in Tai Po and the North District in respect of local students seeking admission to kindergartens. He supplemented that EDB had taken note of the different travelling patterns of cross-boundary students. Some cross-boundary students might stay in Hong Kong during school days and return to the Mainland during weekends, while some had already moved to Hong Kong.

Resources support for kindergartens to implement special measures

38. Mr Michael TIEN noted that some kindergartens might not have adequate resources to handle the administrative work arising from the implementation of the special measures and the large number of applications received. In this connection, SED recapitulated that in the 2013-2014 school year, each kindergarten under PEVS was provided with a One-off School Development Grant in an amount up to \$250,000. Kindergartens could flexibly make use of this grant to improve their website service or to engage additional staff to handle the administrative work in relation to student admission.

39. The Deputy Chairman said that apart from the one-off grant, the Administration should introduce further support measures to enable kindergartens to handle the necessary additional work. Dr Helena WONG was concerned that there might not be adequate trained teachers to tie in with the increase in student intake by kindergartens. She sought information on the plans, if any, to boost the supply of kindergarten teachers.

40. SED said that EDB acknowledged the importance of a quality teaching force in the provision of kindergarten education. The increase in student intake would provide more job opportunities for graduates who had received training in early childhood education. The Committee would examine various issues including the enhancement of professional development of serving kindergarten teachers. DS(Ed)3 added that the demand for trained kindergarten teachers was taken into account by the University Grants Committee when considering the triennial plans of its funded institutions.

Action

Educational needs of cross-boundary students

41. Given the increase in school-age children resulting from the "Year of the Dragon" effect and the number of cross-boundary students, Dr Fernando CHEUNG was concerned that keen competition for kindergarten and primary school places would continue in the coming years. Noting that the increase in cross-boundary students had put considerable pressure on the allocation of Primary One places in the North District, Mr WU Chi-wai enquired on the measures, if any, to prevent similar recurrence in the provision of kindergarten places.

42. SED said that the number of babies born in Hong Kong to Mainland women had reached its peak in 2011 and these children were expected to attend kindergartens in the 2014-2015 school year. The implementation of the six special measures aimed at improving kindergarten admission arrangements and better utilizing kindergarten places within the district so as to dispel parents' worries about insufficient places. Regarding the "Year of the Dragon" effect, SED said that these children were expected to attend kindergartens in the 2015-2016 school year. EDB would only be able to make a more accurate projection on the overall supply and demand of kindergarten places for the 2015-2016 school year when the actual 2013-2014 kindergarten enrolment information was available in February 2014.

43. PS(Ed) advised that according to the Census and Statistics Department, the number of babies born in Hong Kong to Mainland women had dropped from some 41 000 in 2011 to about 31 000 in 2012. The demand for kindergarten places from cross-boundary students was expected to decline progressively after 2016. Meanwhile, the number of babies born in Hong Kong to parents who were Hong Kong residents had increased from about 51 000 to 58 000 in 2012, probably due to the "Year of the Dragon" effect. The Administration would take into account the projected demand for school places in its school building programme. She cited an example that an existing school with 18 classrooms in the North District would be redeveloped into one with 36 classrooms, and the number of school places could be increased as a result.

44. SED recapitulated that in August 2013, EDB announced certain revised arrangements for Central Allocation under the 2014 Primary One Admission ("POA") System. Each primary school in the eight school nets that were close to the boundary was requested to set aside a minimum of two places per Primary One ("P1") class for cross-boundary students. EDB would offer a "Choice of Schools List for Central Allocation" for cross-boundary

Action

students at the Central Allocation Stage of the POA system. Schools in other school nets with cross-boundary students were encouraged to apply for inclusion on the list. The Administration would continue to monitor the trend and needs of cross-boundary students coming to Hong Kong for education at different class levels.

45. PS(Ed) explained that under the POA System, EDB would be able to obtain more information on the supply and demand of P1 places after completion of the Discretionary Stage and commencement of the Central Allocation Stage. Special measures could be implemented at the ensuing Central Allocation Stage if the supply in individual school nets was found to be insufficient. However, the demand for school places and choice of schools of cross-boundary students could vary from year to year because improvements in transport support in selected boundary crossings might help divert cross-boundary students to attend schools in other districts. For example, in the 2008-2009 school year, about 90% of cross-boundary students attended kindergartens in the North District. In the 2012-2013 school year, the proportion dropped to about 60%. Furthermore, there were 737 cross-boundary students studying P1 in the 2008-2009 school year, while the number of cross-boundary students studying P2 was only 663 in the 2009-2010 school year.

46. Mr MA Fung-kwok was of the view that to meet the imminent demand for kindergarten places in districts such as the North District, the Administration should take immediate action, such as providing resources to school sponsoring bodies to set up kindergartens in the North District for a period of two to three years. Consideration should also be given to converting vacant premises of primary and secondary schools in the North District into kindergartens on a temporary basis. In response, SED reiterated that EDB had all along encouraged kindergartens to convert existing vacant rooms or space into classrooms to provide more places. He also reported that a school sponsoring body had indicated that it would open a new kindergarten in the North District.

47. Mr James TIEN noted that with the implementation of the "zero delivery quota" from 2013 for Mainland expectant mothers whose husbands were not Hong Kong residents, the number of locally-born children whose parents were not Hong Kong residents, including cross-boundary students, returning to Hong Kong for education was expected to drop from 2016 onwards. He said that since the high demand for kindergarten places might not last for long, the Administration should properly address this temporary problem. He considered it impracticable for school sponsoring bodies to open new kindergartens for a limited period of three to four years.

Action

48. Mr IP Kwok-him enquired about the longer-term plan, if any, to provide education at different class levels to cross-boundary students. He also asked whether steps would be taken to establish schools offering the Hong Kong curriculum in Shenzhen or the frontier area to cater for students who were born in Hong Kong but resided in Shenzhen.

49. Mr MA Fung-kwok shared the view that the Administration should explore other options such as setting up schools in Shenzhen. Mr WONG Kwok-hing enquired about the action, if any, taken by the Government to follow up the suggestion of establishing publicly-funded schools in Shenzhen for cross-boundary students born in Hong Kong.

50. Mr Michael TIEN remarked that the number of Hong Kong residents living in Shenzhen was expected to increase as a result of improvements in transportation, and sought information on the number of Hong Kong residents living in Shenzhen. Mr TIEN was of the view that the educational needs of Hong Kong children living in Shenzhen should also be addressed. He concurred that the Administration should seriously consider setting up government-funded kindergartens and primary schools in Shenzhen offering the Hong Kong curriculum.

51. Noting members' views, SED said that the Administration was collecting information on Hong Kong people living in Shenzhen including their patterns of work and study. He advised that currently, two schools in Shenzhen offered the Hong Kong curriculum and admitted Hong Kong students. Four other schools offered principally the local curriculum but also operated Hong Kong curriculum classes for Hong Kong students. Primary Six students of these schools/classes in Shenzhen could participate in the Secondary School Places Allocation system in Hong Kong. The Administration and the Shenzhen authority would examine the effectiveness of the operation of this education service.

The motion

52. The Chairman said that he had received the wording of the following motion proposed by Dr Fernando CHEUNG - -

近月在北區、大埔、以至屯門、元朗區均出現大批家長輪候幼兒服務，家長、幼兒以及學校及幼師均飽受折騰。幼兒就近入學，免於奔波乃必需原則。本會促請教育局完善幼稚園入學機制，確保幼兒可以就近入學，加強對家長、幼兒及幼稚園的支援，並盡快落實十五年免費教育。

(translation)

That, given that in recent months, a large number of parents in the North District, Tai Po and even in Tuen Mun, Yuen Long have queued up for early childhood services, which has caused great hardship to parents, children, kindergartens and kindergarten teachers, and that the principle of vicinity should always be upheld in the admission of kindergarten students in order to relieve these young children of long and tiring travelling, this Panel urges the Education Bureau to improve the admission mechanism of kindergartens, ensure the admission of children to kindergartens near their homes, enhance its support for parents, children and kindergartens, and implement 15-year free education as soon as possible.

53. Mr WONG Kwok-hing proposed an amendment to the above motion by adding "進一步推動發揮本港和深圳兩地教育資源," before "完善".

54. Dr Helena WONG proposed to amend Dr CHEUNG's motion by adding "盡快增加北區、屯門、元朗等區的幼稚園學額," before "完善".

55. The Chairman considered that the motion was directly related to the agenda item and the Panel proceeded to deal with the motion and the proposed amendments. As the subject matter had been discussed at length, members agreed that no further debate was required but individual members and the Administration could state their stance briefly. The Chairman extended the meeting for 10 minutes to deal with the motion and the proposed amendments.

56. Mr Tommy CHEUNG expressed his objection to the original motion and the amendments on account of the need to maintain a free business environment, parental choice and kindergartens' discretion in admitting their students. Mr CHEUNG considered that the measures set out in the motion and the amendments could not effectively address any imbalance in the supply and demand of kindergarten places.

57. At the invitation of the Chairman, PS(Ed) said that the appropriateness of seeking resource support from the Shenzhen authorities as requested in Mr WONG Kwok-hing's amendment would need to be carefully deliberated since the current increase in the demand for kindergarten places due to a surge in cross-boundary births a few years back was transient. It should also be

Action

noted that as the supply and demand of kindergarten places was subject to many variable factors, the Administration was not in a position to give a firm undertaking on the issue at this juncture. Nevertheless, PS(Ed) re-assured members that the Administration would closely monitor the outcome of the six special temporary measures to be implemented in Tai Po and the North District, and would make the best endeavour to resolve the matter, as it had done so when dealing with past challenges.

58. The Chairman said that he would first deal with the amendment proposed by Mr WONG Kwok-hing, and then the amendment proposed by Dr Helena WONG. Dr Fernando CHEUNG indicated that he was agreeable with the amendments proposed by Mr WONG and Dr WONG to his original motion. Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that his proposed amendment sought to call for optimization of education resources. Dr Helena WONG said that she did not agree with the amendment proposed by Mr WONG Kwok-hing as the deployment of resources in Shenzhen was a matter for the Mainland authorities, not Hong Kong. She also considered Mr WONG's amendment too sweeping as the shortfall in kindergarten places did not prevail in all 18 districts.

59. The Chairman put to vote the amendment proposed by Mr WONG Kwok-hing. The following members voted for the amendment -

Mr WONG Kwok-hing, Mrs Regina IP, Ms Starry LEE, Mr MA Fung-kwok, Mr Steven HO, Mr Paul TSE, Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che and Mr IP Kin-yuen.

(9 members)

60. Mr Tommy CHEUNG voted against the amendment.

61. The following members abstained –

Mr Charles MOK, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen, Dr Helena WONG, Dr Kenneth CHAN and Mr Dennis KWOK.

(5 members)

62. The Chairman declared that the amendment was passed.

Action

63. The Chairman put to vote the amendment proposed by Dr Helena WONG. The following members voted for the amendment -

Mr WONG Kwok-hing, Mrs Regina IP, Ms Starry LEE, Mr Charles MOK, Mr Dennis KWOK, Mr MA Fung-kwok, Mr Steven HO, Mr Paul TSE, Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che, Dr Helena WONG, Dr Kenneth CHAN and Mr IP Kin-yuen.
(13 members)

64. Mr Tommy CHEUNG voted against the amendment. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen abstained.

65. The Chairman declared that the amendment was passed.

66. The Chairman put to vote the motion moved by Dr Fernando CHEUNG as amended by Mr WONG Kwok-hing and Dr Helena WONG. The following members voted for the motion as amended –

Mr WONG Kwok-hing, Mrs Regina IP, Ms Starry LEE, Mr MA Fung-kwok, Mr Steven HO, Mr Paul TSE, Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che, Dr Helena WONG and Mr IP Kin-yuen.
(10 members)

67. Mr Tommy CHEUNG voted against the motion as amended.

68. The following members abstained –

Mr Charles MOK, Mr Dennis KWOK, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen and Dr Kenneth CHAN.
(4 members)

69. The Chairman declared that the motion moved by Dr Fernando CHEUNG and as amended by Mr WONG Kwok-hing and Dr Helena WONG was passed (wording of motion at **Annex**).

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's written response to the motion passed at the meeting was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)245/13-14(01) on 13 December 2013.)

Action

II. Any other business

70. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:40 am.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
31 December 2013

就議程項目"幼稚園學額供求情況的相關事宜"通過的議案
Motion passed under the agenda item
"Issues related to the supply and demand of kindergarten places"

議案措辭

近月在北區、大埔、以至屯門、元朗區均出現大批家長輪候幼兒服務，家長、幼兒以及學校及幼師均飽受折騰。幼兒就近入學，免於奔波乃必需原則。本會促請教育局進一步推動發揮本港和深圳兩地教育資源，盡快增加北區、屯門、元朗等區的幼稚園學額，完善幼稚園入學機制，確保幼兒可以就近入學，加強對家長、幼兒及幼稚園的支援，並盡快落實十五年免費教育。

(張超雄議員動議並經王國興議員及黃碧雲議員修訂)

Wording of the Motion

(Translation)

That, given that in recent months, a large number of parents in the North District, Tai Po and even in Tuen Mun, Yuen Long have queued up for early childhood services, which has caused great hardship to parents, children, kindergartens and kindergarten teachers, and that the principle of vicinity should always be upheld in the admission of kindergarten students in order to relieve these young children of long and tiring travelling, this Panel urges the Education Bureau to further promote and optimize the use of education resources in Hong Kong and Shenzhen, increase expeditiously the number of kindergarten places in districts like the North District, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long, improve the admission mechanism of kindergartens, ensure the admission of children to kindergartens near their homes, enhance its support for parents, children and kindergartens, and implement 15-year free education as soon as possible.

(Moved by Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG and amended by Hon WONG Kwok-hing and Dr Hon Helena WONG)