

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(4)467/13-14  
(The minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

**Panel on Education**

**Minutes of meeting**  
**held on Monday, 13 January 2014, at 4:30 pm**  
**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 LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP  
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP  
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH  
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 Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yeet, GBS, JP  
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP  
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung  
Hon WONG Yuk-man  
Hon Claudia MO  
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

Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen

**Member absent** : Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP

**Public Officers attending** : Agenda item III

The Administration

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP  
Under Secretary for Education

Ms Pecvin YONG Pui-wan  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Education (Further Education)  
Education Bureau

Hong Kong College of Technology

Dr CHAN Cheuk-hay  
President and Principal

Ms WONG Wai-han  
Vice President

Mr Eugene CHUNG  
Associate,  
Architecture Design and Research Group Ltd.

Agenda item IV

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP  
Under Secretary for Education

Dr K K CHAN  
Deputy Secretary for Education(5)

Ms Jenny CHAN  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Education  
Infrastructure)  
Education Bureau

Agenda item V

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP  
Secretary for Education

Mrs Michelle WONG  
Deputy Secretary for Education (4)

Ms Teresa CHAN  
Principal Education Officer (School Administration)  
Education Bureau

Mr C S WOO  
Principal Education Officer (Education Commission  
and 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

Mr Ian CHOW  
Council Secretary (4) 4

Ms Sandy HAU  
Legislative Assistant (4) 3

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Action

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

(LC Paper No. CB(4)279/13-14(01) -- Letter dated 13 December  
2013 from

Hon Christopher CHUNG  
Shu-kun concerning the  
procedures on handling of  
accidents and bullying in  
schools  
(*Chinese version only*)

LC Paper No. CB(4)279/13-14(02) -- Administration's written  
response dated  
30 December 2013 to the  
letter dated 13 December  
2013 from  
Hon Christopher CHUNG  
Shu-kun concerning the  
procedures on handling of  
accidents and bullying in  
schools

LC Paper No. CB(4)297/13-14(01) -- Letter dated 11 December  
2013 from Dr Hon  
Fernando CHEUNG  
Chiu-hung concerning the  
work pressure on staff of  
higher education  
institutions  
(*Chinese version only*)

LC Paper No. CB(4)297/13-14(02) -- Administration's written  
response dated 9 January  
2014 to the letter dated  
11 December 2013 from  
Dr Hon Fernando  
CHEUNG Chiu-hung  
concerning the work  
pressure on staff of higher  
education institutions)

Members noted the above papers issued since the last meeting.

## II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(Appendix I to LC Paper No. CB(4)284/13-14 -- List of outstanding items for discussion

Appendix II to LC Paper No. CB(4)284/13-14 -- List of follow-up actions)

2. The Chairman informed members that the Administration had proposed to discuss the item of "progress of work of the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education" at the next regular meeting scheduled for 10 February 2014. The Chairman said that after discussion with the Deputy Chairman, another item on the admission of students under the non-Joint University Programmes Admission System ("non-JUPAS") and of non-local students to publicly-funded postgraduate programmes would be included on the agenda of the next meeting. This item would cover the issues set out under items 4 and 5 of the Panel's "List of outstanding items for discussion". Dr Kenneth CHAN said that he had also written to the Chairman recently on this matter. Members noted and raised no objection to the proposed discussion items.

3. 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.

## III. Start-up loan for post-secondary education providers

(LC Paper No. CB(4)284/13-14(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)284/13-14(02) -- Background brief entitled "Issues related to the Start-up Loan Scheme" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat)

4. Members noted the background brief on the subject prepared by the Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(4) 284/13-14(02)].

### Briefing by the Administration

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the Administration's proposal to seek the approval of the Finance Committee ("FC") to provide from the Loan Fund a start-up loan of \$30 million to HKCT Group Limited to fund part of the renovation costs of converting a vacant school premises in Ma On Shan into a campus suitable for the operation of full-time locally-accredited post-secondary programmes by the Hong Kong College of Technology ("HKCT") and the proposed HKCT Institute of Higher Education ("CTIHE") as set out in LC Paper No. CB(4)284/13-14(01). Members noted that the Administration planned to submit the proposal to FC for approval on 7 February 2014.

### Discussion

#### *Justifications for the proposed start-up loan*

6. Mr Dennis KWOK asked whether the contents and quality of the proposed programmes to be offered by HKCT and CTIHE had been considered by the Vetting Committee when assessing the application for the start-up loan. In response, US(Ed) advised that the proposed programmes would be subject to accreditation by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications ("HKCAAVQ"). Hence, the Vetting Committee was not responsible for the quality assurance of the proposed programmes.

7. The Deputy Chairman said that according to the information obtained from the Administration, in the 2010 academic year, the forecast and the actual student intake of HKCT were 625 and 507 respectively; while the corresponding figures for the 2012 academic year were 945 and 281 respectively. Noting that the new campus could accommodate a maximum of 1 100 students by the 2020-2021 academic year, the Deputy Chairman was concerned about the supply of and demand for programmes offered by HKCT. In view of the decline in secondary student population in the next few years, Dr Helena WONG questioned the sustainability of the self-financing post-secondary sector in the long run.

8. Dr CHAN Cheuk-hay, President and Principal of HKCT, clarified that 1 100 students were the maximum capacity to be accommodated at the new campus. On the other hand, HKCT usually referred to the forecast student intake as the maximum intake permitted by HKCAAVQ, and the

actual student intake must therefore be lower than that. Regarding the figures mentioned by the Deputy Chairman, Dr CHAN said that some of the figures might refer to the total enrolment of HKCT rather than the new intake figure.

9. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung enquired about the location of HKCT's existing campus in Ho Man Tin and its relationship, if any, with the Workers' Children Secondary School ("WCSS"). Dr CHAN Cheuk-hay explained that HKCT was currently accommodated at the premises of the former New Method College in Ho Man Tin and at a small area at the premises of the former WCSS (Primary Section). Legally, HKCT did not have any relationship with WCSS, even though previously, before HKCT became a post-secondary institution, HKCT and WCSS were under the same school sponsoring body.

10. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung remarked that in his opinion, there might be a transfer of benefits between HKCT and WCSS. He considered it inappropriate to grant the proposed start-up loan to HKCT Group Limited as it should be able to raise funds on its own to meet the renovation cost.

11. In this connection, US(Ed) pointed out that HKCT Group Limited was a non-profit-making post-secondary education provider offering programmes which met the accreditation requirements of HKCAAVQ. Furthermore, the proposed start-up loan of \$30 million had to be repaid to the Government and would only account for about half of the total renovation cost, which was estimated to be \$62 million.

12. Mr TAM Yiu-chung declared interest as the Honorary Chairman of HKCT's Management Board. He said that the self-financing post-secondary sector played an important role in meeting the demand for higher education as University Grants Committee ("UGC")-funded places were limited. He considered that some members' comments on the current loan application were loaded with political bias, and disagreed that there was any transfer of benefits.

13. Mr MA Fung-kwok said that HKCT had been providing useful programmes and services over the years, and expressed support for the proposed start-up loan to HKCT Group Limited.

14. Dr Kenneth CHAN said that the information provided in support of the present application was relatively brief when compared with the detailed explanation provided in connection with a similar application by the Hang Seng Management College ("HSMC") at an earlier Panel meeting.

15. Dr CHAN Cheuk-hay advised that HKCT Group Limited would be ready to provide more details if necessary. He highlighted that competition for the proposed campus was very keen as a total of five institutions had submitted bids. HKCT Group Limited had submitted a detailed proposal to the Vetting Committee setting out how the future campus would promote independent learning by students. US(Ed) supplemented that unlike the application of HSMC to fund the construction of a teaching block and a student hostel, the works to be funded by the proposed start-up loan would involve only the renovation of an existing vacant school premises, which were of a relatively smaller scale.

*Regulation of the self-financing post-secondary sector*

16. The Deputy Chairman was concerned about the impact of the repayment of start-up loans on the level of tuition fees charged by the institutions on students pursuing self-financed programmes, as well as the Administration's oversight, if any, in this regard. In response, US(Ed) advised that the level of tuition fees were determined by individual institutions, taking into consideration a basket of factors including the costs for operating the programmes, their competitiveness in the market and the affordability of students. Students with financial difficulties could apply for grants and loans provided by the Government.

17. Ms Cyd HO considered that as a single monitoring body was yet to be established, there was insufficient oversight over the self-financing post-secondary sector. She was concerned whether this regulatory body would be in place within two years.

18. In this connection, US(Ed) advised that the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education had recently commissioned a consultant to conduct a study on good practices on the regulation of the self-financing post-secondary sector. Principal Assistant Secretary for Education (Further Education) supplemented that incremental measures had been implemented to enhance the quality assurance mechanism of the self-financing post-secondary sector, such as the setting up of the Liaison Committee on Quality Assurance to promote sharing of good practices among all the quality assurance bodies and to enhance consistency and transparency. Preparation was underway to establish a working group comprising representatives from UGC, HKCAAVQ and UCG-funded institutions for the implementation of periodic external audits on sub-degree operations under the aegis of UGC-funded institutions.



19. Dr Helena WONG requested early discussion of the item of "Issues related to the governance and regulation of the self-financing post-secondary sector" on the Panel's "List of outstanding items for discussion". She objected to the practice of submitting applications for start-up loans for members' consideration on a case-by-case basis. Noting that CTIHE would plan to seek registration under the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320), Dr WONG urged the Administration to critically review and amend the Ordinance which, in her opinion, was highly inadequate for regulating self-financing post-secondary institutions. She was also gravely concerned about the lack of transparency in and monitoring over individual institutions' use of start-up loans, as well as the impact of loan repayment on tuition fees.

20. US(Ed) reiterated that to be eligible for start-up loans, the course provider must be non-profit making, as in the case of HKCT Group Limited. In tandem with various incremental measures to enhance the regulation of the self-financing post-secondary sector, the Administration would also encourage self-financing institutions to offer quality programmes to meet the needs for post-secondary education.

21. Mr TAM Yiu-chung remarked that as self-financed post-secondary programmes were not in receipt of any government subsidy, it was understandable for the institutions to recover part of their costs through tuition fees.

*Other concerns*

22. Mr WONG Kwok-hing considered that to meet the manpower needs of Hong Kong for different industries, it was necessary to include components of vocational training in post-secondary education. US(Ed) advised that in order to provide multiple pathways for students, diversified programmes were offered by self-financing post-secondary institutions, which included components of practical or vocational training to meet market needs. The provision of start-up loans would facilitate self-financing institutions in delivering their programmes.

23. Noting the Government's policy to support the development of the self-financing post-secondary sector, Dr Kenneth CHAN sought confirmation on whether the site of the former Queen's Hill Camp in Fanling would be used for the development of a private university instead of other purposes. US(Ed) said that the future use of the site in question was still under consideration by the Administration.

*Summing up*

24. Concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that members would support the submission of the proposal to FC for consideration. Dr Helena WONG requested to put on record her objection to the proposal.

**IV. Review on the implementation of Territory-wide System Assessment**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)284/13-14(03) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)298/13-14(01) -- Submission from Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union  
(*Chinese version only*)

LC Paper No. CB(4)298/13-14(02) -- Submission from TSA 關注組 (*Chinese version only*)

25. Members noted the submissions from Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union and TSA 關注組 [LC Paper Nos. CB(4)298/13-14(01) and (02) respectively].

Briefing by the Administration

26. At the invitation of the Chairman, US(Ed) briefed members on the progress of the Review on Territory-wide System Assessment ("TSA") by highlighting the salient points in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)284/13-14(03)]. US(Ed) advised that taking into account the views collected from different stakeholders, the Administration would propose a number of implementation arrangements and enhancement measures to TSA. To address the concern about excessive drilling, the current alternate-year arrangement for the Primary Six ("P6") TSA and Pre-Secondary One ("S1") Hong Kong Attainment Test would be extended to 2015 and after. The Administration proposed not to disclose the number and percentage of students achieving Basic Competency ("BC") in Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics to primary schools from 2014 onwards to avoid inappropriate comparisons within and among schools. Subject to members' views, the Administration planned to announce the new TSA arrangement and enhancement measures in the first quarter of 2014.

## Discussion

27. The Chairman drew members' attention to a motion proposed by Dr Helena WONG and seconded by the Deputy Chairman, which was tabled at the meeting. He said that he would deal with the motion after discussion with the Administration. Members noted and raised no objection.

### *Objectives and functions of TSA*

28. The Deputy Chairman was gravely concerned about the excessive drilling practices which started as early as P1. He noted that some schools had arranged after-school classes during the summer holiday to prepare students for TSA to be held in the following school year. The teaching and assessments within schools had become TSA-oriented. Dr Helena WONG shared similar view and was gravely concerned that teaching and assessment in schools were only geared to serving TSA, to the detriment of the education system. Dr WONG said that the Education Bureau ("EDB") should have obtained sufficient data to keep track of students' performance on a territory-wide basis since the introduction of TSA in 2004, and considered that it was time to discontinue TSA on students.

29. US(Ed) stressed that TSA was a low-stakes assessment and the TSA reports on students' performance could provide useful information to schools for drawing up plans to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning. The crux of the problem was the practice of some schools to arrange excessive drilling and the inappropriate comparisons of students' performance in TSA within and among schools. On the tracking of students' performance, US(Ed) clarified that the first cohort of students who had sat for P3 TSA had just completed their secondary school education and took the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination in 2013.

30. Mr WU Chi-wai remarked that TSA might have deviated from its original purpose and function as currently, parents often made reference to students' performance in TSA when choosing schools for their children. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung was of the view that the Administration should put in place a mechanism to prohibit schools from disclosing information on BC attainment rates. Non-compliance on the part of the schools would result in penalty such as reduction in subsidies. The Chairman considered that the Administration should take measures to avoid inappropriate comparison among schools.

31. In this regard, US(Ed) explained that the purpose of providing schools with the school level reports was to facilitate their internal reference with a view to understanding the strengths and weaknesses of their students and drawing up plans to enhance learning and teaching. Although all schools had undertaken not to disseminate the content of their reports, it was noted that some schools and school sponsoring bodies had made comparisons among schools and some had disclosed information on students' performance in their student recruitment exercise. US(Ed) further said that there was practical difficulty in enforcing the restriction on the use of information kept by individual schools. Hence, the Administration had decided not to provide the information on BC attainment rates to primary schools from 2014 onwards.

32. Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered that under existing arrangements, students had to undergo onerous assessments once every three years at P3, P6 and S3 levels. He called on the Administration to consider abolishing P3 TSA and conduct a review on the continued need for TSA.

33. US(Ed) advised that as learning diversity was likely to widen when students progressed from P3 to P4, it was necessary to conduct an assessment on students at P3 level so that timely plans could be drawn up to improve the effectiveness of learning and teaching. If P3 TSA had not been carried out, the weaknesses in students' performance might only be ascertained at P6, at which time remedial actions might be too late. He further said that in other jurisdictions, it was not uncommon for students at about the age of attending P3 to undergo assessments in BC. He stressed that TSA was intended to serve as an assessment tool and not a selection tool.

34. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that learning diversity among students within a school could be identified through daily learning and teaching without TSA which was conducted on a territory-wide, instead of school-specific, basis. He suggested that the Administration might provide the TSA examinations papers to schools for conducting their internal assessment and compiling relevant data on students' performance for internal reference.

35. US(Ed) clarified that every school would be provided with a TSA report containing information on the performance of its students as well as the territory-wide standard. A school could not compare the performance of its students directly with that of another school. Deputy Secretary for

Education(5) ("DS(Ed)5") said that the performance of different cohorts of students from the same school might vary. The school level reports would enable schools to identify this variation for improvement plans.

36. Ms Starry LEE enquired about the action, if any, taken by the Administration to dispel worries and concerns of parents about TSA. In response, DS(Ed)5 advised that EDB met with parents regularly. In collaboration with schools, EDB would step up effort to promote understanding of the purposes of TSA and the proper use of TSA data.

*Enhancement measures proposed by the Administration*

37. The Deputy Chairman welcomed the Administration's proposals to discontinue disclosing the BC attainment rates in Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics to primary schools from 2014 onwards and to remove TSA from the list of Key Performance Measures for primary schools. However, he was of the view that these measures were not sufficient in removing all the drawbacks of TSA, in particular the inappropriate comparison of the BC attainment rates. He was concerned that as long as the attainment rates for each individual item were stated in the school level reports, the overall attainment rates of students of individual school could still be worked out by the teachers. In this regard, the Deputy Chairman enquired whether consideration would be given to making bold and decisive changes, such as total abolition of TSA.

38. Dr Fernando CHEUNG also considered that if it was possible to compare the overall attainment rates of students of individual schools, drilling practices and pressure on teachers and students could not be averted. Dr Helena WONG remarked that the pressure of excessive drilling practices which started as early as P1 could only be removed if P3 TSA was abolished.

39. US(Ed) advised that the proposed arrangements and enhancement measures as set out in the Administration's paper should be able to improve the implementation of TSA and address the concerns of stakeholders. The Administration would continue to promote the proper use of TSA data to the school sector. DS(Ed)5 supplemented that since the information on BC attainment rates for primary schools would not be disclosed under the Administration's proposal, it would not be possible for individual schools to work out their own BC attainment rates based on the schools' performance in individual papers or questions. Teachers could also focus their attention and efforts on enhancing learning and teaching rather than drilling practices.

40. Mr Starry LEE enquired whether the usefulness of school level reports would be affected if the BC attainment rates were not included in the reports. In response, DS(Ed)5 confirmed that upon the implementation of the proposed arrangements and measures, the information in the TSA reports would be sufficient for schools to enhance teaching and learning.

41. Mr WONG Kwok-hing recalled that when a motion related to the academic standard of students in Hong Kong was debated at a Council meeting last month, Members had presented their views on TSA for the Administration's consideration. He enquired about the Administration's prior consultation with stakeholders on the proposed arrangements and enhancement measures.

42. US(Ed) advised that before formulating the proposed arrangements and enhancement measures, EDB had met with various stakeholders in 2013. The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority had also conducted focus group meetings attended by different stakeholders. Taking into account members' views expressed at this meeting, the Administration would refine the proposals as necessary and aim to announce the new TSA arrangement and the enhancement measures in the first quarter of 2014.

43. Ms Starry LEE noted that according to the concerns of Dr Helena WONG and the Deputy Chairman as articulated at the meeting, they appeared to be in support of the abolition of TSA. This stance was different from that stated in the motion proposed by Dr WONG and seconded by the Deputy Chairman. Ms LEE considered that it was necessary to put in place an assessment tool, such as TSA, to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses in the performance of students. She would support the implementation of the new arrangements and enhancement measures proposed by the Administration, to be followed by a review after a period of time. Ms LEE said that Members of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong disagreed with the immediate abolition of TSA prior to any review of the revised arrangements. She also urged EDB to maintain close communication with stakeholders in the implementation of the improved measures.

44. US(Ed) took note of members' views and reiterated that the proposed arrangements and improvement measures aimed to preserve the core functions of TSA and alleviate the pressure on students and teachers arising from excessive drilling practices and inappropriate comparison.

45. Mr IP Kwok-him was of the view that every education system comprised a mechanism for assessment of students' performance. He had no objection to keeping TSA under review with a view to improving its implementation and eliminating drawbacks, but would oppose the immediate abolition of TSA. In this connection, Mr IP made his observation that members had frequently proposed to move motions on important policy issues at Panel meetings where debating time was limited. He also questioned whether the Panel was the appropriate forum to deal with motions from time to time as the Panel should focus its work on monitoring and examining policies and issues of public concern relating to education. He said that he would not support the motion to be moved by Dr Helena WONG.

46. Mrs Regina IP said that she had no objection to calling for a review on TSA. However, she considered that the meaning of the term "異化" in the wording of the motion was not clear and should be clarified.

#### The motion

47. The Chairman concluded the discussion and proceeded to deal with the following motion moved by Dr Helena WONG and seconded by the Deputy Chairman –

就 2014 年 1 月 13 日的立法會教育事務委員會會議，議程討論檢討全港性系統評估 (TSA) 的推行情況。就此，本委員會促請政府聆聽教師、家長及學生意見，在六個月內就全港系統性評估的存廢或改善，進行全面的檢討和諮詢，以消除 TSA 的流弊，避免教育異化。

(translation)

That, in connection with the discussion on the agenda item "Review on the implementation of Territory-wide System Assessment ("TSA")" at the meeting of the Panel on Education of the Legislative Council held on 13 January 2014, this Panel urges the Government to listen to the views of teachers, parents and students and conduct within six months a comprehensive review as well as consultation on the retention, abolition or improvement of TSA, so as to eliminate the drawbacks of TSA and avoid the morbid change to education.

48. In reply to the Chairman's enquiry, Dr Helena WONG clarified that it was her personal view that TSA should be abolished. The motion to be voted on by members, as currently worded, was to urge for a comprehensive review as well as consultation on whether TSA should be retained, abolished or improved. The Deputy Chairman stressed that irrespective of the outcome of the review to retain, abolish or improve TSA, the ultimate objective was to eliminate the drawbacks of the existing arrangements in order not to undermine the education system.

49. At the invitation of the Chairman, US(Ed) reiterated that as set out in the Administration's paper, the proposed arrangements and measures were recommended after conducting a review and consultation with stakeholders.

50. The Chairman put to vote the motion moved by Dr Helena WONG. The following members voted for the motion –

Dr Kenneth CHAN, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Dr Helena WONG, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, Ms Cyd HO, Mr Charles MOK, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen and Mr IP Kin-yuen.  
(9 members)

51. The following members voted against the motion –

Mr WONG Kwok-hing, Mr Steven HO, Mr TAM Yiu-chung, Ms Starry LEE, Mr IP Kwok-him, Mr Tony TSE, Dr Elizabeth QUAT, Mr MA Fung-kiwok and Mr Tommy CHEUNG.  
(9 members)

52. The following members abstained –

Mrs Regina IP and Mr Michael TIEN.  
(2 members)

53. Since the motion was not agreed to by a majority of members voting, the Chairman declared that the motion was negated.

## **V. Review on the policy of Direct Subsidy Scheme schools**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)284/13-14(04) -- Paper provided by the Administration



LC Paper No. CB(4)284/13-14(05) -- Background brief entitled "Issues related to Direct Subsidy Scheme schools" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat

LC Paper Nos. CB(4)284/13-14(06) -- Letters dated 24 July and  
and (07) 6 December 2013 (with wording of a motion attached) from Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok to the Chairman of Panel on Education respectively  
(*Chinese version only*)

LC Paper No. CB(4)284/13-14(08) -- Submission from Hong Kong Association of the Heads of Secondary Schools (*Chinese version only*)

54. Members noted the background brief prepared by the Secretariat on the subject [LC Paper No. CB(4)284/13-14(05)], two letters from Dr Kenneth CHAN [LC Paper Nos. CB(4)284/13-14(06) and (07)] and two submissions from Hong Kong Association of the Heads of Secondary Schools and AntiDSS Concern Group (SPSS) [LC Paper Nos. CB(4)284/13-14(08) and CB(4)304/13-14(01) respectively]. They also noted a submission received from Hong Kong Direct Subsidy Scheme Schools Council [LC Paper No. CB(4)308/13-14(01)] tabled at the meeting.

#### Briefing by the Administration

55. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the roles and functions of schools operated under the Direct Subsidy Scheme ("DSS") and the current position of the DSS policy as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)284/13-14(04)]. He highlighted that the policy objective of DSS was to provide more diversified choices to parents and students. Among the 74 DSS schools, about 40% were newly-established and about 30% were former aided schools. DSS schools accounted for about 9% of publicly-funded schools. They were required to provide fee remission and

scholarship schemes so as to ensure that students would not be deprived of the opportunity to attend DSS schools due to a lack of means.

### Discussion

56. The Chairman drew members' attention to the proposed motion set out in the letter from Dr Kenneth CHAN dated 24 July 2013 which had been issued to members earlier vide LC Paper No. CB(4)284/13-14(06) and the wording of the amendment proposed by Ms Cyd HO to Dr CHAN's motion [LC Paper No. CB(4)309/13-14(01) tabled at the meeting]. He said that he would deal with the motion after the Panel had discussed the item with the Administration and that he would not arrange for further debate on the motion. Members noted and raised no objection. To allow sufficient time for discussion and dealing with the motion, the Chairman informed members that the meeting would be extended for 15 minutes to end at 6:45 pm.

### *Concerns about school fees of DSS schools*

57. Ms Cyd HO noted that DSS schools would provide greater diversity in the school system and more choices for parents. Some aided schools had decided to join DSS in order to operate with greater flexibility and autonomy in deploying resources and providing services to cater for the needs of students. However, Ms HO was concerned that admission to some DSS schools had become a privilege of children from affluent families as the high school fees were not affordable to less well-off students.

58. Dr Fernando CHEUNG noted that according to the submission from AntiDSS Concern Group (SPSS) [LC Paper No. CB(4)304/13-14(01)], 12 ex-aided secondary and primary schools that had joined DSS charged an annual school fee in the range of \$15,000 to \$60,000 for the 2012-2013 school year. He recalled that last year, there was strong opposition from some parents of students from St. Stephen's Girls' College ("SSGC") and St. Paul's Secondary School ("SPSS") to the proposals of these two schools to join DSS for fear that the high school fees to be charged would discourage economically disadvantaged students from applying for admission. Dr Helena WONG pointed out that in recent years, an increasing number of famous aided schools had turned into DSS schools and started charging high school fees. She considered such development unhealthy and would eventually lead to segmentation of the school sector. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung was of the view that if DSS schools would serve only the rich, they should not receive government funding.

59. Mr IP Kwok-him declared that he was an office-bearer of a school sponsoring body that operated a DSS school. He appreciated that in the past two decades or so, DSS schools had provided wider choices for parents and students. He did not subscribe to the views that the development of DSS schools had been tilted in favour of the rich, or had resulted in any segmentation of the school sector.

60. SED said that since the implementation of the DSS policy in 1991, DSS schools had played an important role in Hong Kong's education system, especially in providing diversity and greater choices for students and parents. He clarified that all DSS schools were required to be non-profit-making and in fact, quite a number of DSS schools collected low school fees and a few did not charge school fees in junior secondary classes. Some DSS schools would raise fund to provide better facilities and services to their students.

61. Mr Michael TIEN declared that he was the supervisor of a DSS school. On the utilization of the school fee income set aside to provide for fee remission, Mr TIEN was of the view that measures should be put in place so that more economically disadvantaged students could be admitted to DSS schools and the fee remission provision could be fully utilized. In this regard, he suggested that DSS schools might be allowed to set aside up to 15% of their school fee income for the fee remission scheme and they should be reimbursed by the Government for the amount exceeding the 10% threshold. In the longer run, the Administration should consider raising the ceiling of school fee income to provide for fee remission from the existing 10% to 15% or 20%.

62. Mr Tommy CHEUNG declared that he was a school management committee member of a DSS school. He stressed that the admission of students to DSS schools was based on merits and not on the applicants' financial situation. Mr CHEUNG considered that the Administration should not introduce any drastic change to the prevailing system, such as any suggestion to require individual DSS schools to set aside a certain number of places for admission of economically disadvantaged students.

63. SED said that the establishment of DSS schools was not meant to serve particular types of students. According to the latest figures available to EDB, all DSS schools had set aside 10% or more of their school fee income for fee remission and scholarship schemes. Some schools had even utilized a much high percentage of their school fee income for fee remission and scholarship purposes.

*Transparency of the financial management of DSS schools*

64. Dr Fernando CHEUNG was of the view that information on the actual amount of income and expenditure, the number of students benefiting from the fee remission and scholarship schemes and the amount involved should be disclosed by individual DSS schools to facilitate public scrutiny. Dr Helena WONG shared similar view.

65. As far as transparency was concerned, Mr IP Kwok-him said that DSS schools were required to meet a set of stringent requirements specified by EDB as recommended by the Working Group on DSS. The information currently disclosed by DSS schools was in fact more comprehensive than that disclosed by aided schools.

66. In this connection, SED highlighted that to meet the public expectation of increased accountability and transparency in the operation of DSS schools, all DSS schools had already been required to report the information on major expenditures in terms of percentages of their annual overall expenditures and the cumulative operating reserve in their School Reports. They had also uploaded their financial summaries onto their websites in December 2013.

*Need for a review on the policy of DSS schools*

67. Dr Kenneth CHAN said that instead of merely reporting on the progress of various improvement measures, the Administration was expected to indicate its commitment to conduct a review on the policy of DSS schools so as to ascertain whether the original policy objective had been achieved. Noting the wide public concern and strong opposition to the applications from SSGC and SPSS for turning into DSS schools last year, Dr CHAN said that he intended to move a motion urging the Administration to set up a special committee to promptly review the policy of DSS schools and conduct a comprehensive public consultation exercise. Pending completion of the review, EDB should withhold processing applications from aided schools for turning into DSS schools. Dr Fernando CHEUNG concurred with Dr Kenneth CHAN's views.

68. Noting that DSS schools enjoyed a higher level of autonomy and flexibility than aided schools, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung was of the view that if similar flexibility was given to aided schools, they might be less inclined to apply for turning into DSS schools. He considered it necessary for the Administration to critically review its policy on aided schools as well, so as

to find ways to accord greater flexibility to these schools in developing their strengths.

69. Dr Helena WONG agreed that it was necessary for the Administration to review the prevailing policy on aided schools and to ascertain whether the lack of necessary resources and support from the Government was the major reason for them to apply to join DSS. The Deputy Chairman considered it of utmost importance that EDB should provide both aided schools and DSS schools with the necessary resources for delivering quality education.

70. Ms Cyd HO remarked that she was dissatisfied with the Administration's paper which had only responded to the findings and recommendations set out in the reports of the Audit Commission and the Public Accounts Committee. The paper had not addressed the overall policy, the role of DSS schools, and how DSS schools and public sector schools could complement each other to better serve the students. Based on past deliberations at the Panel, Ms HO believed that there was a broad consensus among members that the implementation of the DSS policy should be reviewed. Therefore, she would propose to amend Dr Kenneth CHAN's motion to this effect. She highlighted that the admission procedures, in particular the timing of releasing the admission results, should not be arranged in favour of DSS schools. The Administration should ensure that both aided schools and DSS schools would receive the necessary resources for delivering quality education. In scrutinizing applications from aided schools for turning into DSS schools, the Administration must ensure that major stakeholders including teachers, parents and alumni could express their views freely and independently. Dr Kenneth CHAN indicated no objection to the amendments proposed by Ms Cyd HO to his motion.

71. SED said that although aided schools and DSS schools were regulated under different policies, both types of schools were able to achieve good performance, as evidenced by the examples of many renowned and popular aided and DSS schools. He advised that the implementation of the improvement measures recommended by the Working Group on DSS was progressive and well-paced. Hence, DSS schools should be allowed a reasonable period of time to enhance their operation. The Administration would continue to monitor the DSS schools and listen to views on how the implementation of the DSS policy could be improved.

72. The Deputy Chairman said that as he was aware, when consulting stakeholders on proposals to turn into DSS schools, some aided schools had required the teachers and parents to write down their names in the questionnaires issued for this purpose. He was concerned whether the Administration, when vetting applications from aided schools to join DSS, could satisfy itself that stakeholders had been able to express their views freely during consultation.

73. Deputy Secretary for Education(4) said that when processing applications from aided schools to join DSS, the Administration would assess each application in accordance with a set of established criteria in a prudent manner. Whether the stakeholders had been properly consulted and whether their concerns had been duly addressed were essential factors for consideration when processing the application.

74. Mr IP Kwok-him expressed his objection to the motion to be moved by Dr Kenneth CHAN and the amendment proposed by Ms Cyd HO. He considered it reasonable to review a policy in the light of implementation experience. If there was already a consensus among members over this principle, Mr IP did not see any justification to move a motion to this effect at the meeting. He remarked that the motion urging, amongst others, EDB to stop processing applications from aided schools to join DSS pending completion of the review would be tantamount to deciding on a course of action before conclusion of the review.

75. Noting that DSS schools enjoyed a higher level of autonomy and flexibility and had been increasingly welcomed by parents, Ms Starry LEE remarked that it might be necessary to review both the policy on aided schools and on DSS schools. However, she opposed any immediate suspension of processing of applications from aided schools to join DSS.

76. Mr WONG Kwok-hing declared that he was a member of the school management committee of a DSS school which mainly served students from grassroot families. Mr WONG considered that the motion to be moved by Dr Kenneth CHAN would demonize DSS schools. It was also inappropriate to stop processing applications to join DSS. On the contrary, he considered that the Administration and the community should have a better understanding of the difficulties faced by DSS schools in their operation.

77. Mrs Regina IP declared that she was a member of the school management committee of a DSS school in Sham Shui Po attended mainly by students from grassroot families. She stressed the importance of a

diversified education sector to provide greater choices for parents and students. Mrs IP pointed out that whilst the proposals of SSGC and SPSS to turn into DSS schools had been met with opposition, there was also strong support from some stakeholders who envisaged that after joining DSS, the schools concerned could secure better resources to deliver quality education. In her view, aided schools were in a disadvantaged position under the prevailing system not because of the DSS policy, but because of the adverse impacts of reform measures such as School-Based Assessment, Territory-wide System Assessment and external reviews, etc.

78. Mr Michael TIEN did not see any problem with conducting a review on the DSS policy. However, he disagreed that the processing of applications from aided schools to turn into DSS schools should be suspended pending the outcome of the review. He pointed out that after joining DSS, schools might not necessarily collect high school fees. According to his understanding, many parents were supportive of the proposals of the schools attended by their children to join DSS. Mr TIEN also objected to comments which sought to demonize DSS schools.

79. Mr Tommy CHEUNG remarked that school sponsoring bodies would only apply to turn into DSS schools after very careful consideration. He also pointed out that since the provision of Government subsidy to DSS schools in the form of a block grant was based on the number of student admitted rather than the number of classes operated as in the case of aided schools, the operation of DSS schools would be adversely affected if there was insufficient student intake.

80. SED took note of members' views on issues related to the implementation of the policies on DSS schools and aided schools.

81. Due to insufficient time, the Chairman sought members' view on further extending the meeting to 7:00 pm so as to deal with the motion. Mr IP Kwok-him objected to further extension of the meeting. Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that he would not agree to the Chairman's suggestion to extend the meeting, but indicated that he was ready to vote on the motion at this juncture. As there was dissenting voice to the proposal, the Chairman declared that the meeting would end at 6:45 pm without any further extension. Regarding the motion and the proposed amendment thereto which had not been dealt with at the meeting, he would discuss the matter with the Deputy Chairman after the meeting.

**VI. Any other business**

82. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:45 pm.

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