

立法會
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by the Administration)

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Panel on Education

Minutes of special meeting
held on Monday, 27 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
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon WONG Yuk-man
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

Members absent : Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon Claudia MO
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP

Public Officers attending : Agenda item I

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP
Secretary for Education

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Ms Michelle LI, JP
Acting Permanent Secretary for Education /
Deputy Secretary for Education (1)

Mrs Betty IP, JP
Acting Permanent Secretary for Education /
Deputy Secretary for Education (3)

Ms Jessie WONG
Deputy Secretary for Education (2)

Mrs Michelle WONG
Deputy Secretary for Education (4)

Dr K K CHAN
Deputy Secretary for Education (5)

Mrs Angelina CHEUNG
Deputy Secretary for Education (6)

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

Action

I. Briefing by the Secretary for Education on the Chief Executive's 2014 Policy Address

(LC Paper No. CB(4)323/13-14(01) -- Paper entitled "2014 Policy Address: Policy Initiatives of Education Bureau" provided by the Administration)

Other relevant documents

Address by the Chief Executive at the Legislative Council meeting on 15 January 2014 -- "Support the Needy, Let Youth Flourish, Unleash Hong Kong's Potential"

The 2014 Policy Agenda booklet

Briefing by the Administration

At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the initiatives on education in the 2014 Policy Address and highlighted the following points –

- (a) Nurturing the next generation and supporting the disadvantaged were among the priorities of the 2014 Policy Address announced by the Chief Executive to facilitate upward social movement.
- (b) The Government had accepted the recommendations of the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education ("the Committee") to implement a number of short-term measures, including the one-off increase in the voucher subsidy of the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme ("PEVS") by \$2,500 per year in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years as well as the fee thresholds for kindergartens under PEVS. In addition, it was proposed to lift the fee remission ceiling under the

Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme ("KCFRS"). Subject to the Panel's views, the Administration planned to submit its proposal to the Finance Committee ("FC") for approval in February 2014.

- (c) Regarding school education, the Government would provide WiFi facilities in about 1 000 public sector schools and local schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme. It would also strengthen life planning and career guidance services in secondary schools.
- (d) The Government would provide young people with more higher education opportunities, including introducing new subsidy and scholarship schemes for studying outside Hong Kong.
- (e) Vocational education would be strengthened by introducing a Pilot Training and Support Scheme at the Vocational Training Council to integrate structured apprenticeship training programmes and clear career progression for specific industries. Subject to members' comment, the Administration planned to submit its proposal to FC for approval later this year.
- (f) The Government would provide enhanced support for non-Chinese speaking students ("NCS students") and students with special educational needs ("SEN students"). Financial assistance to needy students would also be strengthened.

2. Before proceeding to the discussion, the Chairman drew members' attention to the Administration's plan to seek FC's approval on its proposals to increase the voucher subsidy and fee thresholds under PEVS and lift the fee remission ceiling under KCFRS, and introduce a Pilot Training and Support Scheme, as mentioned in paragraph 1(b) and 1(e) above respectively.

Kindergarten education

3. Mr Tommy CHEUNG remarked that currently, non-PEVS kindergartens were in a disadvantaged position when recruiting students because children enrolled in these kindergartens could not benefit from the voucher subsidy. Noting that the rates of voucher subsidy for half-day kindergartens and whole-day kindergartens were the same under PEVS, Mr CHEUNG enquired about the support measures, if any, to assist

whole-day kindergartens to meet their operating needs. He also enquired whether the implementation of PEVS had brought about any enhancement in the quality of kindergartens.

4. SED advised that PEVS was a non-means-tested scheme implemented since the 2007-2008 school year to ease the financial burden of parents and raise the quality of kindergarten education. Currently, about 80% of kindergartens had joined PEVS. These kindergartens had to fulfil a number of requirements specified by the Education Bureau ("EDB") on premises, safety, qualifications of teachers and principals, etc. SED further said that all kindergartens under PEVS would benefit from the proposed short-term measures. Meanwhile, issues related to whole-day kindergartens, such as their operating hours and funding needs, were being studied by the Committee and its subcommittees.

5. Dr Kenneth CHAN was of the view that the proposed short-term measures could hardly address the needs of whole-day kindergartens operating long hours ("long whole-day kindergartens"). The Deputy Chairman said that stakeholders, including parents, teachers and principals of kindergartens, were concerned about the lack of a clear direction on free kindergarten education and the mode of subsidy for whole-day/long whole-day kindergartens. He sought the Administration's explanation on its policy stance on whole-day kindergartens.

6. SED reiterated that all kindergartens under PEVS and their students could benefit from the proposed increase in voucher value in the next two school years. The Committee was aware of the operational needs of different types of kindergartens and was in the course of examining relevant issues.

7. Acting Permanent Secretary for Education/Deputy Secretary for Education(3) ("Acting PS/DS(Ed)3") advised that with the increase in voucher subsidy and school fee threshold, kindergartens would have better capacity to meet their operating expenses without having to pass the financial burden onto parents. It was expected that parents, teachers and kindergartens could benefit from the proposed short-term measures. She assured members that the Committee would continue its study with regard to the concerns and needs of different stakeholders, including long whole-day kindergartens.

8. The Deputy Chairman further enquired how the Administration could ensure that kindergartens would not pass the financial burden onto parents after the increase in the amount of voucher subsidy. Acting PS/DS(Ed)3 advised that the increase in voucher value would, to a certain

extent, off-set the need for kindergartens to raise their fees to meet increased expenses. When kindergartens applied for fee adjustment on account of their specific circumstances, the Administration would consider the applications prudently. The other short-term measure to lift fee remission ceiling under KCFRS would also alleviate the financial burden of needy parents.

Development of e-textbooks

9. Ms Cyd HO noted that e-textbooks often contained various e-features or interactive contents which were conducive to effective learning and teaching. She considered it crucial to provide each student with a device with which they could make the best use of e-textbooks. Ms HO also stressed the need to allocate more resources to develop the IT infrastructure of schools.

10. Mr MA Fung-kwok recalled that earlier on, EDB had announced the launch of a trial scheme to provide a one-off grant to 100 selected schools for upgrading their IT infrastructure with WiFi connectivity. He enquired whether the trial scheme would duplicate the proposed phased provision of WiFi facilities in about 1 000 public sector schools and local schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme, as set out in paragraph 7 of the Administration's paper.

11. In this regard, SED clarified that the trial scheme to be participated by about 100 selected schools was implemented in the 2013-2014 school year to tie in with the adoption of e-textbooks. The Government would soon launch a consultation exercise on the "Fourth Strategy on Information Technology in Education". One of the major initiatives was the phased provision of WiFi facilities in about 1 000 public sector schools and local schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme in order to facilitate more diversified teaching and learning in class.

Support for NCS students in learning Chinese

12. Noting that the Government would provide primary and secondary schools the Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework ("the Framework"), Mr Abraham SHEK enquired about the difference between the Framework and the Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for Non-Chinese Speaking Students ("the Supplementary Guide") issued by the Government in 2008. Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered that it was necessary to develop a "Chinese as a second language curriculum and assessment" for NCS students.

13. Deputy Secretary for Education(5) ("DS(Ed)5") advised that the Supplementary Guide provided schools with guidance on making appropriate adaptation to the mainstream curriculum to cater for the needs of NCS students. The Framework would take a systematic approach and was developed from the perspective of second language learners. It would set out the progressive learning targets and outcomes at different stages with a view to enabling NCS students to bridge over to mainstream Chinese Language classes and sit for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education ("HKDSE") Examination. The Administration also planned to introduce an Applied Learning (Chinese Language) subject as an alternative qualification for NCS students to opt for at senior secondary levels, the contents of which would be pegged at Qualifications Framework Levels 1 to 3 and the results would be recorded in HKDSE. EDB was working with different stakeholders to ensure that the relevant qualifications for NCS students would be recognized for employment and further studies. DS(Ed)5 further said that the Framework would be implemented in the 2014-2015 school year, in tandem with other measures such as professional development programmes to enhance Chinese teachers' professional capabilities in teaching Chinese as a second language.

14. On the development of a "Chinese as a second language curriculum", SED advised that the Administration was working along this direction when drawing up the Framework. Further discussion with stakeholders on the implementation of the Framework would continue to take place.

15. Dr Kenneth CHAN noted that the Hong Kong Unison Limited had submitted its views on the 2014 Policy Address recently. He considered it necessary for the Administration to respond to the organization's concerns, particularly on the development of a "Chinese as a second language curriculum and assessment". In this regard, SED informed members that EDB would arrange briefings for various stakeholders and concern groups on the education initiatives of the 2014 Policy Address.

Integrated education and special education

16. Referring to the Government's plan to increase the rates of the Learning Support Grant ("LSG") by 30% in the 2014-2015 school year to further enhance the support for ordinary schools to cater for SEN students, Dr Fernando CHEUNG pointed out that what the schools needed most was additional manpower. He considered that the ceiling of \$1.5 million of

LSG per school per annum should also be raised. Mr Dennis KWOK considered that an increase of LSG by 30% was not a significant improvement because the rates of LSG had not been adjusted for the past decade. He said that according to his understanding, about 5% of SEN students required tier-3 support under the 3-Tier Intervention Model. He enquired about the number and percentage of SEN students who required tier-2 support.

17. Acting PS/DS(Ed)3 advised that the level of support required by students was a professional judgment and decision made by the schools. Based on the information available from the schools, the majority of SEN students required tier-2 support while a relatively small proportion of SEN students required tier-3 support.

18. Mr Dennis KWOK highlighted that the provision of adequate resources to schools and professional training for teachers were crucial for the effective implementation of integrated education. Noting that schools would usually assign a teacher to be responsible for co-ordinating the provision of support for SEN students in addition to his/her existing duties, Mr KWOK enquired whether consideration would be given to creating a dedicated SEN coordinator post in each school to oversee the effective provision of support for SEN students.

19. In reply, Acting PS/DS(Ed)3 explained that pursuant to the Whole-School Approach adopted in implementing integrated education, the entire teaching force in the school was involved in the provision of support to SEN students. Meanwhile, schools were advised to assign a vice principal or a senior teacher to coordinate the support for SEN students. In fact, EDB had created a deputy headship post in primary schools and one of the major duties of the post-holder was to lead and coordinate the teaching staff in implementing integrated education.

20. Referring to the various measures to further enhance the support for special schools as set out in paragraph 41 of the Administration's paper, Mr Dennis KWOK sought further information on the additional resources to be allocated to special education and the estimated number of students to benefit from these measures.

21. Acting PS/DS(Ed)3 advised that the proposed enhancement measures to be implemented with effect from the 2014-2015 school year would generally benefit all special schools. Currently, over 7 000 students had enrolled in special schools. It was roughly estimated some \$80 to \$90 million would be required for implementing the proposed support measures.

Career guidance services and vocational education

22. Mr WONG Kwok-hing welcomed the Government's plan to strengthen life planning and career guidance service in secondary schools to help students to make informed choices for their future career. He was of the view that the participation of private enterprises was crucial to the implementation of vocational education programmes. He enquired about the details of collaboration with the business sector and possible study pathways for secondary school leavers who took up employment after completion of secondary education but thereafter intended to pursue further studies. Mr Tony TSE enquired whether assistance was provided to students for entering the trade/profession after they had received the relevant training. He was also concerned whether the vocational education programmes offered would tie in with the manpower needs of the relevant industries.

23. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that to ensure the best use of public resources, the provision of vocational education should be geared to meeting the manpower needs of specific industries. He was of the view that the business sector should play a more active role in vocational education and apprenticeship training, such as providing opportunities for internship or practical training.

24. SED advised that the Administration would strengthen life planning and career guidance services for secondary students, promote various opportunities for career education and further studies, and provide career-related learning experiences for students. The Administration was mindful of the importance of collaboration between different stakeholders including the business sector. For example, since the launch of the Qualifications Framework, 19 Industry Training Advisory Committees ("ITACs") had been set up with the support from the relevant industries. The ITACs had drawn up the competency standards of various levels of their industries for human resources management purposes. The Administration had also proposed to introduce a Pilot Training and Support Scheme at the Vocational Training Council to integrate structured apprenticeship training programmes and clear career progression for specific industries which were facing a shortage of skilled labour.

25. Noting the commonly held view that university education was the only key to success, Mr WONG Kwok-hing remarked that the Administration should take steps to promote vocational education as a promising pathway for young people to join relevant industries according

to their aspirations and abilities. In this regard, SED said that a Task Force on Vocational Education would be set up to map out the strategy and measures to promote vocational education in the community.

26. Ms Cyd HO said that the Administration should identify those industries facing labour shortage and provide relevant information to senior secondary students through the enhanced career guidance service in schools. She considered that the Administration should not rely solely on teachers to provide career guidance services, as they might not be well-versed in labour market situations.

27. SED advised that the Administration had planned to strengthen the life planning and career guidance service for secondary students after discussion with relevant stakeholders, including school principals and the Hong Kong Association of Careers Masters and Guidance Masters ("ACMGM"). To strengthen support for schools and unleash teachers' capacity, the Administration would, starting from the 2014-2015 school year, provide each public sector school operating senior secondary education levels with a recurrent cash grant equivalent to the mid-point salary of a graduate teacher.

28. Mr WU Chi-wai questioned the effectiveness of providing additional cash grant to schools. He was of the view that consideration should be given to creating a dedicated post in each secondary school for the provision of career guidance service. Mr WU remarked that the prevailing New Senior Secondary ("NSS") curriculum was highly examination-oriented. He recalled that under the old curriculum, students could take subjects such as metalwork and some arts-related subjects which placed greater emphasis on craftsmanship and practical aspects instead of academic competency. He enquired whether students could take similar practical subjects without being assessed in open examinations under the NSS curriculum.

29. SED said that the Administration would need to discuss with ACMGM on whether a full-time dedicated post of career master should be provided in each secondary school. Regarding the NSS curriculum, he advised that students could choose from 37 Applied Learning courses which comprised practical components.

Provision of post-secondary places

30. Mr TAM Yiu-chung and Mr Tony TSE welcomed the Government's plan to introduce a new subsidy scheme to subsidize up to

1 000 students per cohort to pursue self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines for the purpose of nurturing talents for industries in keen demand of labour. Members also sought further explanation on the operation of the scheme.

31. Acting Permanent Secretary for Education/Deputy Secretary for Education(1) ("Acting PS/DS(Ed)1") said that EDB would work in collaboration with other relevant bureaux and departments to identify the accredited self-financing undergraduate programmes for which subsidy should be provided in order to meet the known demand for trained manpower by specific industries. The admission of students to the selected programmes would be on the basis of merits of the applicants. The level of subsidy and other operational arrangements would be worked out in consultation with stakeholders. Acting PS/DS(Ed)1 further said that after formulating the details of the scheme, the Administration would consult the Panel and seek the funding approval of FC in accordance with the established procedures. SED supplemented that the scheme would benefit three cohorts of students in the 2015-2016 to 2017-2018 academic years, and would then be subject to a review on its effectiveness.

32. Mr Michael TIEN was concerned about the articulation of sub-degree graduates to subsidized undergraduate programmes. He considered that the Administration should further increase the number of senior year undergraduate places at University Grants Committee ("UGC")-funded institutions so as to provide adequate opportunities for students who had successfully completed sub-degree programmes to articulate to subsidized undergraduate studies.

33. SED reiterated that the Administration was committed to enabling more young people to receive post-secondary education, and one such initiative was the proposed new subsidy scheme to subsidize up to 1 000 students per cohort to pursue self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines. The annual intake of senior year undergraduate places in UGC-funded institutions would be further increased by 1 000, i.e. from 4 000 to 5 000 per annum starting from 2015-2016 and during the following planning triennium. There were also 6 500 intake places for locally accredited self-financing top-up degree programmes. Students pursuing self-financing sub-degree or undergraduate programmes were eligible to apply for financial assistance through the Financial Assistance Scheme for Post-secondary Students.

34. Mr Michael TIEN remarked that according to some survey findings, the qualifications attained from self-financing programmes received lower

recognition by the business sector. He said that the Administration should actively consider increasing the number of UGC-funded first-year-first-degree places. In this regard, SED remarked that there were plentiful examples of quality self-financing post-secondary programmes, such as the nursing degree programmes, the qualifications of which were recognized by relevant professional bodies.

35. The Chairman was of the view that the Administration should take a more decisive and bold move to increase UGC-funded first-year-first-degree places so that students who met the minimum entrance requirements (i.e. "3-3-2-2") would be able to pursue subsidized undergraduate studies.

36. Dr Fernando CHEUNG declared that he was teaching in a UGC-funded institution. He remarked that the number of UGC-funded first-year-first-degree places had not been adjusted for over a decade and had only been slightly increased from 14 500 to 15 000 in 2012. He saw the need to increase the number of subsidized first-year-first-degree places to meet the demand for higher education.

37. SED highlighted that in considering whether or not the number of UGC-funded first-year-first-degree places should be adjusted, it was necessary to take into account all relevant factors including the decline in secondary student population. It should also be noted that whilst applicants had fulfilled the minimum requirements (i.e. "3-3-2-2") for university entry, they might also need to meet additional requirements when applying for individual undergraduate programmes. SED advised that the new initiatives proposed in the 2014 Policy Address were targeted measures that aimed at providing more diversified choices in post-secondary education for young people, as well as meeting the requisite manpower needs of certain industries.

38. Mr Abraham SHEK declared that he was a member of the Council and the Court of the University of Hong Kong and that he was studying at the City University of Hong Kong. Mr SHEK expressed concern about the inadequate provision of UGC-funded first-year-first-degree places and Postgraduate Certificate in Laws ("PCLL") places.

39. Acting PS/DS(Ed)1 said that the number of UGC-funded PCLL places was determined taking into account the views of the Standing Committee on Legal Education and Training which comprised representatives from the legal profession, the three law schools, the Administration and other stakeholders. These places were primarily targeted at local graduates of UGC-funded Bachelor of Laws programmes.

40. Referring to the \$100 million scholarship designated for about 20 local students who excelled in sports, art as well as community service to pursue post-secondary education, Mr MA Fung-kwok enquired about the policy bureau which was responsible for administering the scholarship scheme. He expressed the view that the number of awardees should be increased.

41. Acting PS/DS(Ed)1 said that the operation of the scheme, including the selection mechanism, would be coordinated by Home Affairs Bureau ("HAB"). She said that according to her understanding, HAB would invite school principals to nominate students for consideration by a selection panel.

42. Noting that the plan for the development of a private university at the site of the former Queen's Hill Camp in Fanling would not be proceeded with, Dr Kenneth CHAN enquired whether the Administration would allocate another greenfield site for the development of private university.

43. In this connection, SED explained that the Government had examined the proposed use of the site in question holistically and carefully, taking into account the prevailing circumstances. In addition to the decline in the number of secondary school leavers in the coming years, the large scale and rugged topography of the site in question would require extensive site formation and infrastructural works, which might not be compatible with the development needs of a private university. After considering all relevant factors, the Administration had come to the view that to optimize the use of scarce land resources, the Queen's Hill site should be designated for the alternative use of housing development in order to better serve the needs of the community. SED stressed that the Administration would uphold its policy and commitment on supporting the development of higher education in Hong Kong.

Further education outside Hong Kong

44. Mrs Regina IP welcomed the proposal of establishing a new scholarship scheme starting from the 2015-2016 academic year to support up to 100 outstanding students per cohort to study in renowned universities outside Hong Kong, and enquired about details of the scheme. Mr MA Fung-kwok asked whether the recipients had to undertake to return to work in Hong Kong for a specified period after graduation. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen enquired about the respective proportion, if any, of funding allocated for studying in the Mainland and other countries.

45. SED advised that scholarships under this scheme would be awarded to outstanding local students for further studies in renowned universities outside Hong Kong. Other things being equal, priority would be given to applicants pursuing programmes that were not currently offered in Hong Kong or those that would help meet the keen demand for certain industries or professions. To be eligible for the scholarships, the applicants had to demonstrate their commitment to Hong Kong after graduation. Acting PS/DS(Ed)1 further said that the scholarship would cover both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. In principle, priority would be given to programmes/disciplines not offered by local universities. Subjects of excellence in individual universities outside Hong Kong would also be considered. A committee would be set up to advise on the selection mechanism and implementation of the proposed scholarship scheme.

46. The Chairman considered that if the publicly-funded scholarship scheme was to achieve its intended objective of grooming a top cadre of talents with global vision, prospective recipients should be required to undertake that they would return and work in Hong Kong for a specified period after graduation. The Administration should also put in place appropriate measures for handling cases in which the scholarship recipients failed to complete their studies.

47. SED advised that in principle, the Administration would consider requiring the scholarship recipients to return to Hong Kong after graduation but some flexibility would be allowed, such as where the graduates continued their postgraduate studies overseas. He also referred to his meetings with Hong Kong students during recent overseas duty visits, and said that many of the students had indicated their intention to return to Hong Kong after graduation.

48. Dr Kenneth CHAN urged the Administration to announce details of the new scholarship scheme early. Referring to the suggestion that the scholarship recipients should give an undertaking to return to work in Hong Kong after graduation, Dr CHAN urged for caution in considering the matter as it might have implications on existing subsidized university education. He noted that currently, while UGC-funded programmes were also publicly-funded, their students were not required to give an undertaking to stay and work in Hong Kong after graduation.

49. SED noted members' views and indicated that the selection panel proposed to be established for determining the selection criteria would comprise community leaders who possessed relevant experience.

50. Mrs Regina IP sought further explanation on the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme ("the Mainland Scheme") and the Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions ("the Admission Scheme"), as well as the eligibility criteria for subsidy under the Mainland Scheme.

51. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen asked whether the Mainland Scheme was subject to any quota, and whether the Administration would launch a similar scheme for students pursuing studies in other places, such as Taiwan. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung sought information on the number of students pursuing higher education in the Mainland.

52. In this regard, SED informed members that currently, the Admission Scheme was participated by 75 higher education institutions in the Mainland. Acting PS/DS(Ed)1 explained that the Admission Scheme was a collaboration project at the Government-to-Government level. Under the Admission Scheme, the participating institutions would admit Hong Kong students based on their HKDSE Examination results.

53. Acting PS/DS(Ed)1 further advised that needy Hong Kong students pursuing studies under the Admission Scheme would be eligible to apply for assistance under the Mainland Scheme, and the plan was to roll out the scheme in the 2014-2015 academic year. The Mainland Scheme would provide a means-tested bursary of up to \$15,000 per year per student. Only the students pursuing studies in the Mainland institutions under Admission Scheme would be eligible to apply for the subsidy. In the past two academic years, a total of about 2 000 Hong Kong students were admitted by Mainland institutions under the Admission Scheme. For the time being, there was no plan to introduce a quota under the Mainland Scheme.

54. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen commented that the roll out of the Mainland Scheme and the new scholarship scheme to subsidize 100 outstanding students to study in renowned overseas universities gave the impression that the Government was providing incentives to encourage local students to leave Hong Kong for further studies. He questioned whether there had been any change in policy, and was concerned that the new initiatives were introduced merely for the sake of easing pressure on the Government to increase local undergraduate places.

55. SED explained that the objective of these initiatives was to provide students with more diversified opportunities for higher education. For instance, with the increase in the number of students studying in the Mainland and participating in the Admission Scheme, the Administration

had proposed to introduce the Mainland Scheme to provide financial assistance to these students. On access to higher education, it was expected that with the parallel development of publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary sectors, by 2015, one-third of secondary school leavers could be admitted to undergraduate programmes. The overall post-secondary education participation rate could reach about 70% if students on sub-degree programmes were also included.

56. To allow sufficient time for discussion, the Chairman extended the meeting for 15 minutes to 6:45 pm.

Provision of international school places

57. Ms Starry LEE said that Members of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong supported the policy objective to let youth flourish and welcomed various education-related initiatives. However, she relayed the grave concern of some foreign chambers of commerce about the shortage of international school places in Hong Kong. Noting that the subject of international school places had not been addressed in the 2014 Policy Address, Ms LEE enquired about the measures, if any, to increase the provision of international school places.

58. In this regard, SED said that the Administration had commissioned a consultancy study from 2011 to 2012. According to the findings of the study, the provision of international school places in secondary schools would be sufficient and there would be a shortfall of about 4 200 primary school places by the 2016-2017 school year. The Administration was fully aware of the projected shortage and had planned to allocate additional vacant school premises and greenfield sites for international school development.

59. Ms Starry LEE was concerned that the International Montessori School ("IMS") had not been able to renew the lease of its premises at Tin Hau with the Hong Kong Construction Association ("HKCA"). She sought clarification on whether the lot concerned would be used for youth hostel development instead. She also enquired whether assistance would be provided to IMS in securing lease renewal or finding new school premises.

60. SED explained that the lot where the Tin Hau campus of IMS was currently located was granted to HKCA by the Government in 1953 for operating a non-profit-making school. After the former school operated by HKCA on the site had ceased operation, HKCA, with approval from the Administration, leased the lot to IMS for a defined period. Renewal of the

tenancy was a matter for negotiation between HKCA and IMS. While the Administration did not consider it appropriate to intervene and ask HKCA to renew the tenancy, it had reminded HKCA that sufficient lead time should be given to the sponsoring body for IMS to make alternative arrangements if the lease would not be renewed upon expiry. SED also confirmed that if HKCA intended to use the lot in question for other purposes not in compliance with the land grant, it must apply for approval in accordance with the relevant procedures. So far, EDB was not aware of any such application. SED assured members that EDB would provide necessary assistance to IMS if it needed temporary school premises.

61. The Deputy Chairman and Mr Paul TSE were concerned about the Administration's stance on any application for change in the use of the lot where IMS was located. Mr Paul TSE considered that EDB should play a proactive role to facilitate discussion between HKCA and IMS with a view to securing at least a short-term lease of one to two years. Given the current shortage of international primary school places, Dr Kenneth CHAN concurred that the Administration should proactively provide assistance to IMS in its lease negotiation with HKCA.

62. SED reiterated that in accordance with the relevant town planning procedures, approval would need to be obtained for any change in the land use of the lot in question (i.e. from a non-profit-making school to other purposes). EDB might also be consulted if such an application was received. He assured members that the Administration was fully aware of the need for increased provision of international school places, notably primary school places.

Summing up

63. Concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that in general, members supported the Administration's submission of its proposals to FC on increasing the voucher subsidy and fee thresholds under PEVS and introducing a Pilot Training and Support Scheme.

II. Any other business

64. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:15 pm.