

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)764/13-14
(The minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 14 April 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 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-yee, GBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
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 Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen

**Member
absent** : Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP

**Public Officers
attending** : Agenda item IV

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP
Secretary for Education

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Agenda item V

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP
Secretary for Education

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

Mr Wallace LAU
Principal Assistant Secretary (Higher Education)
Education Bureau

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

Agenda item VI

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Ms Jessie WONG Hok-ling
Deputy Secretary for Education (2)

Dr K K CHAN
Deputy Secretary for Education (5)

Ms IP Ling-bik
Principal Assistant Secretary (Education
Commission and Planning)
Education Bureau

Mr Sheridan LEE
Principal Education Officer (Curriculum
Development) 1
Education Bureau

Agenda item VIII

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Miss Wendy CHUNG
Principal Assistant Secretary (Infrastructure &
Research Support)
Education Bureau

Ms Sophia WONG
Principal Education Officer (Special Education and
Kindergarten Education)
Education Bureau

Agenda item IX

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Miss Wendy CHUNG
Principal Assistant Secretary (Infrastructure &
Research Support)
Education Bureau

Ms Sophia WONG
Principal Education Officer (Special Education and
Kindergarten Education)
Education Bureau

Mr Peter NG
Assistant Director (Youth and Corrections)
Social Welfare Department

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) 4

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes

(LC Paper No. CB(4)543/13-14 -- Minutes of meeting on
10 February 2014)

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2014 were confirmed.

II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

2. Members noted that no information paper had been issued since the last meeting.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(Appendix I to LC Paper No. -- List of outstanding items
CB(4)545/13-14 for discussion

Appendix II to LC Paper No. -- List of follow-up actions)
CB(4)545/13-14

3. The Chairman informed members that the Administration had proposed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting to be held on 12 May 2014 at 4:30 pm –

- (a) 8093EB - Construction of an annex to Baptist Lui Ming Choi Secondary School in Shatin; and
- (b) 3354EP - A 36-classroom primary school in Area 36 in Fanling.

Action

4. The Chairman referred members to the letter dated 11 April 2014 from the Deputy Chairman [LC Paper No. CB(4)574/13-14(01) tabled at the meeting] and said that after discussion with the Deputy Chairman, another item on "Policy on small class teaching in primary schools and issues related to increasing the number of students allocated to each Primary One class" would be included on the agenda of the next meeting. Members noted and raised no objection to the proposed discussion items.

5. 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.

IV. Matter arising

- Motion to be moved by Hon IP Kin-yuen

(LC Paper No. CB(4)491/13-14(05) -- Letter dated 17 March 2014 (with wording of a motion) from Hon IP Kin-yuen to the Chairman of Panel on Education (*Chinese version only*))

6. The Chairman said that as the Panel had thoroughly deliberated the matter at the last meeting, he would proceed to deal with the following motion moved by the Deputy Chairman without further debate. Members agreed.

"本事務委員會認為政府當局提交有關「未來數年升中學生人口短暫下降紓緩措施」的文件未能回應教育界的合理訴求。教育界憂慮因學生人口下降導致學位供求失衡，將會對教育生態及學生發展造成深遠的負面影響。

本委員會促請政府當局因應實際情況，進一步加強中一年級每班的減派人數，讓香港學校教育在穩定和健康的生態下發展，也讓學生在良好環境下學習。"

Action

(translation)

"That this Panel considers that the paper on "Relief Measures to Address the Temporary Decline in Secondary One Student Population in the Coming Few Years" provided by the Administration fails to address the reasonable demands of the education sector; the education sector worries that the decline in student population will lead to an imbalance between the supply and demand of school places, bringing far-reaching adverse impacts on education ecology and the development of students.

That this Panel urges the Administration to, in the light of the actual circumstances, further reduce the number of students allocated per Secondary One class, so that school education in Hong Kong may develop in a stable and healthy ecology and students may learn in a desirable environment."

7. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Education ("SED") pointed out that in implementing the basket of targeted relief measures, including the progressive reduction in the number of students allocated to each Secondary One ("S1") class under the district- and school-based "2-1-1 option"/"1-1-1 option", the Education Bureau ("EDB") had taken into account the views of different stakeholders. The measures aimed at preserving the stability and strengths of the schools as well as the teaching force to cope with the temporary decline in secondary student population and the anticipated rebound in a few years' time. In the absence of any new justifications, the Administration would continue the progressive reduction in the number of students to be allocated to each S1 class in the 2014-2015 school year. The School Development Sections of EDB would work closely with schools in this regard. The Administration would not agree with any further reduction in the number of students allocated to each S1 class as put forward in the motion.

8. The Chairman put the motion to vote. The following members voted for the motion –

Mr IP Kin-yuen, Dr Kenneth CHAN, Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che, Ms Claudia MO and Mr Charles MOK.
(6 members)

Action

The following members voted against the motion –

Mr Tony TSE, Mrs Regina IP, Mr MA Fung-kwok, Ms Starry LEE,
Mr TAM Yiu-chung, Mr IP Kwok-him, Mr Steven HO and Mr
WONG Kwok-hing.
(8 members)

No member abstained.

9. The Chairman declared that the motion was negatived.

V. Increasing Subsidized Higher Education Opportunities

(LC Paper No. CB(4)545/13-14(01) -- Paper provided by the
Administration)

10. Members noted a paper dated 11 April 2014 prepared by the Deputy Chairman [LC Paper No. CB(4)574/13-14(02)] tabled at the meeting.

Briefing by the Administration

11. At the invitation of the Chairman, SED briefed members on the following initiatives announced in the 2014 Policy Address to broaden the opportunities for local students of receiving higher education, as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)545/13-14(01)] –

- (a) launching a new scholarship scheme to support up to 100 outstanding Hong Kong students per cohort to study in renowned universities outside Hong Kong, starting from the 2015-2016 academic year ("Scholarship Scheme");
- (b) exploring how to practically introduce a new subsidy scheme starting from the 2015-2016 academic year to subsidize up to 1 000 students per cohort to pursue designated full-time locally-accredited self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines to nurture talents to meet Hong Kong's social and economic needs ("Subsidy Scheme"); and
- (c) launching the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme ("MUSSS") starting from the 2014-2015 academic year to support needy students pursuing studies under the Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher

Action

Education Institutions ("Admission Scheme").

Subject to members' views, the Administration would seek funding approval from the Finance Committee ("FC") in May 2014 for launching the three proposed initiatives in mid-2014.

Discussion

12. Before proceeding to the discussion, the Chairman sought clarification on whether the three proposed initiatives would be bundled in a single FC paper, or separately put up for consideration by FC. In reply, SED advised that the three proposed initiatives would be submitted as three separate items for consideration by FC.

Scholarship Scheme for studying outside Hong Kong

13. Mr Charles MOK noted that under the Scholarship Scheme, priority would be given to students intending to pursue study disciplines that were currently not available in Hong Kong. He remarked that if the disciplines or programmes were not offered locally, the demand for graduates of such disciplines might not be great. Mr Tony TSE expressed his support for the Government's proposed initiatives to increase the higher education opportunities. He was concerned about the employment prospect for graduates of study programmes which were not available in Hong Kong, and whether applicants would overwhelmingly apply for disciplines of study not offered in Hong Kong in order to improve their chance of being awarded the scholarships.

14. SED said that awardees would be selected through a rigorous selection process and in accordance with a set of criteria to be determined by a Steering Committee. Whilst priority would be given to programmes that were conducive to building up Hong Kong's long-term competitiveness, in particular those not available in Hong Kong, there was no restriction on the disciplines of study.

15. Mr Tony TSE noted that for undergraduate programmes, only students who had completed formal school education in Hong Kong would be eligible. He enquired whether individuals who had completed their secondary education many years ago would also be eligible.

16. Deputy Secretary for Education (1) ("DS(Ed)1") explained that the Scholarship Scheme would target mainly students receiving senior secondary education in Hong Kong, as well as recent secondary school

Action

graduates. The applicants were also required to have resided in Hong Kong continuously for three complete years immediately prior to the commencement of the academic programme outside Hong Kong.

17. While welcoming the new initiatives, Mr WU Chi-wai was concerned that they would only benefit the top students who might already have many choices. In this regard, SED highlighted that the Scholarship Scheme aimed at building up or diversifying talents for Hong Kong's sustainable development. In addition to a non-means-tested scholarship which was merit-based, a means-tested bursary would also be available for application by awardees who were less well-off financially.

18. Ms Starry LEE said that Members of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong supported the three proposed initiatives. She sought confirmation on whether the awardees of the Scholarship Scheme would be required to return to work in Hong Kong for a specified period after graduation. In reply, SED advised that after taking into account various views including those from members, it was proposed that the awardees would be required to undertake to return to Hong Kong upon graduation to work for at least two years or a period equivalent to the duration of receiving the proposed scholarship, whichever was longer.

19. Mr WONG Kwok-hing enquired whether the Administration would, after launching the Scholarship Scheme, consider setting up a fund-matching arrangement by enlisting the financial support of the private sector. In reply, SED advised that the Administration was aware of other scholarship/subsidy schemes set up by other organizations for students pursuing further studies outside Hong Kong. For the time being, there was no plan to introduce any change such as inviting private sector participation. The proposed Scholarship Scheme would benefit three cohorts of students starting from the 2015-2016 academic year and then be subject to a review on its effectiveness.

20. Mrs Regina IP expressed her support for the initiatives and urged for their early implementation. She said that according to her understanding, non-local students pursuing PhD programmes in some countries, such as the United States and Canada, could be granted scholarships that fully subsidized their study. However, this arrangement was not applicable to non-local students pursuing undergraduate programmes. Mrs IP opined that the Steering Committee should consider how to determine the respective proportion of scholarship recipients for undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

Action

21. Dr Helena WONG remarked that it was not a common practice for overseas universities to provide scholarships to non-local postgraduate students. She was of the view that there should be greater flexibility in the proportion of scholarship recipients for postgraduate studies. Noting that the scholarship would be tenable for up to two years for a master's degree, Dr WONG considered that this requirement should be relaxed because the duration of postgraduate programmes might be up to four years. In response, DS(Ed)1 advised that the scholarship proposal already had the flexibility to ensure that it would be tenable for the normal duration of the undergraduate or postgraduate programme concerned.

22. In order to ensure a fair and transparent selection process, Dr Helena WONG considered that the Administration should provide members with detailed information on the selection criteria to be drawn up by the Steering Committee, as well as the selection panels to be set up for vetting, interviewing and selecting qualified applicants.

23. DS(Ed)1 explained that the selection for award was primarily based on the applicant's merit in terms of academic and non-academic achievements, leadership qualities and potential, as well as contribution and commitment to Hong Kong, particularly the willingness to contribute to Hong Kong upon completion of studies. The selection panels would work in accordance with the criteria and directions set out by the Steering Committee.

24. With reference to the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)545/13-14(01)], members requested the Administration to provide the following information/explanation on the Scholarship Scheme –

- (a) out of the 100 scholarships, the respective numbers of prospective awardees for undergraduate programmes and postgraduate programmes;
- (b) the composition of the Steering Committee, in particular the identification of "community leaders" (paragraph 6); and
- (c) details of the selection criteria and selection process (paragraph 6) such as the assessment of "contributing to enhancing Hong Kong's competitiveness" (paragraph 2) and the selection of universities or programmes that would be recognized as "world renowned universities or programmes" (paragraph 3).

Action

Subsidy Scheme for self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines

25. Noting that the Administration had initially identified health care, construction industry, testing and certification, and creative industry as the key disciplines that were in keen and urgent demand for talent, Ms Starry LEE sought explanation on the criteria for selecting these disciplines. Mr Charles MOK enquired about the authority responsible for selecting the aforesaid disciplines.

26. SED and DS(Ed)1 informed members that an inter-departmental working group comprising EDB and other relevant bureaux/departments had been convened to identify the disciplines that were in need of manpower and the relevant self-financing post-secondary programmes.

27. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed concern about any possible cross-subsidy arising from the co-existence of subsidized and non-subsidized places in the same self-financing programme.

28. Mr Christopher CHUNG declared that he was a representative of Legislative Council Members sitting on the Court of the University of Hong Kong. Mr CHUNG was concerned that the Subsidy Scheme would favour the self-financing programmes operated by the University Grants Committee ("UGC")-funded institutions, notably the University of Hong Kong's School of Professional and Continuing Education ("HKU SPACE").

29. DS(Ed)1 confirmed that only full-time locally-accredited self-financing undergraduate programmes on selected disciplines would be covered by the Subsidy Scheme. HKU SPACE primarily offered sub-degree programmes which were outside the scope of the Subsidy Scheme. The designated programmes would nurture the necessary talent for specific industries with a keen demand for trained manpower. On the admission of students to the designated programmes, DS(Ed)1 said that the Administration was exploring the feasibility of using the Joint University Programmes Admissions System.

MUSSF

30. Before expressing his view on the discussion item, Mr TAM Yiu-chung raised a point of order. He pointed out that it might not be appropriate for objects carrying slogans to be displayed on the table of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman. The Deputy Chairman subsequently

Action

removed the object referred to by Mr TAM.

31. Mr TAM Yiu-chung expressed his support for MUSSS. He said that according to some students studying in the Mainland whom he had met recently, they were charged the same level of tuition fee as their Mainland counterparts. In addition to tuition fees, Hong Kong students had to spend about \$2,000 per month as living expenses, as well as pay for the airfare between Hong Kong and the Mainland during term breaks. Financial support in the form of discounted airfare or living expenses supplement would be of great relief to them. Mr TAM considered that the Administration should inform the students currently studying in the Mainland through the Admission Scheme of the latest information about MUSSS once it was approved.

32. Ms Starry LEE urged for early implementation of MUSSS and considered it useful for the Administration to collect information on the pathways for further study or employment upon graduation from higher education institutions in the Mainland.

33. Noting that quite a number of students with special educational needs ("SEN students") pursued their post-secondary education in Taiwan where greater educational support was available to SEN students, Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung took the view that the Administration should consider providing subsidy to students pursuing post-secondary studies in nearby places outside Hong Kong, notably Taiwan and Macau.

34. SED advised that the Admission Scheme, which had been implemented for two years, was currently the only Government-to-Government initiative for local students to pursue further education outside Hong Kong. This was distinct from other channels whereby Hong Kong students, on their own volition, pursued studies outside Hong Kong. MUSSS was planned to be implemented for three cohorts starting from the 2014-2015 academic year and then be subject to a review on its effectiveness. SED further said that the Administration had adopted a pragmatic approach and upon funding approval, would implement the Scheme as soon as possible.

35. Dr Kenneth CHAN was of the view that since MUSSS would provide incentives for local students to pursue post-secondary study outside Hong Kong, this would compete with local self-financing post-secondary institutions in recruiting students. To facilitate members' consideration of MUSSS, Dr CHAN requested the Administration to

Action

provide more information on the effectiveness of the Admission Scheme, such as the number of applicants, the number of students successfully admitted through the Admission Scheme, the number of withdrawals after places were offered, etc.

Provision of publicly-funded undergraduate places

36. The Deputy Chairman referred to his paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)574/13-14(02)] tabled at the meeting and commented that the proposed initiatives could not address the shortage of publicly-funded undergraduate places nor students' financial burden as a result of the high tuition fees of self-financing sub-degree programmes.

37. In this regard, SED advised that over \$18 billion had been budgeted for higher education in 2014-2015. In addition to the three proposed initiatives, 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 the 2015-2016 academic year and the following triennium.

38. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that whilst Members of the Labour Party welcomed the increase in higher education opportunities, the best approach was to increase UGC-funded first-year-first-degree ("FYFD") places. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, Dr Helena WONG and Mr WU Chi-wai concurred that publicly-funded FYFD places should be increased. Noting the members' concerns, DS(Ed)1 said that the proposed initiatives were complementary to the provision of local post-secondary education places. She added that any proposed increase in publicly-funded FYFD places warranted careful consideration, with regard to all relevant factors including the decline in secondary student population and the quality of higher education.

Seeking funding approval from FC

39. Dr Kenneth CHAN was of the view that the Administration should not proceed further with its plan to seek funding approval for the three proposed initiatives. Instead, the Administration should provide the Panel with more detailed information to justify its proposals. Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Dr Helena WONG concurred that the Administration should provide further information to facilitate consideration by FC.

40. Mr WONG Kwok-hing disagreed that the Administration should withhold its plan to seek funding approval. He considered that the

Action

proposed initiatives would benefit students and should be taken forward expeditiously. He also cautioned that the prolonged debate on the Appropriation Bill 2014 due to some Members' avowed intention to filibuster would delay consideration of the financial proposals.

41. Mrs Regina IP expressed support for the proposed initiatives. She remarked that there should be ample time prior to the relevant FC meeting for the Administration to address members' concerns and provide the requested information.

42. SED reiterated that it was the Administration's plan to seek approval from FC in May 2014 for launching the initiatives in mid-2014, and that preparatory work was underway.

Summing up

43. Concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that in principle, the Panel would not object to the submission of the proposals to FC for consideration. However, he reminded the Administration to provide further information/explanation as requested by members to address their concerns and facilitate consideration by FC.

(Post-meeting note : The Administration's written information was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)720/13-14(01) on 26 May 2014.)

VI. Enhanced Chinese learning and teaching for non-Chinese speaking students

(LC Paper No. CB(4)545/13-14(02) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)545/13-14(03) -- Background brief on issues related to enhancing Chinese learning and teaching for non-Chinese speaking students prepared by the LegCo Secretariat

Action

LC Paper No. CB(4)559/13-14(01) -- Paper prepared by Hon IP Kin-yuen (*Chinese version only*)

LC Paper No. CB(4)558/13-14(01) -- Submission from Oxfam Hong Kong)

44. Members noted the background brief prepared by the Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(4)545/13-14(03)], a paper prepared by the Deputy Chairman [LC Paper No. CB(4)559/13-14(01)] and the submission from Oxfam Hong Kong [LC Paper No. CB(4)558/13-14(01)].

Briefing by the Administration

45. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the enhancement in Chinese learning and teaching for non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") students, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)545/13-14(02)]. As announced in the 2014 Policy Address, starting from the 2014-2015 school year, the Administration would allocate \$200 million per year to step up the support for NCS students to facilitate their effective learning of Chinese. Specifically, starting from the 2014-2015 school year, EDB would provide primary and secondary schools with the "Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework" ("Learning Framework") to help NCS students overcome the difficulties in learning Chinese as a second language with a view to enabling them to bridge over to mainstream Chinese Language classes. Besides, an Applied Learning (Chinese) subject would be introduced by phases at senior secondary levels starting from the 2014-2015 school year as an alternative qualification for NCS students, especially those who newly arrived at Hong Kong and did not have the opportunity to study the full Chinese Language curriculum in primary / secondary schools.

Discussion

Chinese Language curriculum and assessment

46. Noting the Government's plan to introduce the Learning Framework starting from the 2014-2015 school year, the Deputy Chairman sought explanation on how the Learning Framework would differ from the local mainstream Chinese Language curriculum and from a second language curriculum implemented in other countries.

Action

47. Deputy Secretary for Education (5) pointed out that the Learning Framework was different from the mainstream Chinese Language curriculum in that the Learning Framework was developed from the perspective of second language learners and a "small-step" learning approach with progressive learning targets would be adopted. The second language curriculum in other countries was generally more functional, for instance, focusing on oral communication and pedagogically teaching students the second language in their mother tongue. The Learning Framework to be provided would help NCS students bridge over to mainstream Chinese Language classes eventually and sit for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (Chinese Language) Examination.

48. Noting that the Chief Executive had pledged in his election manifesto to develop a "Chinese as a Second Language" curriculum and assessment for NCS students, Dr Fernando CHEUNG questioned whether the Learning Framework was meant to be a curriculum. Ms Claudia MO enquired about any assessment tools to help teachers implement the Learning Framework.

49. US(Ed) advised that in conjunction with the Learning Framework, module exemplars, assessment tools and supporting learning and teaching materials would be provided to help teachers systematically teach Chinese to NCS students having due regard to individual learner's needs according to the Learning Framework.

50. Dr Fernando CHEUNG referred to the second-language policies in other countries as described in the submission from Oxfam Hong Kong [LC Paper No. CB(4)558/13-14(01)], and enquired whether the Administration would provide NCS students with similar immersed Chinese Language programmes in the form of separate Chinese Language classes. Ms Starry LEE enquired about the implementation arrangements of the Learning Framework at the school level.

51. In this regard, Deputy Secretary for Education (2) ("DS(Ed)2") advised that each school provided with additional recurrent funding would be required to assign at least a dedicated teacher to coordinate the implementation of the Learning Framework, including adoption of the Chinese Language Assessment Tools and the selection of appropriate intensive learning modes as well as learning and teaching materials. Schools should also create an inclusive environment in schools through the appointment of additional ethnic minority assistants as appropriate to strengthen communication with NCS parents, and appoint additional teaching staff for implementing different intensive learning modes as

Action

appropriate (including pull-out learning, split-class/group learning, increasing Chinese lesson time, learning Chinese across the curriculum, etc.).

52. Mr Michael TIEN enquired whether the qualification of the Applied Learning (Chinese) subject to be introduced starting from the 2014-2015 school year would be recognized for the purpose of seeking admission to local universities. In reply, US(Ed) said that the contents of the proposed Applied Learning (Chinese) subject would be pegged at the Qualifications Framework Levels 1 to 3 with the results recorded in HKDSE. Discussion with local universities on the recognition of the qualification for the purpose of admission was underway.

Teaching of the Chinese Language subject

53. Ms Claudia MO said that according to some parents of NCS students, their children were taught Chinese Language in Putonghua, and Putonghua was also used in other activities during the summer holiday. Ms MO was concerned that using Putonghua as the medium of instruction would make the learning of Chinese Language even more difficult for NCS students. Ms Cyd HO shared Ms MO's concern and considered that the use of Cantonese instead of Putonghua would be more effective in the learning and teaching of Chinese for NCS students.

54. Ms Starry LEE considered that using Putonghua to teach the Chinese Language subject would help promote biliteracy and trilingualism among students, which was in line with the language policy of the Government.

55. The Chairman enquired whether the Administration had conducted any study on teaching and learning Chinese Language through Putonghua and other related aspects such as comparison of the use of traditional Chinese or simplified Chinese characters for students.

56. US(Ed) pointed out that to tie in with the Government's policy to enhance students' biliterate and trilingual proficiencies, the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research had launched various initiatives to support the use of Putonghua in teaching the Chinese Language subject. On teaching and learning Chinese in schools, schools should exercise their professional judgment on using Putonghua having regard to the needs of their students. Regarding written Chinese, traditional Chinese characters were commonly used in Hong Kong and schools.

Action

Promotion of early integration

57. Dr Fernando CHEUNG suggested that the Learning Framework should be extended to pre-primary education. In response, DS(Ed)2 said that the Learning Framework was currently developed for public sector primary and secondary schools to address the concern about NCS students' learning of "Chinese as a second language", while the Quality Education Fund had funded related studies to help NCS students learn Chinese in kindergartens.

58. The Deputy Chairman noted that as stated in the Administration's paper, NCS students' early exposure to, and learning of, Chinese in daily life and at school was critical to their bridging over to mainstream Chinese Language classes. He was concerned that some NCS children did not attend kindergartens and would start learning Chinese Language only after entering primary schools. He enquired whether the Administration had any information on the enrolment rate of NCS children at kindergartens and the difficulties, if any, faced by these children. Ms Cyd HO concurred that such information would facilitate the planning of early support to NCS children.

59. US(Ed) explained that currently, kindergarten education was not part of the universal basic education system in Hong Kong. As such, the enrolment rate of NCS children at kindergarten level was not available. Nevertheless, reference might be drawn to the enrolment rate of children of the relevant age cohort at kindergartens on a territory-wide basis at nearly 100%, particularly upon the implementation the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme. US(Ed) further said that the Administration would continue to encourage NCS parents to send their children to kindergartens offering a local curriculum so as to facilitate their children to have an early exposure to the Chinese Language.

60. While welcoming the initiatives to support NCS students to learn the Chinese Language, Mr WU Chi-wai enquired whether the Administration had put in place any arrangements for NCS students to be allocated to mainstream schools offering the local curriculum.

61. US(Ed) said that the prevailing school places allocation systems were underpinned primarily by parental choice. He also pointed out that EDB had abolished the so-called "designated schools" system in the 2013-2014 school year and provided recurrent funding to all schools admitting 10 or more NCS students, thereby widening the choice of schools for NCS parents.

Action

Teachers' professional development

62. Ms Claudia MO and Ms Starry LEE considered that the Administration should strengthen the professional development for Chinese Language teachers on teaching Chinese as a second language. Ms Cyd HO was concerned whether the additional recurrent funding could be deployed by schools to appoint supply teachers to enable serving teachers to attend professional training. She was also concerned about the support measures to enhance the professional development of kindergarten teachers.

63. Noting members' views, US(Ed) advised that the Administration would enhance teachers' professional development through training courses and experience sharing sessions on teaching Chinese as a second language for Chinese Language teachers.

Other support measures

64. Whiling welcoming the Administration's provision of additional recurrent funding to schools to support NCS students in learning Chinese as described in paragraph 9 of the Administration's paper, Dr Helena WONG was concerned whether schools admitting less than 10 NCS students would be provided with additional resources. She also enquired whether the arrangements under the prevailing school places allocation system would enable a school to be allocated 10 or more NCS students so as to meet the threshold for the enhanced additional recurrent funding.

65. US(Ed) and DS(Ed)2 referred to paragraph 18 of the Administration's paper, and advised that for schools admitting only a handful of NCS students, most NCS students could benefit from the immersed Chinese language environment in these schools. To step up the support, the Administration also proposed to provide a formal platform for these schools to apply for additional funding to organize after-school support for NCS students to consolidate their Chinese learning starting from the 2014-2015 school year.

66. Noting that some parents of NCS students might not be able to communicate in English or Chinese, Dr Helena WONG opined that schools should put in place effective communication channels with parents of NCS students and keep parents of NCS students informed of the support measures and financial assistance available to their children.

Action

67. In response, US(Ed) said that NCS students and their parents were currently provided with information on financial assistance and support measures through schools and on the EDB website. With the provision of enhanced additional recurrent funding, schools were required to strengthen communication with parents of NCS students by employing NCS assistants or procurement of translation services as appropriate.

68. Dr Fernando CHEUNG remarked that the provision of the additional recurrent funding to special schools might not be sufficient to fully address their needs. Given that NCS students in special schools generally had greater difficulties in communication and language learning, Dr CHEUNG considered it necessary for the Administration to work out with the special school sector on ways to cater for NCS students with different types of disabilities.

69. Ms Cyd HO was of the view that EDB should work in collaboration with other bureaux/departments, such as the Department of Health and Immigration Department, in order to reach out to the parents of new-born/newly-arrived NCS children and to disseminate to them up-to-date information on the services and support available in Hong Kong.

70. US(Ed) noted members' views and said that relevant information leaflets were made available at boundary control points and Maternal and Child Health Centres.

71. Ms Starry LEE considered that the Administration should report the progress of the support measures for NCS students to the Panel periodically. In this connection, US(Ed) said that the Administration would monitor schools' use of the additional recurrent funding to support NCS students. It would also invite research and language experts to formulate a research framework to facilitate the evaluation of the effectiveness of various support measures for NCS students in learning Chinese. He assured members that the Administration would report the progress of the support measures to the Panel in due course.

Action

VII. Proposal to set up a subcommittee to study free kindergarten education

(LC Paper No. CB(4)495/13-14(01) -- Letter dated 17 March 2014 from Hon IP Kin-yuen to the Chairman of Panel on Education (*Chinese version only*)

LC Paper Nos. CB(4)495/13-14 (02) and (03) -- Letters dated 25 February and 13 March 2014 from Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok to the Chairman of Panel on Education (*Chinese version only*)

LC Paper No. CB(4)557/13-14(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

72. Members noted the letter dated 17 March 2014 from the Deputy Chairman [LC Paper No. CB(4)495/13-14(01)], two letters dated 25 February 2014 and 13 March 2014 from Dr Kenneth CHAN [LC Paper Nos. CB(4)495/13-14(02) and (03)], and a paper provided by the Administration [LC Paper No. CB(4)557/13-14(01)]. They also noted two newspaper articles tabled at the meeting [subsequently issued vide LC Paper Nos. CB(4)574/13-14(03) and (04)] which were authored by the Deputy Chairman and by Dr LI Hui of the University of Hong Kong respectively.

73. Before inviting members' views on the proposal to set up a subcommittee to study the implementation of free kindergarten education ("Subcommittee on KE"), the Chairman drew members' attention to the following matters –

- (a) The Panel had received 105 submissions from members of the public, among which 102 were largely identical in contents, requesting the Panel to set up a Subcommittee on KE. These submissions had been circulated for members' information through e-mail.
- (b) In its paper provided to the Panel, the Administration was concerned that the proposed terms of reference and work plan

Action

of the Subcommittee on KE under the Panel would overlap with those of the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education ("the Committee") set up in April 2013. The Administration also suggested that members might wish to consider whether to set up the Subcommittee on KE after the publication of the final report by the Committee.

- (c) The number of subcommittees on policy issues in operation had reached the maximum number of 10. Pursuant to the arrangements agreed by the House Committee on 15 November 2013, the Subcommittee on KE, if formed, could activate upon expiry of the extended period of work (i.e. 28 April 2014) of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project ("the Joint Subcommittee"), which was formed under the Panel on Home Affairs and Panel on Development. The Joint Subcommittee would then be put on the waiting list and would reactivate when a vacant slot arose upon the completion of work of any one of the existing subcommittees.
- (d) The Subcommittee on Integrated Education ("Subcommittee on IE") formed under this Panel was in operation and would complete its work by the end of September 2014. If the Subcommittee on KE was formed and activated immediately after 28 April 2014, then, there would be two subcommittees in operation concurrently under this Panel.

74. The Chairman then invited Dr Kenneth CHAN and the Deputy Chairman to speak on their proposals.

75. Dr Kenneth CHAN was concerned that not only was the membership of the Committee not representative of all stakeholders, the transparency and progress of its work were far from satisfactory. The progress report of the Committee submitted to the Panel earlier on had not put forward any practicable recommendations to address the concerns of members and stakeholders. Dr CHAN urged for the formation and early activation of the Subcommittee on KE.

76. The Deputy Chairman said that the kindergarten sector had formed a common view that the Panel should set up the Subcommittee on KE. He was concerned that the Committee had not engaged the public in its work. He did not subscribe to the Administration's view that the work of the Subcommittee on KE would overlap with that of the Committee. On the

Action

contrary, the Committee might expedite its work as a result of the monitoring by the Subcommittee on KE.

77. Dr Fernando CHEUNG supported the proposal to set up the Subcommittee on KE. He pointed out that there had been cases in which the Legislative Council ("LegCo") had formed a subcommittee to monitor the work of a corresponding committee set up by the Government. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che and Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung concurred with Dr CHEUNG's view. They opined that the formation of the Subcommittee on KE would facilitate more informed public discussion on the subject of implementation of free kindergarten education.

78. Mr WU Chi-wai and Dr Helena WONG expressed their support for the formation of the Subcommittee on KE under the Panel. Dr WONG declared that she was a member of the Joint Subcommittee. She considered that the work of the Committee was largely steered by the Administration. The Subcommittee on KE, which was formed under the Panel, could engage the public and take forward its work in a more transparent manner.

79. Ms Cyd HO disagreed with the views of Dr LI Hui as set out in the newspaper article tabled at the meeting [LC Paper No. CB(4)574/13-14(04)], and stated that the Committee and the Subcommittee on KE would work independently of each other. She considered that the concerns raised by Dr LI were not justified.

80. Mr Abraham SHEK expressed his support for setting up the Subcommittee on KE which would facilitate the monitoring of the work of the Committee and enable members to make recommendations.

81. Dr Priscilla LEUNG was concerned about the overlapping of the work of the Subcommittee on KE and that of the Committee. She said that she was not yet convinced of the justification to set up the Subcommittee on KE. Referring to the Chairman's remarks earlier on, she noted with grave concern that the Subcommittee on KE, if formed and activated, would result in the suspension of the work of the Joint Subcommittee after 28 April 2014. As the LegCo Member from the Geographical Constituency of Kowloon West, Dr Priscilla LEUNG stressed the need for the Joint Subcommittee to continue its work as scheduled without interruption.

82. In this regard, the Chairman advised that if the Panel agreed to set up the Subcommittee on KE, members might then consider the timing of

Action

its activation. If members agreed that the Subcommittee on KE would only be activated after the Subcommittee on IE had completed its work by the end of September 2014, then, other subcommittees currently in operation, including the Joint Subcommittee, could continue their work.

83. The Chairman noted that members did not have any objection in principle to activating the Subcommittee on KE, if formed, only after the Subcommittee on IE had completed its work by the end of September 2014.

84. Summing up the discussion, the Chairman concluded that members agreed to set up the Subcommittee on KE. He said that he would confirm the timing of activating the Subcommittee on KE after due consultation and then notify members accordingly. Members took note of the proposed terms of reference and work plan of the Subcommittee on KE as set out in the Deputy Chairman's letter [LC Paper No. CB(4)495/13-14(01)] and raised no objection.

(Post-meeting note: After due consultation by the Chairman, members were informed vide LC Paper No. CB(4)583/13-14 on 17 April 2014 that the Subcommittee on KE would activate after the Subcommittee on IE had completed its work by the end of September 2014.)

(The Chairman left the meeting at this juncture and the Deputy Chairman took the chair.)

VIII. Two special schools at site 5C-5, Kai Tak development, Kowloon

(LC Paper No. CB(4)545/13-14(04) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

Briefing by the Administration

85. At the invitation of the Deputy Chairman, US(Ed) briefed members on the Administration's proposal as set out in LC Paper No. CB(4)545/13-14(04) on the construction of two special school premises at Sung On Street, Kowloon City of the Kai Tak development to reprovision Po Leung Kuk Anita L. L. Chan (Centenary) School ("Centenary School") and Chi Yun School which were currently accommodated in sub-standard premises. Members noted that the Administration planned to submit the

Action

proposal to the Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC") and FC for approval on 4 and 27 June 2014 respectively.

Discussion

Reprovisioning of special schools operating in sub-standard premises

86. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed support for the proposed reprovisioning project which, in his view, was long overdue and should be taken forward expeditiously. He said that Chi Yun School was built over 50 years ago. Its facilities had become out-dated and it was technically not feasible to provide barrier-free access. Centenary School currently shared premises with a local primary school and this arrangement was highly unsatisfactory. In response, US(Ed) advised that subject to funding approval from FC, the construction works were expected to commence in December 2014 for completion in March 2017.

87. Both Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che urged EDB to give early consideration to the use of the premises to be vacated by Centenary School and Chi Yun School. US(Ed) said that a decision on the future use of the vacated premises had yet to be made. The Administration would take into consideration all relevant factors when deciding on the way forward.

88. Dr Fernando CHEUNG referred to the unsatisfactory conditions at Hong Chi Morninghill School ("Morninghill School") and Hong Chi Morninglight School ("Morninglight School") in Tuen Mun, which currently shared school premises. He enquired about the reprovisioning plans, if any, for the two schools. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che considered that EDB should examine the feasibility of reprovisioning Morninghill School to the vacated premises of Centenary School.

89. Principal Education Officer (Special Education and Kindergarten Education) ("PEO(SE&KG)") noted that matters about Morninghill School and Morninglight School had been considered in past case conferences held at the Public Complaints Office of the Legislative Council Secretariat. The Administration would consider feasible options for school improvement taking into account the age, the conditions of the school premises and other relevant factors. As far as Morninghill School was concerned, in-situ improvements had been carried out in past years. On the feasibility of reprovisioning Morninghill School to the vacated premises of Centenary School, US(Ed) said that Centenary School was currently sharing the same school premises with another school and the

Action

existing premises of Chi Yun School, which was built many years ago, could not meet the prevailing requirements of barrier-free access.

90. Dr Kenneth CHAN concurred with the need for early reprovisioning of the two schools in question. He referred to the relocation of Hong Kong Christian Service Pui Oi School, a special school for physically handicapped children, to its current premises in Tuen Mun, and drew the Administration's attention to the importance of careful prior planning in order to ensure that the facilities could meet the needs of students and to avoid disputes over matters such as the school's responsibility in managing trees.

Admin

91. Ms Cyd HO expressed support for the proposed reprovisioning project of the two schools. Noting that many special schools were currently accommodated in sub-standard premises, Ms HO enquired on the Administration's policy on the reprovisioning of such special schools. She also requested the Administration to provide a paper on this subject before the PWSC meeting.

92. US(Ed) highlighted that in planning for the reprovisioning of special schools, the Administration would need to take into consideration a host of relevant factors such as the conditions of individual schools, the feasibility of other improvement options and the availability of suitable vacant premises / sites. He informed members that EDB would submit reprovisioning proposals for more special schools shortly.

Provision of special school places

93. In view of the Administration's plan to designate a portion of the former campus site of the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (Lee Wai Lee) in Kowloon Tong for the construction of a special school, Dr Fernando CHEUNG asked whether a special school for children with moderate intellectual disability would be built to meet the shortfall in places. US(Ed) said that the Administration would examine the need for different special schools before making a decision.

94. Dr Kenneth CHAN referred to paragraph 5 of the Administration's paper and sought information on the methodology adopted by the Administration in the analysis of provision of special school places as well as boarding places and the shortfall in special school places on a district basis. In this connection, PEO(SE&KG) explained that the planning of school places in special schools was based on seven regions, including Hong Kong Island, Kowloon & Tseung Kwan O, Shatin & Sai Kung

Action

Admin

(excluding Tseung Kwan O), Tai Po & North, Kwai Tsing & Tsuen Wan, Tuen Mun & Yuen Long, and Outlying Islands. The existing student enrolment and the projected school age population would be considered. At the request of members, US(Ed) agreed to provide in writing information on the projection of supply of and demand for school places and boarding places in special schools for children with moderate intellectual disability and severe intellectual disability after the meeting.

Concerns about traffic flow

95. In view of the presence of a large number of tourist coaches that usually caused traffic congestion on Sung On Street, Dr Helena WONG was concerned about the hindrance caused to students of the Centenary School and Chi Yun School boarding or alighting from school buses or Rehabuses in future.

96. In response, US(Ed) advised that according to the Transport Department, no serious congestion was expected with the planned widening of the future L19 road next to the proposed location of the two schools on Sung On Street before the two schools commenced operation. Since many students at Chi Yun School were boarding students, they would not need to commute by school bus on a daily basis. As there were only 120 students attending the Centenary School, heavy use of school buses was not expected. In February 2014, the Administration had also issued survey forms to local residents and stakeholders including the nearby The Church of Christ in China Kei To Secondary School to collect their views and the majority of the respondents had no comment or objection to the proposal.

Summing up

97. Concluding the discussion, the Deputy Chairman said that members were supportive of the proposal. He also reminded the Administration to provide further information as requested by members.

IX. A school for social development for girls at Choi Hing Road, Kwun Tong, Kowloon

(LC Paper No. CB(4)545/13-14(05) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

Action

Briefing by the Administration

98. At the invitation of the Deputy Chairman, US(Ed) briefed members on the proposal to build a school for social development ("SSD")-cum-residential home for girls at Choi Hing Road, Kwun Tong as set out in LC Paper No. CB(4)545/13-14(05). Members noted that the Administration planned to submit the proposal to PWSC and FC for approval on 4 and 27 June 2014 respectively.

Discussion

Project scope and design

Admin

99. Ms Cyd HO referred to her past visits to SSDs and expressed concern over the over-crowded conditions and the lack of privacy for the girl boarders. She highlighted the need to safeguard against such problems, and requested the Administration to provide more details on the design of the dormitory of the proposed SSD-cum-residential home for girls in its submission to PWSC.

Admin

100. Noting the proposed SSD-cum-residential home for girls would be bordered on three sides by slopes, Ms Cyd HO was concerned about the high costs for maintaining the slopes and asked whether the school sponsoring body of the proposed SSD would be responsible for slope maintenance. Principal Assistant Secretary (Infrastructure & Research Support) ("PAS(IRS)") advised that the Government would provide funding for the maintenance of the slopes. On whether the slopes were within the boundary of the proposed SSD, PAS(IRS) would confirm after the meeting.

Supply of and demand for SSD places

101. Ms Cyd HO referred to the Direct Investigation Report issued by the Office of The Ombudsman in February 2012 on Special Education Services for Students with Moderate to Severe Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties ("the Report"), in which the shortfall in SSD places had been examined. Ms HO noted with concern that the Administration had taken measures to lower the demand for, instead of boosting the supply of, SSD places. She considered that the Administration should not resort to measures to lower the demand. She also enquired about the shortfall, if any, in SSD places after the proposed SSD came into operation.

Action

102. US(Ed) advised that when the new SSD commenced operation in 2017-2018, the school places and residential home places in SSD for girls would slightly exceed the demand for such places. The Administration would continue to keep in view the demand for SSD places.

103. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che noted that according to paragraph 6 of the Administration's paper, the demand for SSD for girls was 330 school places and would remain the same in the 2013-2014 and 2017-2018 school years respectively, and would increase to 390 school places by the 2020-2021 school year, resulting in a shortfall of 210 school places in the 2020-2021 school year if no new SSD for girls was built by then. Mr CHEUNG enquired on the methodology used by the Administration in projecting the demand for SSD places, given that the severity of emotional and behavioural difficulties of these students might fluctuate.

Admin

104. US(Ed) advised that in making the projections, the Administration had made reference to the percentage of students requiring SSD services within the entire student population, the number of applicants on the waiting list etc. He said that there was no precise formula for working out the estimated demand. In response to the requests of Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che and the Deputy Chairman for further explanation on the methodology, US(Ed) said that EDB would provide relevant information as far as practicable before its submission to PWSC.

Admin

105. Dr Fernando CHEUNG referred to the problems regarding the shortfall in the provision of residential places and the inadequacies in the mechanism for reporting and filling vacancies, as well as the 10 recommendations given in the Report. He asked whether the Administration had followed up the observations and recommendations. PEO(SE&KG) confirmed that the Administration had taken action to follow up the recommendations. She would provide the Panel with the relevant information after the meeting.

Other concerns

106. The Deputy Chairman enquired whether SSDs were provided on a district basis. In response, US(Ed) advised that SSDs were provided on a territory-wide basis.

107. Dr Fernando CHEUNG asked whether EDB would consider reducing the class size of SSDs from 15 to 12 students. PEO(SE&KG) said that subject to the passage of the Appropriation Bill 2014, the class size of SSDs would be reduced from 15 to 12 students progressively by grade

Action

level starting from the 2014-2015 school year.

Summing up

108. Concluding the discussion, the Deputy Chairman said that members were in support of the proposal. He also reminded the Administration to provide the information as requested by members.

X. Any other business

109. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 7:25 pm.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
4 June 2014