



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局
Education Bureau

Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

本局檔號 Our Ref. : (9) to EDB(SPA)PPR3/13(1)

電話 Telephone : 3509 8505

來函檔號 Your Ref. : CB4/PL/ED

傳真 Fax Line : 3104 4667

5 June 2014

Miss Polly YEUNG
Clerk to Panel on Education
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Miss YEUNG,

Panel on Education
Follow-up to the meeting on 12 May 2014

Thank you for your letter dated 14 May 2014. Regarding the motions to urge the Education Bureau (EDB) to re-negotiate with the school sector issues relating to allocation of more students to each Primary One (P1) class, and to uphold the policy on small class teaching (SCT) and oppose the adoption of the temporary arrangement of allocating more students to each P1 class to address the shortage of P1 places moved by Hon IP Kin-yuen and Dr Hon Helena WONG respectively, the Administration's consolidated reply is as follows:

The 2007-08 Policy Address announced that the Government would, where circumstances permit, progressively implement SCT in public sector primary schools starting from P1 in the 2009/10 school year. When formulating the implementation details, the EDB sought to tie in with the Primary One Admission (POA) System aiming to allocate public sector P1 places to eligible applicant children in an orderly manner. Currently, the whole territory is divided into 36 POA school nets, and it is impossible to expect a perfect match of the supply and demand of P1 places in all school nets in each POA cycle. Due to various factors (including population movement, the number of newly arrived children from the Mainland, parental choice, etc.), there are uncertainties of the actual demand for P1 places and situation in various

districts or school nets at the Central Allocation Stage of each POA cycle. These year-on-year changes cannot be fully foreseeable in the long-term overall planning. When working out the implementation details related to SCT, the EDB has consulted the major stakeholders. It was explicitly announced in the implementation details that in parallel with the implementation of SCT, should there be shortfall of P1 places in individual school nets, we may have to adopt the temporary arrangement to increase the number of students allocated per class by adjusting “provisional number of places for the Central Allocation” of the schools concern to meet the actual demand in a particular year. In other words, the flexible arrangements to temporarily increase the supply of P1 places and SCT policy are not mutually exclusive.

In this regard, we will, where necessary, continue to adopt flexible arrangements to temporarily increase the supply of P1 places in individual school nets during the Central Allocation stage to meet the demand in individual districts or school nets between years. The arrangements include borrowing school places from neighbouring school nets, making use of remaining classrooms and changing use of other rooms to additional classrooms. Where necessary, we would also temporarily allocate more students to each P1 class.

In POA 2014, five school nets in three districts have temporarily increased the number of places to 30 for each P1 class to meet the demand. The major reason is that the number of classrooms and other rooms to be changed to additional classrooms is not sufficient to make up for the total shortfall of school places of the district concerned. Besides, we have to avoid unnecessary labelling having taken into account the concerns of stakeholders. To safeguard the learning effectiveness of students, we will provide additional resources for schools with more students allocated to each P1 class in the manner same as the prevailing arrangement for those schools with 30 students in each P1 class.

We anticipate that the demand for public sector P1 places would reach its peak between the 2016/17 and 2018/19 school years and then progressively decrease to a stable level (details in paragraph 4 of LC Paper No. CB(4)645/13-14(01)). Given that construction of schools requires precious land resources, it should tie in with the long-term development of the district concerned as well as the existing schools in the district. As such, we will continue to adopt the flexible measures mentioned above to temporarily increase the supply of school places to meet the transient demand for P1 places in individual school nets during the transitional period. The EDB is actively planning to recycle

suitable vacant school premises in the districts concerned to increase the supply of P1 places during the transitional period with a view to alleviating the impact of individual arrangements, specifically the allocation of more students to each P1 class, on major stakeholders. We have to balance different views and concerns of stakeholders and should not commit to abolish any effective arrangements in a haste.

At the meeting on 12 May 2014, we clearly stated that as parents had already made their school choices under the Central Allocation and the relating processing jobs were also at the final stage with the allocation results to be released on 7 June 2014, we should not scrap the related arrangements and re-do the allocation. We appreciate the possible impact of student population changes on schools and parents. Regarding the sector's request for further increasing the provision of learning and teaching resources for the schools allocated more students per P1 class, we have undertaken to explore further from the perspective of priority in utilisation of public resources. We are planning to consult the representatives of the sector on the above-mentioned flexible arrangements for temporary increase of P1 places and complementary support measures with a view to planning for the coming allocation cycle upon completion of student registration for P1 places under the Central Allocation in 2014, i.e. about mid-June this year. With the collaboration of the sector, we will embrace the challenges arising from increasing transient demand for P1 places during the transitional period.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms L B IP)
for Secretary for Education