



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

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11 December 2013

Clerk to Panel
(Attn: Miss Polly YEUNG)
Legislative Council Panel on Education
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms YEUNG

Panel on Education
Follow-up to Special Meeting on 28 October 2013

I refer to your letter dated 30 October 2013 on the captioned matter. The Education Bureau's response to the motion passed at the special meeting is enclosed for Members' reference.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hera'.

(Ms Hera CHUM)
for Secretary for Education

Enclosure

Enclosure

Panel on Education
Motion Passed at the Special Meeting on 28 October 2013

Wording of the motion

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

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

Education Bureau's response:

Our reponse to Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG's motion is set out below.

Kindergarten places and admission mechanism in North District, Tai Po, Tuen Mun and Yuen Long

2. According to our figures in hand, the supply of kindergarten places in various districts throughout Hong Kong, including the North District, Tai Po, Tuen Mun and Yuen Long, is sufficient to meet the demand of school-age children, while the demand in the North District is relatively close to the supply. The relevant figures have been set out in the Annexes to our reply to the oral question by Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai at the Legislative Council meeting on 23 October 2013 (see Appendix). We will continue to closely monitor the supply and demand of kindergarten places in various districts. When needs for additional school places are identified, we will request kindergartens to optimise their campus capacities for providing more classrooms, encourage them to admit more students by making full use of their registered classrooms, such as re-commissioning vacant classrooms.

We will also approach school sponsoring bodies and encourage them to expand or open kindergartens in districts with a high demand for school places. In this connection, we have touched base with a number of kindergartens in the North District. To date, about five of them have already agreed during our brief meeting to consider converting existing rooms or space into classrooms. We will further discuss the feasibility of such arrangements with the kindergartens concerned and encourage more kindergartens to conduct room conversion if necessary and possible, to provide more places.

3. Kindergarten education in Hong Kong has all along been provided by the private sector and is characterised by great flexibility, diversity, adaptability, vibrancy and responsiveness to parents' needs. Parents may choose a kindergarten suitable for their children with regard to their needs, while admission is at the discretion of individual kindergartens. In general, kindergartens have been adopting the principle of vicinity in admission of students. They have accumulated some experiences in application processing and can share them with other kindergartens. For example, some kindergartens have said that, apart from documentary proofs of residential addresses, they would also make use of the interviews with the student applicants to gain a better understanding of their backgrounds and living conditions.

4. In view of the concerns of the public and parents over the admission arrangements in Tai Po and the North districts, we have addressed the matter on a special case basis and reached a consensus with the kindergartens in the districts. Specifically, we have implemented six special temporary measures to improve the kindergarten admission procedure. These measures include adopting the special admission arrangements to prevent a child from holding a number of places at one time, encouraging kindergartens to provide online application forms and unlimited supply of application forms, supporting the principle of vicinity in admission of kindergarten students and requesting kindergartens to optimise their campus capacities as far as possible for increasing school places. Details of these six special temporary measures have been set out at paragraph 9 of the discussion paper for the Panel on Education meeting on 28 October 2013.

5. Regarding the admission arrangements mentioned in paragraph 4 above, the support and co-operation of parents is vital to its smooth implementation. As such, 16 identical seminars for parents of the North District and Tai Po were organised in late November and early December to explain the procedures and points to note in detail. The Education Bureau will also enhance its enquiry and coordination services to provide information and assistance to parents whose children fail to secure a kindergarten place, including setting up hotlines to provide parents with information on kindergarten vacancies and helping them apply for admission for their children.

Further promotion and optimization of education resources in Hong Kong and Shenzhen

6. Regarding setting up schools of different levels, including primary schools and kindergartens, on the Mainland by schools sponsoring bodies or the Mainland authorities to cater specifically for children of Hong Kong residents and hence discourage students from travelling across the boundary to attend schools, we have discussed and undertaken a number of trial schemes with the Shenzhen authorities in recent years. Schools and classes have been operated, having regard to the development of individual schools, in Shenzhen for children of Hong Kong residents. At the 2013 Hong Kong/Shenzhen Co-operation Meeting held recently, the two sides have agreed to further expand the scope and substance of cooperation in basic education, and also signed the Co-operation agreement on operating classes for Hong Kong students in Shenzhen schools.

Implementation of 15-year free education

7. The Education Bureau set up the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education in April this year to examine the various issues relating to the provision of free kindergarten education in order to make practicable proposals on the way forward. Kindergarten admission procedure is one of the issues to be reviewed. In view of the intricacies of the issues involved, our estimation at this stage is that the Committee will take two years to complete its tasks. During this period, the Committee will proactively explore short- and medium-term measures which can help kindergartens meet their imminent challenges. The Government will actively consider providing support accordingly.

Appendix

LEGCO QUESTION No. 4

(Oral Reply)

Asked by: Hon LAM Tai-faiDate of Meeting: 23 October 2013Replied by: Secretary for Education**Question:**

It has been reported that, early this month, a large number of parents of cross-boundary students queued up overnight for admission application forms outside the kindergartens in districts such as the North District and Tuen Mun, etc. which gave rise to a phenomenon of intermediaries queuing on behalf of the parents. Some mainland parents criticized the kindergartens concerned for the improper arrangements, while local parents marched to protest about cross-boundary students affecting the opportunities of local children to study in kindergartens close to their homes. Moreover, owing to the "Year of the Dragon" effect, the number of children born in Hong Kong in 2012 is higher than those in other years. As such children will apply in the next year for kindergarten places in the year after next, some parents in Hong Kong are worried that the competition for kindergarten places next year will be even more intense than this year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the respective numbers of local and international kindergartens in each of the past five years, broken down by District Council district, the respective numbers of places in Nursery, Lower and Upper classes provided by those kindergartens, as well as the respective numbers of cross-boundary students who applied for and were admitted to those kindergartens;
- (b) whether it has projected the demand for kindergarten places in Hong Kong in the coming five years and, among such places, the number of those which will be taken up by cross-boundary students; if it has, of the relevant figures and the details of the method adopted for the projection; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (c) given that the Secretary for Education said publicly on 7 October this year that kindergartens could use vacant classrooms to flexibly provide places for different classes, of the respective numbers, according to the Government's estimation, of kindergartens in the North District, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long and Tai Po which can provide additional places through this method in the 2014-2015 school year, as well as the respective

numbers of places to be flexibly provided in each of these districts through using vacant classrooms; the respective numbers of cross-boundary students which the authorities expect to be admitted by the kindergartens in these districts in the 2014-2015 school year?

Reply:

President,

Our reply to the question raised by Hon LAM is as follows:

- (a) Distribution of local and non-local kindergarten (KG) by district, distribution of students and places in local and non-local KG by district and by class level, as well as distribution of cross-boundary KG students by district for the past five years, i.e. 2008/09 to 2012/13 school years, are set out at Annexes 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

KGs, including KG-cum-child care centres, in Hong Kong are all privately-run. It is up to the parents to choose whether to apply for one or more KGs suitable for their children with regard to their needs. As for student admission, it is at the discretion of individual KGs. Hence, the Education Bureau (EDB) does not have statistics on the number of KG applicants (including the number of cross-boundary applicants).

- (b) In projecting the overall demand of KG places in Hong Kong, we will take into account factors including:
- (1) the number of students (including cross-boundary students) already in KGs;
 - (2) the projected school age population, which is compiled based on the population projections and the latest demographic changes (including the number of newly-arrived children from the Mainland) as updated by the Census and Statistics Department from time to time;

- (3) the KG attendance rates for children of different age groups and the latest trend; and
- (4) the estimated number of cross-boundary students.

Among the above factors, the population projections are based on a number of factors and assumptions. Of particular relevance is that related to babies born in Hong Kong to Mainland women. However, it is difficult to predict with accuracy the actual numbers of such babies who would settle in Hong Kong and if so, when. As for the number of cross-boundary students, it is subject to year-on-year changes depending on family factors, distribution of their places of residence, adjustment of relevant policies, etc. Therefore, it is difficult to make an accurate projection. For these reasons, we will only estimate the number of KG students for the coming year in the annual controlling officer's report. As for the long-term projection of the overall demand of KG places, we consider it only suitable for internal reference.

In view of the public concern about KG places recently, we have made an estimation regarding the overall demand of KG places for the 2014/15 school year (about 168 000) and the number of students aged three to five (including cross-boundary students) for the 2014/15 school year in the four districts close to the boundary control points earlier than usual (Annex 4). In estimating the demand, we have made reference to the actual number of KG students in the 2012/13 school year and taken into account the number of cross-boundary students already attending KGs in Hong Kong and the year-on-year progression of these students. Later this year, when we get hold of the actual number of KG students in the 2013/14 school year, we will be able to estimate more accurately the overall demand of KG places for 2014/15.

- (c) We will closely monitor the supply and demand of KG places in various districts. When needs for additional school places are identified, we will request KGs to optimize their campus capacities for providing more classrooms and encourage them to admit more students by making full use of their registered classrooms such as re-commissioning vacant classrooms.

We will also approach school sponsoring bodies and encourage them to expand or open KGs in districts with a high demand for school places. Some school sponsoring bodies have responded positively to the EDB's appeal and already decided to open new KGs in the North District in the 2014/15 school year.

In the 2012/13 school year, there were about 5 200 school places available in vacant classrooms, involving about 60 KGs, in Tuen Mun, the North District, Tai Po and Yuen Long. Details are given in Annex 5. Later this year, when we get hold of the actual number of KG students and the number of school places for the 2013/14 school year, we will be in a better position to make a more accurate estimation on the number of vacant classrooms and school places available in the 2014/15 school year.

The estimated numbers of students aged three to five (including cross-boundary students) in the North District, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long and Tai Po for the 2014/15 school year are set out at Annex 4. With the announcement by the EDB of the six special measures relating to admission of KG students in Tai Po and North District for 2014/15, it is difficult for us to estimate at this stage the number of cross-boundary students to be admitted to KGs in Hong Kong.

Annex 1

Table 1: Distribution of local and non-local kindergartens by district from the 2008/09 to 2012/13 school years

District	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Central and Western	45	44	41	41	39
Wan Chai	33	32	32	31	29
Eastern	82	82	82	77	80
Southern	39	40	40	39	41
Yau Tsim Mong	38	36	35	37	37
Sham Shui Po	43	41	41	43	44
Kowloon City	84	84	85	86	90
Wong Tai Sin	48	46	47	47	47
Kwun Tong	71	70	70	70	70
Sai Kung	55	57	58	59	60
Sha Tin	72	72	73	72	72
Tai Po	35	35	35	35	35
North	42	43	44	45	46
Yuen Long	77	74	71	71	72
Tuen Mun	66	63	63	61	63
Tsuen Wan	36	35	35	36	36
Kwai Tsing	66	64	65	63	63
Islands	32	32	34	33	33

Note: Figures include kindergartens-cum-child care centres.

Table 2: Distribution of students and places in local and non-local kindergarten by district and by class level from the 2008/09 to 2012/13 school years

School year		2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12		2012/13	
District	Class	Places	Students	Places	Students	Place	Students	Place	Students	Place	Students
Central and Western	K1	2 530	1 818	2 460	1 837	2 411	1 904	2 410	1 969	2 300	1 849
	K2	2 461	1 816	2 383	1 894	2 291	1 853	2 539	2 126	2 342	1 913
	K3	2 266	1 645	2 138	1 633	2 187	1 804	2 114	1 785	2 084	1 783
	All	7 257	5 279	6 981	5 364	6 889	5 561	7 063	5 880	6 726	5 545
Wan Chai	K1	2 268	1 645	2 305	1 716	2 531	2 029	2 601	2 195	2 482	2 165
	K2	2 549	1 826	2 466	1 773	2 564	2 002	2 593	2 224	2 564	2 241
	K3	2 387	1 684	2 467	1 762	2 289	1 738	2 424	1 968	2 319	2 029
	All	7 204	5 155	7 238	5 251	7 384	5 769	7 618	6 387	7 365	6 435
Eastern	K1	4 550	3 176	4 627	3 302	5 163	3 795	4 852	3 684	5 245	4 005
	K2	4 736	3 257	4 496	3 238	4 556	3 395	4 761	3 633	5 123	3 999
	K3	4 770	3 247	4 732	3 247	4 467	3 271	4 163	3 198	4 569	3 637
	All	14 056	9 680	13 855	9 787	14 186	10 461	13 776	10 515	14 937	11 641
Southern	K1	2 100	1 424	2 090	1 469	2 206	1 534	2 120	1 547	2 269	1 662
	K2	2 176	1 400	2 165	1 458	2 239	1 535	2 374	1 723	2 317	1 668
	K3	2 181	1 432	1 975	1 334	2 070	1 448	1 979	1 418	2 218	1 582
	All	6 457	4 256	6 230	4 261	6 515	4 517	6 473	4 688	6 804	4 912

Annex 2 (cont'd)

School year		2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12		2012/13	
District	Class	Places	Students	Places	Students	Place	Students	Place	Students	Place	Students
Yau Tsim Mong	K1	2 245	1 518	2 178	1 641	2 354	1 831	2 484	1 940	2 334	1 873
	K2	2 176	1 508	2 168	1 614	2 145	1 730	2 201	1 810	2 293	1 900
	K3	2 138	1 434	1 963	1 467	1 951	1 543	2 003	1 664	2 152	1 834
	All	6 559	4 460	6 309	4 722	6 450	5 104	6 688	5 414	6 779	5 607
Sham Shui Po	K1	3 129	2 211	3 288	2 324	3 302	2 448	3 340	2 539	3 422	2 637
	K2	3 467	2 461	3 138	2 304	3 178	2 391	3 350	2 567	3 407	2 673
	K3	3 326	2 329	3 519	2 501	3 131	2 345	3 305	2 503	3 482	2 688
	All	9 922	7 001	9 945	7 129	9 611	7 184	9 995	7 609	10 311	7 998
Kowloon City	K1	7 589	6 088	8 097	6 536	8 857	7 238	8 895	7 456	8 978	7 617
	K2	7 579	6 034	7 840	6 413	8 253	6 849	8 818	7 455	9 075	7 776
	K3	7 554	5 937	7 192	5 840	7 291	6 082	7 810	6 562	8 119	7 040
	All	22 722	18 059	23 129	18 789	24 401	20 169	25 523	21 473	26 172	22 433
Wong Tai Sin	K1	2 681	1 893	2 650	1 979	2 737	2 131	2 756	2 173	2 671	2 185
	K2	2 894	2 041	2 783	1 999	2 868	2 261	2 798	2 241	2 781	2 275
	K3	3 115	2 135	2 931	2 128	2 886	2 196	2 922	2 342	2 903	2 376
	All	8 690	6 069	8 364	6 106	8 491	6 588	8 476	6 756	8 355	6 836
Kwun Tong	K1	4 575	3 283	4 608	3 381	4 820	3 646	4 711	3 676	4 578	3 702
	K2	4 596	3 323	4 677	3 423	4 726	3 649	4 887	3 829	4 884	3 898
	K3	4 883	3 572	4 790	3 524	4 835	3 673	4 837	3 804	4 964	4 003
	All	14 054	10 178	14 075	10 328	14 381	10 968	14 435	11 309	14 426	11 603

Annex 2 (cont'd)

School year		2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12		2012/13	
District	Class	Places	Students	Places	Students	Place	Students	Place	Students	Place	Students
Sai Kung	K1	3 049	2 264	3 116	2 321	3 250	2 470	3 501	2 705	3 410	2 728
	K2	2 972	2 209	3 066	2 237	3 034	2 288	3 153	2 532	3 358	2 750
	K3	2 933	2 216	2 787	2 075	2 834	2 117	2 718	2 205	2 883	2 392
	All	8 954	6 689	8 969	6 633	9 118	6 875	9 372	7 442	9 651	7 870
Sha Tin	K1	4 335	3 113	4 339	3 280	4 854	3 729	4 857	3 905	4 931	3 970
	K2	4 494	3 211	4 587	3 395	4 553	3 540	4 783	3 905	4 906	4 092
	K3	4 452	3 178	4 422	3 247	4 324	3 339	4 169	3 449	4 503	3 776
	All	13 281	9 502	13 348	9 922	13 731	10 608	13 809	11 259	14 340	11 838
Tai Po	K1	2 057	1 527	2 086	1 589	2 201	1 728	2 261	1 898	2 160	1 856
	K2	2 053	1 528	2 009	1 565	2 092	1 636	2 163	1 805	2 300	2 007
	K3	2 135	1 482	1 987	1 496	1 960	1 566	1 930	1 644	2 036	1 812
	All	6 245	4 537	6 082	4 650	6 253	4 930	6 354	5 347	6 496	5 675
North	K1	3 093	2 495	3 235	2 740	3 425	3 061	3 773	3 480	3 872	3 573
	K2	3 130	2 563	3 224	2 755	3 291	3 033	3 608	3 410	3 947	3 746
	K3	3 105	2 561	3 251	2 791	3 285	3 008	3 484	3 330	3 730	3 554
	All	9 328	7 619	9 710	8 286	10 001	9 102	10 865	10 220	11 549	10 873
Yuen Long	K1	4 988	3 703	5 343	4 013	5 505	4 491	5 635	4 764	5 549	4 923
	K2	5 268	3 847	5 154	3 937	5 260	4 299	5 568	4 793	5 840	5 169
	K3	6 010	4 232	5 278	3 972	4 948	4 100	5 211	4 508	5 656	5 072
	All	16 266	11 782	15 775	11 922	15 713	12 890	16 414	14 065	17 045	15 164

Annex 2 (cont'd)

School year		2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12		2012/13	
District	Class	Places	Students	Places	Students	Place	Students	Place	Students	Place	Students
Tuen Mun	K1	4 117	2 911	4 160	2 990	4 249	3 304	4 222	3 494	4 230	3 693
	K2	4 047	2 855	4 123	2 999	4 073	3 150	4 191	3 478	4 327	3 799
	K3	4 181	2 874	3 977	2 885	3 843	3 016	3 948	3 250	4 080	3 635
	All	12 345	8 640	12 260	8 874	12 165	9 470	12 361	10 222	12 637	11 127
Tsuen Wan	K1	2 234	1 794	2 194	1 780	2 316	1 885	2 437	2 076	2 445	2 081
	K2	2 076	1 687	2 213	1 822	2 175	1 826	2 235	1 921	2 429	2 067
	K3	2 185	1 756	2 098	1 695	2 194	1 833	2 162	1 861	2 278	1 929
	All	6 495	5 237	6 505	5 297	6 685	5 544	6 834	5 858	7 152	6 077
Kwai Tsing	K1	4 254	3 247	4 143	3 194	4 279	3 281	4 092	3 174	3 971	3 146
	K2	4 472	3 331	4 402	3 364	4 217	3 239	4 240	3 274	4 080	3 296
	K3	4 512	3 326	4 327	3 245	4 234	3 238	4 042	3 131	3 996	3 212
	All	13 238	9 904	12 872	9 803	12 730	9 758	12 374	9 579	12 047	9 654
Islands	K1	1 680	1 126	1 543	1 017	1 594	1 118	1 574	1 075	1 591	1 164
	K2	1 863	1 252	1 766	1 213	1 832	1 204	1 811	1 251	1 700	1 214
	K3	1 780	1 205	1 680	1 148	1 598	1 120	1 548	1 084	1 470	1 098
	All	5 323	3 583	4 989	3 378	5 024	3 442	4 933	3 410	4 761	3 476
All districts	K1	61 474	45 236	62 462	47 109	66 054	51 623	66 521	53 750	66 438	54 829
	K2	63 009	46 149	62 660	47 403	63 347	49 880	66 073	53 977	67 673	56 483
	K3	63 913	46 245	61 514	45 990	60 327	47 437	60 769	49 706	63 442	53 452
	All	188 396	137 630	186 636	140 502	189 728	148 940	193 363	157 433	197 553	164 764

(1) Figures exclude special schools.

Note: (2) Figures reflect the position as at mid-September of the respective year.

(3) Figures include K1, K2 and K3 of kindergartens (including kindergartens-cum-child care centres)

(4) Figures for school places exclude vacant classrooms and vacant parts of child care centres

Annex 3

Table 3: Distribution of cross-boundary kindergarten students by district from the 2008/09 to 2012/13 school years

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
North	1 629	2 219	2 774	3 668	4 274
Tai Po	1	19	29	67	189
Yuen Long	56	210	514	1 069	1 647
Tuen Mun	94	225	454	892	1 265
Other districts (Sha Tin, Tsuen Wan, Kwai Tsing and Tung Chung)	N.A.	2	2	2	64

- Note : (1) The Education Bureau collects data on cross-boundary students through an annual school survey.
 (2) Figures exclude cross-boundary students aged 0-3 who attend child care centres.
 (3) Figures reflect the position as at mid-September of the respective year.
 (4) N.A. – Data were not collected from the districts concerned in that particular school year.

Annex 4

Table 4: Number of children aged three to five (including cross-boundary students) in Tuen Mun, the North District, Tai Po and Yuen Long in the 2014/15 school year

District	Age	Number of children aged three to five (including cross-boundary students)
Tuen Mun	3	4 400
	4	4 500
	5	4 300
North District	3	4 000
	4	4 500
	5	3 900
Tai Po	3	2 300
	4	2 100
	5	2 200
Yuen Long	3	5 700
	4	5 600
	5	5 400

- Note: (1) Figures refer to the projected number of children aged 3-5. Projected figures may not be the same as the actual no. of students enrolled in KGs of the respective district. The latter hinges on the distribution of school places, demand for places and choice of parents at that time. Also, students aged below 3 or over 5 may enrol in kindergartens.
- (2) Figures of school-age population are premised on the 2011-based population projections released by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) in July 2012.
- (3) Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.

Annex 5

Table 5: School places available in vacant classrooms and the number of kindergartens involved in Tuen Mun, the North District, Tai Po and Yuen Long in the 2012/13 school year

	Tuen Mun	North District	Tai Po	Yuen Long	Total
School places available in vacant classrooms	1 680	906	1 296	1 362	5 244
Number of kindergartens involved	20	12	11	20	63