

For Discussion  
On 9 December 2013

**Legislative Council Panel on Education  
Injection into the Language Fund**

**PURPOSE**

This paper seeks Members' views on the Administration's proposal for a funding injection into the Language Fund.

**PRESENT SITUATION**

2. All along, the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR), relevant stakeholders like schools, parents, employers and the media, as well as other bodies like the former Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications (ACTEQ), the Curriculum Development Council (CDC), the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) and the Education Bureau (EDB) have worked together to raise the language proficiency of our students.

3. Of milestone impact has been SCOLAR's Final Report of Language Education Review titled "Action Plan to Raise Language Standards in Hong Kong" (Final Report) issued in 2003, which laid a solid foundation on various areas, particularly on specifying a clear and realistic set of expected language competencies, creating a more motivating language learning environment and building a professional teaching force with the use of the Language Fund. These have, among others, brought about equity in language learning provision and achievements across the full spectrum of schools. Students' performance in the public examinations of Chinese Language and English Language has kept steady and is in fact improving slightly in the upper echelon. Internationally, there is also evidence of improving language standards of

school students as revealed in the results of Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). In addition, the proportion of subject-trained teachers as at the 2012/13 school year stood at 96% and 93% respectively for Chinese Language and English Language teachers while the proportion of teacher-trained reached 98% and 95% respectively. Nevertheless, SCOLAR is well aware of the challenges ahead in further enhancing the language proficiency of the Hong Kong people as a whole and its workforce in particular.

## **PROPOSAL**

4. We propose to inject a sum of \$5 billion into the Language Fund for introducing and strengthening various learner-centred initiatives to further enhance the language proficiency of our students and the workforce with a vision for better learning and better life in realising the bi-literate (in written Chinese and English) and tri-lingual (in Cantonese, Putonghua and spoken English) language education policy.

## **JUSTIFICATIONS**

5. Language competencies are the asset of quality population and the future of Hong Kong. Hong Kong's language policy has covered two of the most widely used languages, Chinese and English, for world-wide communication. Against the backdrop of globalisation and raising expectation of the community over the language standards of our people, there is a need to build on successful experience and existing practice to map out a strategic plan on how to make use of the Language Fund to implement new initiatives to further enhance the language proficiency of our students and the workforce.

6. The non-earmarked balance of \$96.56 million in the Language Fund as at the end of October 2013 cannot fully support the various learner-centred initiatives outlined in the following paragraphs. In his Budget Speech delivered in February 2013, the Financial Secretary proposed injecting \$5 billion into the Language Fund to facilitate its longer term planning in enhancing the proficiency in the use of Chinese

language (including Putonghua) and English language by the people of Hong Kong, which is in line with our bi-literate and tri-lingual language education policy. The proposed one-off injection, which will be in the form of seed capital, will provide a stable stream of investment income to facilitate the longer term strategic planning and development of language education through the Language Fund. A one-off injection will also enable the Government to become more responsive to the rapid changes and new demands of the society.

## **Our Vision 2014 and Beyond – Investment for Better Learning and Better Life**

7. Language is fundamental to all learning for life-long education and whole-person development. It is therefore a key to quality population. We will continue to invest in our human resources and strive to make our people, particularly our students and the workforce, to be bi-literate and tri-lingual. We aim to unleash the full potential and enhance the language proficiency of our students from early age to a level that can help them meet personal aspirations and the evolving societal and economic needs continuously to attain better learning and better life. This will in turn maintain Hong Kong's competitive edge as an international city. On the lighter yet equally important side, mastery of language also opens up to the individual the colourful world of entertainment, social and cultural life for their much needed recreation, whole-person development and work-life balance.

## **Strategic Directions and Key Areas**

8. Having consulted key stakeholders, namely the school community (including principals, teachers and parents), employers, Tertiary Education Institutes, ethnic minority leaders and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), the strategic directions on the use of Language Fund are set out as follows -

- (a) positioning languages as core learning in school education for life-long and whole-person development as well as valuable

- population resource;
- (b) making reference to the latest theories and research findings of language development and learning of children as well as bilingual education;
- (c) meeting the changing demographic, societal and economic needs to meet the expectations of different stakeholders;
- (d) providing equal opportunity for all students; and
- (e) catering for diverse needs to enable all students to learn, with continuous promotion of a reading culture.

9. We will make use of the proposed injection as a long-term investment in human resources and initiate longer term planning on various learner-centred key areas which are in line with the above strategic directions to achieve our vision as set out in paragraph 7 above. The key areas include -

- (a) facilitating effective language education policy formulation and implementation through initiating longitudinal research and comparative studies in local and international settings;
- (b) strengthening support of language learning in Chinese and English in very early years;
- (c) enhancing professional preparation and continuing development of language teachers;
- (d) catering for learner diversity, including the needs of non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students;
- (e) creating and nurturing a facilitating language learning environment for students in and beyond school settings through partnership with relevant stakeholders, in particular the community; and
- (f) raising language proficiency of Hong Kong's workforce in response to the changing language landscape.

### **Proposed Initiatives under the Key Areas**

10. The proposed initiatives under the key areas as outlined in paragraphs 11 to 17 below, spanning from research and development projects, support to schools, continuous professional development of

teachers to community-based projects, aim to work in tandem and sometimes across, for achieving the strategic directions of the Language Fund. Details of the proposed initiatives are set out in the following paragraphs. They would be divided into short-term (i.e. to start in one to two years and be reviewed within five years) and long-term ones (i.e. to start in three to five years and be reviewed within seven years) and will be deliberated by SCOLAR Members based on their urgency and importance. Impacts of the initiatives would be continuously reviewed to inform future language education policy planning.

*Facilitating effective language education policy formulation and implementation through initiating longitudinal research and comparative studies in local and international settings*

11. Ever since its inception in 1996, SCOLAR has launched various research and development projects with a view to facilitating the formulation of language education policies by focusing on language use, teaching approaches, resources development, etc. For example, there are useful data and information on adopting Putonghua as the medium of instruction for teaching of Chinese language as well as insightful findings on the use of Chinese language (including Putonghua) and English language in different contexts. In the years ahead, other than disseminating the good practices, it is of strategic importance to put greater emphasis on the needs of specific groups such as kindergarten children, NCS students and the workforce, as well as to track the external influences on language policy and learning for more sustainable impact. The strategies recommended below have adopted an all-embracing approach in tapping the wider pool of research expertise in the local and international arena. Building on SCOLAR's past and current efforts, we will make use of the proposed injection to -

- (a) encourage more bottom-up research and development projects on language learning and pedagogy from tertiary institutions and professional bodies to better inform policy and practice, in addition to those projects initiated by the Government and SCOLAR;

- (b) commission longitudinal studies at early age to track students' language learning and development at different stages of education to better inform planning and practice;
- (c) continue to study the use of Chinese language (including Putonghua) and English language, as well as the needs and practice of bilingualism in different contexts (including workplace) in response to changing societal and economic contexts;
- (d) conduct literature review and comparative studies on language development and language learning, as well as make reference to available local and international studies; and
- (e) continue to benchmark language education in Hong Kong, including qualifications on the proficiency of Chinese language and English language, with international practices and performance.

*Strengthening support of language learning in Chinese and English in very early years*

12. All along, SCOLAR has helped kindergartens develop effective practices of English language exposure for young children in response to the recommendation of the Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum. World-wide research has shown that language development in the early years is powerful and may yield high returns from a future generation that is proficient in the use of languages. It is also evident in research studies on early language acquisition/learning that there is rapid brain development in the early years, especially in particular areas of the brain associated with language. Small children also have considerable capacity to learn more than one language when placed in a bi-lingual or multi-lingual environment. Capitalising on such findings and with the proposed injection, we will -

- (a) provide school support to enhance pedagogy for effective language development in children's early years in both Chinese language and English language;
- (b) work in close collaboration with school leaders to lead priority language initiatives to facilitate smooth transition from

- pre-primary to primary level in meeting the needs of the young children;
- (c) conduct and/or support research studies on early language and literacy development of first and second language and bilingual education to better inform language learning in early years; and
  - (d) promote continuous professional development of kindergarten teachers in teaching of Chinese language and English language, with added emphasis on pedagogy and the understanding of early language and literacy development.

*Enhancing professional preparation and continuing development of language teachers*

13. Teachers play a key role in motivating and facilitating students to learn a language. Their passion and pedagogy are instrumental to the success of all our language enhancement initiatives. In the period from 2003 to 2010, the Language Fund was largely used for enhancing teachers' professional development, providing school-based support, implementing overseas immersion programme and offering grant schemes to schools, as support measures in response to SCOLAR's Final Report issued in 2003. Currently, we are planning to use the existing balance of the Language Fund to implement a Professional Enhancement Grant Scheme for Chinese teachers with a view to enhancing their professional qualifications in teaching Chinese language to NCS students. With the new injection, we will -

- (a) work closely with the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals (COTAP) [formerly ACTEQ] to provide advice on teacher education programmes and offer sustainable, quality continuing professional development opportunities, such as those on knowledge and pedagogy on early language and literacy development of first and second language for kindergarten teachers, that are in line with the latest language education policy;
- (b) offer quality programmes that would not otherwise be provided for teachers across the sectors, which may include language immersion programmes, focused programmes on language across the curriculum for both Chinese language and English

- language in primary and secondary schools; and
- (c) provide special assistance on developing learning and teaching resources (e.g. web-based, e-packages, tailor-made readers) that would enhance teachers' effectiveness and save their workload for language teaching, in particular resources premised on sound pedagogy for teaching specific groups (such as NCS students and kindergarten children).

*Catering for learner diversity, including the needs of NCS students*

14. Over the past years, SCOLAR has implemented various projects to cater for learner diversity, including, for example, setting up a dedicated Task Force on Language Support to provide primary and secondary schools with a wide range of on-site school-based or networked support services on strengthening curriculum planning, pedagogical knowledge and skills in the areas of Chinese language and English language learning; as well as providing grants to both primary and secondary schools to allow teachers to implement various effective and needs-based measures to raise the English proficiency of their students in response to the fine-tuned Medium of Instruction policy. Based on the evidence of these effective measures, it is envisaged that external facilitation by engaging language and teaching experts for school support services and the creation of space for teachers through additional resource could facilitate peer and collaborative learning among schools and further enhance language learning and teaching in schools. With the proposed injection, we will -

- (a) provide on-site or networked support customised to the contexts of individual schools (e.g. those schools with NCS students, those schools with students with deprived English environment) for effective language learning and teaching as well as whole-school language curriculum planning;
- (b) help schools orchestrate school-based language initiatives to foster curriculum continuity among primary and secondary schools through a collaborative mode;
- (c) pilot new pedagogy, learning and/or teaching resources, assessment methods and selective innovations to cater for learner



diversity, including harnessing technologies to assist language learning and teaching; and

- (d) continue to promote a reading culture and reading across the curriculum for all students in schools.

15. In recent years, in the light of the rapid population growth of NCS students in Hong Kong, SCOLAR has run district-based programmes to encourage NCS students to learn Chinese language at an early age so as to arouse their interest in learning Chinese. In addition, a Project of After-school Extended Chinese Learning for NCS students has been launched to reinforce the learning of the Chinese language by the NCS students through various modes of after-school extended Chinese learning. With the new injection, we will -

- (a) conduct and/or support research studies on the difficulties that NCS students encounter in learning Chinese language to help them overcome the hurdles in Chinese language learning as well as to generate good practices;
- (b) provide those teachers teaching Chinese language to NCS students with sustainable and quality continuing professional development opportunities; and
- (c) develop or try out tailor-made resources (including e-resources) to help NCS students learn Chinese language and/or provide special assistance to develop learning and/or teaching resources that would enhance teachers' effectiveness and save their workload for teaching NCS students.

*Creating and nurturing a facilitating language learning environment for students in and beyond school settings through partnership with relevant stakeholders, in particular the community*

16. Reading provides a rich source of knowledge and pleasure and is fundamental to language development. Between the 2004/05 and 2010/11 school years, SCOLAR successfully implemented the Reading Ambassador and Reading Contract Project to promote reading in schools and benefited over 200 000 students and 500 schools. From this, SCOLAR is aware of the cost-effectiveness in leveraging on the efforts, resources and synergy of the community partners for innovative methods and creative partnerships to thrive at all levels of education. With the

proposed injection, we will -

- (a) continue to promote the importance of language education, particularly reading, through nurturing closer partnership and form stronger alliance with various stakeholders such as various advisory committees, COTAP, Government bureaux and departments, NGOs, private sectors, and the community at large; and
- (b) implement community projects and encourage bottom-up initiatives that promote the importance of reading, language education and language use, thereby rendering a facilitating language environment.

*Raising language proficiency of Hong Kong's workforce in response to the changing language landscape*

17. SCOLAR has launched the Workplace English Campaign and the Vocational English Enhancement Programme to increase public awareness on the importance of having a good command of English in a workplace environment and to improve English among the workforce in Hong Kong. It is well noted that globalisation and advancements in information and communication technology have brought about drastic changes to the work environment and linguistic demands on the employees. To keep track of such developments, SCOLAR has already initiated a Study on the Use of Language in the Workplace of Hong Kong. With the proposed injection, we will -

- (a) continue to conduct research studies on language proficiency of the workforce to respond to the changing needs of the economy; and
- (b) continue to promote vocational English to the workforce to raise their awareness on the importance of language at the workplace; and launch new initiatives to promote vocational Chinese (particularly Chinese writing) to the workforce to raise their awareness on the importance of language at the workplace.

## **Monitoring Mechanism**

18. On formulating the key initiatives as stated in the above paragraphs, we will continue the current mode of operation which has proven to be effective in retaining the flexibility of the Language Fund to encourage projects which are pioneer in nature. Members of SCOLAR, comprising experienced principals and teachers, renowned language academics and private sector personalities, will from time to time, look into the changing needs of our students and the workforce, accord appropriate priorities and provide constructive feedback on details of the initiatives under planning.

19. In particular, in considering the initiatives, SCOLAR Members will adopt prudent financial management control and adopt the following specific funding principles in addition to the broad disbursement principles, which are enshrined in the Trust Deed upon the creation of the Language Fund in 1994 -

- (a) while allocation of fund should generally be in line with the key strategic directions, sufficient flexibility would be allowed to cater for ad hoc worthwhile initiatives;
- (b) while higher priority should be given to SCOLAR initiatives, bottom-up initiatives raised by the community would also be considered to encourage wider participation of the community sector, and foster innovation and creativity;
- (c) a balance would be made to cater for the learning diversity of students; and
- (d) projects funded under the Language Fund are subject to regular reviews and are subject to a cap on the funding support and timeframe unless fully justified to forestall projects from becoming long-term recurrent commitments.

20. SCOLAR Members will also closely monitor the implementation of the initiatives upon approval. The monitoring mechanism for each project may vary because of its uniqueness in nature. That said, in general, grantees are required to provide document proof such as statements of accounts, programmes of events, progress reports and final reports etc. Monitoring and evaluation visits will also be arranged as

appropriate.

21. To monitor the Language Fund, its Audited Statement of Accounts together with the Director of Audit's report will continue to be tabled before the Legislative Council on an annual basis. In addition, for greater transparency on the use of the Language Fund, the activities so funded will be reported to the Legislative Council on a regular basis in the future.

### **Financial Arrangements**

22. If the proposed injection of \$5 billion is approved, we will explore placing it with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority to earn investment return that is linked to the performance of the Hong Kong Exchange Fund. On assumption that the rate of return is 5% per annum, the funding available will be around \$250 million per year on average. The \$250 million will be roughly allocated to various areas, including providing support to schools and teachers (55%), conducting research and development projects (20%), implementing language education community projects (15%), and serving as contingency (10%). As a general principle, the operation of the Language Fund will be funded by the investment returns. In times of market volatilities, we may have to adjust our expenditure in the light of the reduced investment income or use a small part of the principal to finance the programmes under very exceptional circumstances.

23. As for the existing balance of the Language Fund (including the non-earmarked balance of \$96.56 million (as at the end of October 2013)), it will, in accordance with current practice, be deposited with the banks or deployed for prudent investment to meet cash flow requirements.

### **Expected Outcome**

24. It is envisaged that, with the proposed injection, we will be able to initiate longer term planning which will facilitate us in unleashing the full potential of our students and workforce and enhancing their language

proficiency of Chinese language (including Putonghua) and English language to a level that can help them meet the evolving societal and economic needs and attain better learning and better life. We will continue to monitor the language proficiency of our students and the workforce through local and international studies and assessments, and collect feedback on a regular basis on whether their language needs have been met.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

25. We propose a one-off injection of \$5 billion into the Language Fund in 2013-14. In line with the existing practice, the administrative costs will be absorbed by the EDB. As for the direct expenses incurred in implementing the language education projects, including those staff specifically employed to implement the said projects, they will be charged to the Language Fund.

## **BACKGROUND**

26. The Language Fund was set up in March 1994 with an initial allocation of \$300 million, held in trust under the Director of Education (now the Permanent Secretary for Education) Incorporation Ordinance, to provide financial support for projects and activities aiming at improving Hong Kong people's proficiency in Chinese language (including Putonghua) and English language. The Language Fund is operated in accordance with a Trust Deed which sets out the objects of the Language Fund, the broad principles governing the disbursement, as well as the management framework. SCOLAR, established in 1996 to advise the Government of language education issues in general, is responsible for advising the Trustee of the Language Fund of the policies and procedures in governing the operation of the Language Fund.

27. Since the establishment of the Language Fund, the Finance Committee has approved six injections into the Language Fund. Details of the injections are summarised below -

<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount (\$ million)</b>
1994	300
2001	200
2003	400
2005	500
2006	1,100
2010	500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,000</b>

28. Added to the \$3,000 million injection is a total interest income of \$509.47 million accrued by the Language Fund over the years. Taking into account the total grant of \$3,316.26 million already approved for various projects, the Language Fund had an outstanding balance of \$193.21 million as at the end of October 2013. Of this, \$96.65 million has been earmarked for on-going initiatives, leaving only a non-earmarked balance of \$96.56 million.

29. Since 1994, through the use of the Language Fund, a wide variety of projects have been conducted by a range of organisations, including tertiary education institutes, schools, educational bodies, and government departments. Different stakeholders of different stages of education (i.e. pre-primary, primary, secondary and post-secondary) are benefited. A highlight of the major projects is set out at Enclosure 1. These projects and initiatives carried out or being carried out have been complementing the Administration's efforts in building a professional language teaching force, supporting for the learning and teaching of languages in schools, supporting the development of school-based programmes for upgrading students' language proficiency and creating a motivating and conducive language learning environment. Summary of the major impacts brought by the Language Fund across the years is set out at Enclosure 2.

Education Bureau  
December 2013

**Major Completed/On-going Language Fund Projects**

**(I) Professional Development of Language Teachers**

- ◆ **The Professional Development Incentive Grant Scheme for Language Teachers (PDIGS)** – PDIGS was launched in 2004 to encourage serving language teachers to attain certain qualifications<sup>1</sup> by providing financial incentives to them. PDIGS provides serving language teachers (i.e. those who joined the teaching profession and taught at the primary or secondary level before the 2004/05 school year) incentive grant to meet 50% of their tuition fees, subject to a maximum of \$30,000 per teacher. A total of \$525 million has been allocated for the Scheme. Since its launch in April 2004, altogether more than 8 200 applications have been approved with funds spent and earmarked at about \$211 million. Overall speaking, the percentage of language teachers equipped with relevant subject knowledge and pedagogy has risen from 29% in the 2003/04 to 71.6% in the 2012/13 school year.
  
- ◆ **Overseas Immersion Programme for English Language Teachers** – Through the use of Language Fund, SCOLAR started to sponsor the Overseas Immersion Programme (the Programme) in the 2006/07 school year. The objectives of the Programme are to provide English language teachers of primary schools with an opportunity to learn and experience innovative learning and teaching methods, materials and curricular activities in English as a second language, and to gain deeper knowledge of the English language and understanding of the culture of English-speaking countries. The Programme was extended to cover principals of primary schools in the 2007/08 school year to broaden their exposure and to enhance their curriculum leadership in English language education. SCOLAR sponsored each participant 85% of the tuition fee upon successful completion of the tour. \$27 million was allocated for the Programme. Teacher participants were required to implement a school plan to improve English language teaching in their school after the completion of the Programme. Since the 2006/07 school year,

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<sup>1</sup>Starting from the 2004/05 school year, new Chinese language and English language teachers in primary and secondary schools should hold at least a Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree majoring in the relevant language subject, or both a first/higher degree majoring in the relevant language subject and a recognised teacher training qualification majoring in the relevant language subject.

SCOLAR has sponsored 493 English teachers and 99 principals from 264 and 99 primary schools of 114 and 50 school sponsoring bodies respectively to participate in the Programme. Teachers reported that the immersion programmes had given them an eye-opening experience. Many have introduced the newly acquired teaching methods to their classes/schools.

- ◆ **Putonghua Summer Immersion Course Subsidy Scheme** – The Scheme provided a maximum subsidy of \$12,500 for teachers to attend summer immersion courses in the Mainland. The rate of subsidy was based on the teachers' performance in the Putonghua Shuiping Ceshi that they had achieved before and after the immersion courses. \$24 million was allocated for running the Scheme from 2000 to 2012. The Scheme was conducted on an annual basis (except 2003 and 2008 due to SARS and Beijing Olympics respectively). Upon the completion of the Scheme, over 1 700 teachers have been subsidised.

## **(II) Supporting Schools in the Learning and Teaching of Languages**

- ◆ **The Task Force on Language Support** – The Task Force, with an allocation of \$278 million from the Language Fund, was established in 2004 to help schools implement the curriculum reform. It seeks to promote curriculum leadership development and enhance the quality of language education through the process of curriculum planning, implementing different learning and teaching strategies and on-going evaluation. Support is rendered to schools through on-site visits (by conducting collaborative lesson planning and action research), professional development activities of different scales and on different topics, and consultancy services. In the 2013/14 school year, support is being rendered to 284 primary and secondary schools. Experiences of those schools are documented and shared through CD-ROMs, publications, and the website of EDB and Hong Kong Education City.
- ◆ **Quality English Language Education at Pre-primary Level Project** – The project was launched in the 2007/08 school year with a view to exploring and developing more effective models of quality English exposure to children at the pre-primary level and thereby facilitating the formulation of a long-term strategy on supporting English language education at the pre-primary level. Under the project, participating teachers will be provided with a two-year professional development programme on various effective English



language teaching strategies and activity/curriculum planning; whereas participating kindergartens will be provided with a two-year intensive on-site support service or consultancy service on English language activity/curriculum planning and implementation. \$85 million has been allocated for the project. Since the launch of the project in the 2007/08 school year, more than 230 kindergartens, 600 teachers and 12 000 children have participated in the project. The project is being well received by principals, teachers of kindergartens and the parents.

- ◆ **Scheme to Support Schools in Using Putonghua to Teach Chinese Language Subject** – In the 2008/09 school year, SCOLAR launched a scheme to assist schools to implement using Putonghua to teach Chinese language. The Support Scheme is carried out in four phases, providing support to 40 primary and secondary schools in each phase. There will be a total of 160 schools benefited from the 2008/09 to 2013/14 school years. The professional support given to schools comprises three components: (a) support rendered by experts from the Mainland and local consultants to help schools implement their plan on using Putonghua to teach Chinese language; (b) seminars/workshops for teachers on theories of and pedagogy in using Putonghua to teach Chinese language; and (c) exchange activities conducted locally and in the Mainland to increase teachers' exposure to different teaching practices. Grant for supply teacher is provided to the participating schools to create room for teachers to implement their school plan and attend professional development programmes. About \$225 million was allocated for the Scheme. We believe that, by encouraging and supporting more schools to implement the use of Putonghua to teach Chinese language subject, the Scheme would play a significant role in the attainment of the long-term vision of using Putonghua to teach Chinese language subject. As of 2013/14 school year, 40 primary and secondary schools are still being supported under the Scheme.

### **(III) Supporting School-based Language Enhancement Programmes**

- ◆ **English Enhancement Scheme and Refined English Enhancement Scheme** – The Education Bureau launched the English Enhancement Scheme (EES) and Refined English Enhancement Scheme (REES) in 2006 and 2010 respectively with a view to building up teachers' capacity in the teaching and learning of English in secondary schools for raising students' English proficiency. While the EES launched in 2006 is to strengthen the teaching and learning of English of

secondary schools<sup>2</sup> through strategic planning with a holistic school-based plan on capacity building, the REES launched in 2010 is primarily for supporting the implementation of the fine-tuned medium of instruction arrangements at junior secondary levels with schools<sup>3</sup> building on the foundation of the EES to adjust and/or refocus relevant items of their plans as appropriate to put in place their school-based medium of instruction arrangements. For budgetary purpose, a total amount of \$880 million was then earmarked from the Language Fund for the EES for schools to apply with at most \$3 million and \$500,000 for schools adopting Chinese and English as their medium of instruction respectively through four batches between 2006 and 2007. Another sum of \$323 million was earmarked for the REES with a ceiling of \$1 million for each school. Both Schemes are to be completed at the end of the 2013/14 school year.

- ◆ **English Enhancement Grant Scheme for Primary Schools**– The objective of the Scheme is to provide additional resources (a maximum of \$500,000 per school) to primary schools to help developing school-based English enhancement measures in strengthening the learning and teaching of English language. Of the \$270 million allocation for the Scheme, about \$234 million has been granted to a total of 475 government, aided or Direct Subsidy Scheme primary schools. Schools with approved grants have started implementing the proposed support measures in September of 2010, 2011 or 2012 respectively.
  
- ◆ **Project of After-school Extended Chinese Learning for Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) Students** – The government is committed to encouraging and supporting early integration of NCS students into the local community, including their adaptation to the local education system and mastery of the Chinese language. One of the support measures is providing NCS students with after-school support to reinforce what they have learnt of the Chinese language in class. A sum of \$77 million has been earmarked for schools to try out various modes of extended Chinese learning for their NCS students from the 2010/11 to 2015/16 school years through the Project of After-school Extended Chinese Learning for NCS Students.

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<sup>2</sup> 392 public-sector schools including 7 special schools, and 47 Direct Subsidy Scheme schools, making up a total of 439 secondary schools under the EES.

<sup>3</sup> 351 public-sector schools including 3 special schools, and 35 Direct Subsidy Scheme schools, making up a total of 386 secondary schools under the REES.

The number of NCS students being benefited from the Project is about 2 300, 4 000 and 4 300 in the first three years of implementation, i.e. the 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 school years respectively, with an expenditure of about \$34 million in the period concerned.

#### **(IV) Creating a Facilitating Language Learning Environment**

- ◆ **Promotion of Putonghua** – In the 2012/13 school year, three school-based programmes, namely Putonghua Public Speaking Competition for Primary and Secondary Schools, Chinese Language Enrichment Programme for Primary Schools and Putonghua Drama Performance for Primary Schools were rolled out. A total of 16 000 students participated. In the 2013/14 school year, a television programme demonstrating the use of Putonghua in different contexts and a radio programme highlighting the common mistakes or misuse of Putonghua in daily life have been broadcasted. In addition, two school-based programmes, with 12 000 students to be benefited, will be rolled out.
- ◆ **Drama-in-Education English Alliance (2008/09 and 2009/10)** – The project was first launched in the 2008/09 school year to arouse students’ interest in English language learning and to improve their English language skills through the promotion of English drama. Under the project, professional development workshops were organised for primary school teachers and on-site support services were provided to the participating schools. 89 and 92 primary schools were benefited from the project in the 2008/09 and 2009/10 school years respectively.
- ◆ **English Alliance (2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14)** – Building on the success of Drama-in-Education in the 2008/09 and 2009/10 school years, English Alliance was launched in the 2010/11 school year. Since then, a range of meaningful, fun and creative English language programmes/activities under a designated theme were arranged every school year to raise interest of the school community in the learning and use of English. In the 2010/11 school year, the designated theme was “Stories Alive”. The programmes/activities benefited over 920 students and teachers from 170 schools. In the 2011/12 school year, the designated theme was “English is Everywhere”. Apart from the English language

programmes/activities, a 2-day “Fun Day” was organised to showcase the learning experience of participating students as well as the deliverables of the programmes/activities. A total of 14 070 participants (including students, teachers and parents) from 361 schools participated and were benefited from the English Alliance. In the 2012/13 school year, a series of reading-related language programmes with the purpose of changing the perception of the participants and making an impact on their aspiration or habits in reading in English were organised for more than 7 800 participants. In addition, a territory-wide reading event, titled “Create Our Own Reading Records!”, as well as pre- and post-Event activities were held for 15 000 participants. To extend further the enjoyable reading experience brought by English Alliance 2012/13, a new series of reading-related English language programmes/activities are launched under English Alliance 2013/14 for primary and secondary schools. The number of target participants for English Alliance 2013/14 is 8 450 students and 230 teachers.

- ◆ **Creating English Language Environment for Students in Hong Kong Project** – With a view to creating a richer and pleasurable English language environment for primary school students to extend their English learning experience beyond classroom, SCOLAR collaborated with Treasure House of Noah’s Ark and Ocean Park in the 2010/11 and 2011/12 school years in providing primary school students with opportunities of listening to and speaking English through interesting and interactive educational programmes in an informal manner so as to motivate them to learn English and raise their confidence in using the language. A total of 267 primary schools and their 19 780 students were benefited from the project.
- ◆ **Reading Ambassador and Reading Contract Project** – The project was launched in the 2004/05 school year and completed in the 2010/11 school year. The programme on Reader Ambassador aimed to train secondary school students and parents of primary students to be Reading Ambassadors with a view to promoting reading in their respective schools whereas the programme on Reading Contract aimed to encourage primary and secondary students to read more during the school term and summer holiday. With an allocation of \$7 million, over 200 000 students and 500 schools were benefited from the project.
- ◆ **Promotion of Chinese** – Since the 2012/13 school year, SCOLAR has focused on promoting Chinese writing to local students with a

view to nurturing a writing culture in schools, arousing students' interest and enhancing their proficiency in writing. Separately, in the light of the rapid growth of NCS children in Hong Kong, SCOLAR has run district-based programmes to encourage NCS students to learn Chinese at an early age so as to arouse their interest in learning Chinese. In the 2012/13 school year, over 100 000 students were benefited from the programmes. Around \$13 million has been allocated for the implementation of various programmes in the 2013/14 and 2014/15 school years.

#### **(V) Raising Workplace Language Proficiency of Hong Kong's Workforce**

- ◆ **Publicity and Public Education Programme on Putonghua** – In the 2012/13 school year, SCOLAR implemented various publicity and public education programmes on Putonghua, including broadcasting a radio programme focusing on terms commonly used in the business and economic sector as well as organising workshops to enhance the Putonghua proficiency of working adults in seven different industries, namely retail, hospitality, catering, tourism, real estate, banking, and business and trading. In the 2013/14 school year, a new series of publicity and public education programmes, including a television and a radio programme, have been rolled out.
- ◆ **Workplace English Campaign** – The Campaign, launched in 2000, aims to heighten public awareness on the importance of having a good command of English in a workplace environment and to improve English among the workforce in Hong Kong. Public education and publicity programmes/activities, including seminars, television programmes, as well as open competition are being carried out to encourage our workforce in enhancing their English proficiency.
- ◆ **Vocational English Enhancement Programme** – A pilot tailor-made programme for five industries, namely transport and logistics; import/export and wholesale; hotel, catering and tourism; retail; and banking and finance was launched in 2011. These five industries are chosen as they cover over 50% of the local workforce and have a generally high demand for English language training. Riding on the success of the pilot run, \$23.7 million has been allocated for launching the Vocational English Enhancement Programme for three years from the 2012/13 to 2014/15 school years.

## **(VI) Research and Development**

- ◆ **Research on Factors Affecting the Use of Putonghua to Teach Chinese Language in Primary and Secondary Schools in Hong Kong** – The research aimed to identify the conditions necessary to successfully use Putonghua to teach Chinese language in schools. From the case studies of the 20 participating schools, six factors were identified to be conducive to the implementation of using Putonghua to teach Chinese language, namely (a) capacity of teachers; (b) attitudes and strategies of the school management; (c) language environment; (d) students’ learning ability; (e) arrangements on curriculum, teaching methods, and teaching materials; and (f) support for teaching and learning. The research findings were submitted to the Education Panel of the Legislative Council in July 2008 and are available online for reference by schools and members of the public. The findings of the research have provided school management with examples of good practices for adoption in implementing the use of Putonghua to teach Chinese language. These findings have also informed the design of the above-mentioned “Scheme to Support Schools in Using Putonghua to Teach Chinese Language Subject” which seeks to help participating schools create favourable conditions for the use of Putonghua to teach Chinese language.
  
- ◆ **Research on the Putonghua Proficiency of Hong Kong Students** – The research, carried out by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, consists of a three-year study at Primary 3, Primary 6 and Secondary 3 levels from 2008 to 2011. The research has generated useful information on the Putonghua proficiency of Hong Kong students. It has also facilitated the general public in understanding their Putonghua language proficiency in Hong Kong context. \$21 million has been allocated.
  
- ◆ **Language Landscape Studies – A Study on the Use of Language in the Workplace of Hong Kong** – This study, involving both quantitative and qualitative elements, examines the problems and challenges of working adults of different age and occupation in the use of language at the workplace of Hong Kong. The Study targets at five industries, which involve more than half of the working population of Hong Kong, namely, transport and logistics, retail, banking, import and export, and hospitality.

- ◆ **Language Landscape Studies - Thematic Household Survey (THS) on the Use of Language in Hong Kong** – The objective of the THS is to study the use of language of the people of Hong Kong in different contexts, in particular, at home, at work and during their daily exposure to the media. It is administered by the Census & Statistics Department. The fieldwork of THS has been completed and a total of 10 044 households were successfully enumerated. Findings are being studied in detail.

**Summary of Major Impacts**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Major Impacts</b>
1994 to 2002	Implement research and development projects on language learning and conduct language projects to enhance language environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gathered data of young children's Cantonese development as mother language and English language learning</li><li>• Collected data on English language teaching practices in Hong Kong primary and secondary schools</li><li>• Evaluated the effectiveness of Native-speaking English Teacher Scheme (secondary)</li><li>• Developed Chinese/English language learning and teaching resources for teachers' use and self-learning materials for students' access</li><li>• Set the English proficiency of different job types for employees under the Workplace English Benchmark</li><li>• Provided working adults with financial assistance for improving their language proficiency</li><li>• Raised general public's awareness on the importance of English competency at the workplace through Workplace English Campaign</li><li>• Supported schools to organise various language activities for students</li><li>• Immersed full-time Post Graduate Diploma/Certificate of Education students in overseas immersion programmes for improving their English language proficiency</li></ul>
2003 to 2010	Enhance teachers' professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Upgraded the professional qualifications of serving Chinese/English language</li></ul>



	<p>development, provide school-based support and offer grant schemes to schools</p>	<p>teachers who joined the teaching professional before the 2004/05 school year through the provision of financial assistance to meet the SCOLAR requirement in response to SCOLAR’s Final Report on Language Education review titled “Action Plan to Raise Language Standards in Hong Kong” issued in 2003</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced primary school English language teachers’ English proficiency and exposed them to innovative pedagogy through subsidising them for overseas immersion programmes</li> <li>• Facilitated primary and secondary schools in implementing curriculum reform through providing schools with a wide range of school-based support services on curriculum planning and pedagogical knowledge and skills in the areas of Chinese language and English language</li> <li>• Facilitated primary and secondary schools in adopting Putonghua as the medium of instruction for Chinese language in response to the growing school population that adopts Putonghua to teach Chinese language</li> <li>• Helped kindergartens develop effective models of English exposure for young children in response to the recommendation of the Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum (CDC, 2006) on teaching English as a second language</li> <li>• Raised the English language proficiency of secondary students of schools using Chinese language or English language as the medium of instruction (MOI) through the provision of grants to schools in</li> </ul>
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2011 to 2013	Conduct research studies on language education issues and create a facilitating language environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Studied the use of Chinese language (including Putonghua) and English language in different contexts (home and workplace) to inform language education policy</li> <li>Created a facilitating Chinese and English language environment in/outside schools to enhance students' language proficiency through organising various creative language programmes/projects</li> <li>Supported pre-primary, primary and secondary NCS students in learning Chinese language through funding various Chinese language programmes in response to students' changing language needs</li> <li>Nurtured a positive language environment in the community through closer networking and partnering with NGOs and private sectors</li> </ul>