

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(4)439/14-15  
(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

**Panel on Education**

**Minutes of meeting**  
**held on Monday, 8 December 2014, at 4:30 pm**  
**in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

**Members present** :

- Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, SBS, JP (Chairman)
- Hon IP Kin-yuen (Deputy Chairman)
- Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
- Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
- Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
- Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
- Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
- Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH
- Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan, JP
- Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
- Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
- Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
- Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
- Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
- Hon Steven HO Chun-yin
- Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai
- Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
- 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 CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
- Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP

**Members  
absent** : Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP  
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che  
Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP

**Public Officers :** Agenda item III  
**attending**

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP  
Secretary for Education

Mr Brian LO Sai-hung  
Deputy Secretary for Education (1)

Dr Richard ARMOUR, JP  
Secretary-General  
University Grants Committee

Mr Stanley W H WONG  
Research Director  
Central Policy Unit

Agenda item IV

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP  
Secretary for Education

Mr Brian LO Sai-hung  
Deputy Secretary for Education (1)

Mr LEUNG Yam-shing  
Deputy Executive Director  
Vocational Training Council

Agenda item V

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP  
Under Secretary for Education

Mr Stephen YIP  
Principal Assistant Secretary  
(Curriculum Development)  
Education Bureau

Dr TONG Chong-sze  
Secretary General  
Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment  
Authority

Agenda item VI

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP  
Under Secretary for Education

Ms Sophia WONG  
Principal Assistant Secretary  
(School Development)  
Education Bureau

Mr Edwin TSUI  
Principal Education Officer  
(Kowloon)  
Education Bureau

**Invited  
Participant**

: Agenda item III

Research Grants Council

Professor Benjamin W WAH  
Chairman

**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

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**I. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)197/14-15(01) -- Information paper on report on the implementation of the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme dated 24 November 2014 provided by the Administration)

Members noted the above paper issued since the last meeting.

**II. Items for discussion at the next meeting**

(Appendix I to LC Paper No. CB(4)210/14-15 -- List of outstanding items for discussion

Appendix II to LC Paper No. CB(4)210/14-15 -- List of follow-up actions)

2. The Chairman informed members that the Administration had proposed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting to be held on 12 January 2015 at 4:30 pm –

(a) Progress Report of the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals; and

(b) an item related to the University Grants Committee.

3. The Chairman said that he would finalize with the Deputy Chairman the items to be discussed at the next regular meeting with reference to the Panel's "List of outstanding items for discussion". Members would be notified accordingly in due course.

*(Post-meeting note: Upon finalization by the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, the agenda for the meeting to be held on 12 January 2015 was issued to members vide LC Paper CB(4) 285/14-15 on 22 December 2014.)*

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4. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan said that some university staff had blatantly abetted their students to participate unlawful activities in the recent mass assemblies occupying roads. Although relevant arrangements had been put in place by individual higher education institutions to deal with the conduct of their staff, Dr CHIANG said that the Panel might wish to consider discussing the subject.

5. Referring to Dr CHIANG's view, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung remarked that the expression of personal views should not be taken as an act of abetting. The Chairman noted the suggestion and views of Dr CHIANG and Mr LEUNG.

6. The Chairman recalled that at the last meeting held on 10 November 2014, there was a suggestion that the Panel should hold a special meeting to receive views from deputations on issues related to the regulation, governance and quality assurance of the self-financing post-secondary sector, with reference to the Report of Consultancy Study on "Local and International Good Practices in the Governance and Quality Assurance of the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Sector" published by the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education. He informed members that after seeking members' views on the proposed meeting arrangements vide LC Paper No. CB(4)195/14-15, he had decided to schedule a special meeting to be held on Saturday, 7 February 2015, from 9 am to about 1 pm. The end-time of the special meeting would depend on the number of attending deputations.

*(Post-meeting note: The notice of special meeting to be held on 7 February 2015 was issued to members vide LC Paper CB(4)239/14-15 on 9 December 2014.)*

7. 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.

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**III. Funding support for research work conducted by the post-secondary education sector**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)210/14-15(01) -- Paper provided by the Education Bureau

LC Paper No. CB(4)230/14-15(01) -- Information paper on the "Public Policy Research Funding Scheme" provided by the Central Policy Unit

LC Paper No. CB(4)210/14-15(02) -- Background brief entitled "Allocation of research funding to the post-secondary education sector" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat)

8. Members noted the background brief prepared by the Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(4)210/14-15(02)].

Briefing by the Administration

9. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the existing funding support for research work conducted by the post-secondary education sector in Hong Kong, as set out in the paper provided by the Education Bureau ("EDB") [LC Paper No. CB(4)210/14-15(01)]. Research Director, Central Policy Unit ("RD/CPU") briefed members on the latest position of the Public Policy Research Funding Scheme ("PPRFS"), as set out in CPU's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)230/14-15(01)].

Discussion

*Research funding from University Grants Committee ("UGC") and Research Grants Council ("RGC")*

10. Dr Kenneth CHAN considered that research funding provided to the post-secondary education sector should be increased. He was concerned that under the existing mechanism of providing research funding on a competitive basis, institutions with a shorter history and relatively junior academics might be disadvantaged. Dr CHAN pointed out that apart from

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competition, collaboration in research activities was equally important.

11. Noting the diversity of research funding schemes, Mrs Regina IP enquired whether the Administration would consider strengthening the development of basic research activities of selected disciplines with a proven record of outstanding research performance. For instance, given the achievements in research on the subject of chemistry, consideration should be given to setting up an advanced research institute on chemistry.

12. In this connection, Prof Benjamin WAH, Chairman of RGC, advised that the various funding schemes administered by RGC targeted at projects of different scales and disciplines. Meanwhile, in the context of its strategic planning, RGC was exploring whether some of the existing schemes should be consolidated. RGC/UGC would continue to identify areas of excellence for allocating of research funding resources.

13. Noting from EDB's paper that 223 elite candidates from 38 countries and regions had accepted the scholarship awarded by RGC under the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan enquired about the proportion of local candidates and whether they would be given priority for the scholarship over non-local candidates. Dr Helena WONG sought information on the proportion of students from the Mainland.

14. Prof Benjamin WAH said that out of the 223 candidates, about 6% were local candidates and about 58% were from the Mainland. The success rate for applications from local candidates and Mainland candidates in recent years was about 6% to 9% and 3% to 4% respectively. In line with the established international practice, the award of scholarship was based on merits and not the candidates' place of origin.

15. Dr Helena WONG remarked that in overseas jurisdictions such as the United States, some scholarship schemes were designated for application by local students only. Given the high proportion of non-local awardees under the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme, Dr WONG was concerned that the nurturing of local researchers might be adversely affected. She also doubted whether the non-local awardees would stay in Hong Kong to pursue further research or academic activities upon completion of their research postgraduate programmes.

16. On the proportion of local candidates, Prof Benjamin WAH said that some outstanding graduates from local universities might choose to pursue postgraduate studies overseas. In other places such as the United States, graduates from a state could pursue further studies in another state.

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However, this arrangement might not be practicable in Hong Kong which was a small place.

17. Dr Helena WONG enquired about the support available to local graduates aspiring to pursue research postgraduate programmes at overseas universities. In response, Prof Benjamin WAH said that RGC had considered a proposal of formulating a new fellowship scheme for PhD graduates employed by UGC-funded institutions to study postdoctoral courses overseas. As the proposed scheme required the awardees to undertake that they would return to work in the institutions in Hong Kong for a prescribed period of time after completion of their study overseas, RGC had reservation on the attractiveness of the proposal.

18. Noting that UGC currently provided funding under the Block Grant to support the provision of 5 595 research postgraduate places, Dr Helena WONG enquired about the criteria for allocation of places among the UGC-funded institutions. In reply, Prof Benjamin WAH advised that a new mechanism for allocation of research postgraduate places had been introduced starting from 2012-2013. By 2016-2017, about 50% of the research postgraduate places would be allocated based on historical factors while the remaining would be allocated on a competitive basis. Admission of students was within the autonomy of individual institutions and the students were selected on a merit basis.

*(Post-meeting note: On the instruction of the Chairman, a letter dated 10 December 2014 from Dr Helena WONG to the Chairman [LC Paper No. CB(4)303/14-15(01)] setting out some follow-up questions on this discussion item was forwarded to the Administration for response. The Administration's written response was issued to members vide LC Paper CB(4)303/14-15(02) on 30 December 2014.)*

*Applied research and development ("R&D") activities*

19. Mr Charles MOK noted that a new Technology Start-up Support Scheme for Universities ("the Support Scheme") had recently been set up under the Innovation and Technology Fund ("ITF") to provide an annual funding of up to \$24 million to six local universities, initially for three years, to encourage their students and professors to start technology businesses and commercialize their R&D outcomes. He opined that the Administration should consider increasing the funding under the Support Scheme and extending its duration. Mr MOK also noted that the Innovation and Technology Commission ("ITC") had worked with EDB



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and the UGC/RGC Secretariat to explore ways of forging a closer link between the funding programmes of ITF and UGC/RGC. In this regard, Mr MOK considered that the Administration should also explore ways to encourage more applied R&D activities.

20. Prof Benjamin WAH said that after discussion between RGC and ITC, a new arrangement providing an interface between the funding programmes of UGC/RGC and ITF had been implemented since last year. The Principal Investigator of a group research project applying for funding from RGC would be requested to provide information on the planned technology transfer of their projects. Representatives from ITC would be invited to participate in the interviews with these applicants. Upon approval of UGC/RGC funding, ITC would be invited to keep in view of the progress of these projects. For projects with potential to proceed to the applied R&D phase, the project teams would be encouraged to apply for funding support from ITF even before completion of the RGC-funded projects.

*Public Policy Research Funding Scheme*

21. Dr Fernando CHEUNG enquired about the latest position on PPRFS and whether any useful reference could be drawn from its implementation experience with regard to addressing the needs for public policy research.

22. RD/CPU advised that out of the 150 projects funded during the period from 2005 to 2012 when PPRFS was administered by RGC, there was only one research project each on governance, housing and population. After CPU had taken over the administration of PPRFS since July 2013, funding for a total of 33 research projects had been approved. The 33 funded public policy research projects covered a wide spectrum of policy areas ranging from land and housing to governance and administration. RD/CPU further said that academic research and public policy research could complement each other and should be developed in parallel. He highlighted that unlike other research funding schemes, PPRFS had the flexibility to accept applications throughout the year.

23. The Deputy Chairman recalled that when the Panel discussed the administration of PPRFS in February 2013, members had expressed concern about the involvement of government officials in the assessment of research proposals. He asked whether any government officials from relevant bureaus/departments had been invited to take part in the assessment of funding applications.

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24. In this regard, RD/CPU advised that when formulating the mechanism for assessing research proposals under PPRFS, reference had been made to the arrangements adopted by RGC. Under the prevailing arrangements administered by CPU, an application under PPRFS would be assessed by two members of the Assessment Panel and two external reviewers who were academics and experts. The external reviewers might be nominated by the applicants or by the Assessment Panel. The relevant government bureau(x)/department(s) would be consulted but the scores given by them would not be counted towards the final assessment.

25. Mr Gary FAN remarked that among the 33 projects funded by PPRFS, two were carried out by think-tanks which had close connection with the business sector. Having regard to the prudent use of public resources, Mr FAN considered that the Administration should also take into consideration the financial position of the applicants and their capability of obtaining funding support from other sources when deciding whether funding from PPRFS should be approved.

26. In this regard, RD/CPU explained that local non-profit-making think-tanks were eligible to apply for funding from PPRFS. Currently, the financial position of applicants was not a factor for consideration in the assessment of research proposals. He nevertheless took note of Mr FAN's view for consideration at a suitable opportunity.

27. Mr Dennis KWOK sought information on the arrangements for publishing the research reports of funded projects under PPRFS. RD/CPU said that research reports on completed projects would be submitted to the Assessment Panel. Subject to the endorsement by the Assessment Panel, the reports would be uploaded onto CPU's website. On whether any research report was not published because it had not been endorsed by the Assessment Panel, RD/CPU advised that all the projects which were funded after CPU had taken over the administration of PPRFS were still in progress and hence, no research report had been submitted to the Assessment Panel so far. The CPU would revert to the Assessment Panel for further advice in the event that the Panel did not endorse a research report.

#### **IV. Implementation of vocational education in Hong Kong**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)210/14-15(03) -- Paper provided by the Administration )

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Briefing by the Administration

28. At the invitation of the Chairman, SED briefed members on the latest developments of vocational education in Hong Kong, as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)210/14-15(03)].

Discussion

*Business-school collaboration*

29. Mr Michael TIEN expressed support for strengthening vocational education and implementing the Pilot Training and Support Scheme ("Pilot Scheme"). He considered it necessary for the Administration to encourage more industries to participate in the Pilot Scheme. Mr Albert HO considered the collaboration between industries and training providers vital for the implementation of vocational education. He enquired about the measures adopted by the Administration to promote the involvement of enterprises in various training schemes, such as the provision of attachment and practical training.

30. SED advised that the Administration had all along attached great importance to business-school collaboration and would continue to work in this regard. A total of 20 Industry Training Advisory Committees had been established with the support from the relevant industries to draw up the competency standards of various skill levels of their industries for human resources management purposes. Under the Pilot Scheme implemented by VTC earlier this year, apprenticeship training for targeted industries would be provided to students alongside a guaranteed level of salary and incentive allowance. So far, the electrical & mechanical trades of the construction industry, printing industry and clock & watch industry had joined the Pilot Scheme. The Pilot Scheme specifically for the retail industry was also launched. He further said that structured apprenticeship training programmes could prepare students for a smooth transition from study to work. Upon completion of the training programmes run by VTC, more than 90% of the graduates were employed.

*Programmes offered by Vocational Training Council*

31. Mr Charles MOK sought information on the modes of funding for programmes offered by the Vocational Training Council ("VTC"). In this regard, Deputy Executive Director, VTC ("DED/VTC") said that with reference to the recommendation put forward in Lord Sutherland's report entitled "Higher Education in Hong Kong" published in 2002, some of the

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information technology- and business management-related programmes were operated by VTC on a self-financing basis.

32. Mr Charles MOK remarked that according to some teaching staff, self-financing programmes were often much less attractive to prospective applicants. Since the recommendations of Lord Sutherland's report had been published over a decade ago, Mr MOK enquired whether VTC had kept its self-financing programmes under regular reviews to keep pace with changing needs.

33. DED/VTC informed members that since 2012, about 50% to 70% of the IT programmes offered by the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education of VTC were publicly-funded. When deciding whether an IT programme should be self-financed or publicly-funded, the proportion of IT-related contents in the curriculum concerned would be considered. To facilitate members' reference, Mr MOK requested VTC to provide further information (including relevant statistics) on the modes of funding for different IT programmes offered by VTC. DED/VTC agreed to provide the requested information in writing after the meeting.

*(Post-meeting note: The Administration's written response was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)294/14-15(01) on 29 December 2014.)*

34. Noting that students with special educational needs ("SEN students") who had received basic vocational training at the Shine Skills Centre might not be able to progress to the Youth College or Chinese Cuisine Training Institute due to the latter's more stringent admission requirements, Dr Fernando CHEUNG was concerned whether sufficient progression pathways in vocational education were available to cater for SEN students with different levels of competency

35. DED/VTC said that the Shine Skills Centre was under the purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB"). VTC would need to explore with LWB on whether the Shine Skills Centre could offer appropriate extension programmes for SEN students upon their completion of basic training. SED added that EDB would work closely with VTC and LWB so as to broaden the articulation pathways for SEN students. In this regard, Dr Fernando CHEUNG reiterated his concern about the possible lack of co-ordination when the policy responsibility was shared by different bureaux.

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*Promotion of vocational education*

36. The Deputy Chairman referred to SED's recent visit to Germany and Switzerland where a robust system was in place to enable interested students to pursue vocational education in their senior secondary years. He enquired whether the Administration had drawn any useful reference from overseas experience to promote vocational education in Hong Kong.

37. SED explained that in Germany, there was active support from the industrial and commercial sectors in vocational education, as evidenced by structured placement and mentoring programmes. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the proportion of students taking vocational education in Germany had dropped from about 70% in recent years to the present 50%. The authorities concerned had been making efforts to raise public awareness of and recognition for vocational education. On the promotion of vocational education in Hong Kong, SED highlighted that whilst reference could be made to overseas experience, other factors specific to Hong Kong, such as the trained manpower needs of individual industries and the development of the senior secondary curriculum, would also need to be considered.

38. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung commented that Hong Kong and Germany differed considerably in their education systems and industrial developments. For example, in Germany, students receiving vocational education could revert to general education. In considering the promotion of vocational education in Hong Kong, Mr LEUNG pointed out that it was necessary to ascertain whether the industries, such as the construction industry and printing industry, could provide sufficient opportunities for practical training, and whether vocational education could bring added value to certain industries, such as the service industry.

39. SED said that the construction industry was one of the industries with a keen demand for labour. According to the Construction Industry Council, it would provide a total of some 84 300 training places in 2014-2015 to meet the demand for trained manpower. Regarding Mr LEUNG's enquiry about the service industry, SED cited an example in Switzerland that there was a keen demand for trained salespersons for the sale of certain specialized products. Meanwhile, the Pilot Scheme specifically for the retail industry was also launched.

40. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan stressed the need to take steps to raise public awareness about vocational education as an attractive pathway for secondary school leavers. In this regard, SED advised that the Task Force

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on Promotion of Vocation Education had been set up with a view to mapping out a strategy to promote vocational education and raise the public awareness and recognition towards vocational education. Meanwhile, the Administration had also stepped up life planning and career guidance services in secondary schools to assist students in making an informed choice in academic pursuits or vocational training.

**V. Registration for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination of various subjects**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)210/14-15(04) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)210/14-15(05) -- Background brief entitled "Issues related to certain elective subjects under the New Senior Secondary curriculum" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat)

41. Members noted the background brief prepared by the Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(4)210/14-15(05)].

Briefing by the Administration

42. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the day school candidature of the past three years of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education ("HKDSE") Examination and the enrolment for the coming 2015 HKDSE Examination, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)210/14-15(04)].

Discussion

*New Academic Structure and HKDSE Examination*

43. The Deputy Chairman noted that when comparing the candidature for nine elective subjects in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination ("HKCEE") in 2010 and HKDSE Examination in 2014, there was a significant drop of over 50% in the number of candidates. He also noted that on average, a student might sit for about six subjects in the

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HKDSE Examination, compared to seven to 10 subjects in HKCEE. In view of the fewer number of elective subjects taken by candidates in the HKDSE Examination, the Deputy Chairman enquired whether this was consistent with the objective of implementing the New Academic Structure ("NAS") and the New Senior Secondary ("NSS") curriculum and assessment. He was also concerned that the complexity of NSS subjects, study pressure and prolonged lesson time had resulted in students taking up fewer elective subjects.

44. US(Ed) and Principal Assistant Secretary (Curriculum Development) ("PAS(CD)") advised that the implementation of the NSS curriculum aimed to broaden the knowledge of senior secondary students and prepare them to be self-initiating and lifelong learners. Towards this end, a new interdisciplinary core subject of Liberal Studies ("LS") had been introduced alongside three other core subjects required to be taken by senior secondary students. The breadth and depth of NSS subjects were different from those of HKCEE subjects and could not be directly comparable.

45. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung expressed concern about the general acceptance of the HKDSE Examination as an increasing number of students had opted to study for other qualifications, such as the International Baccalaureate diploma. He considered it necessary for the Administration to critically review its education and examination system.

46. In this regard, US(Ed) said that the HKDSE Examination had been introduced to tie in with the implementation of NAS. The qualification attained in the HKDSE Examination had received increasing recognition both locally and internationally.

47. Noting that some elective subjects were taken by a handful of students only, Dr Helena WONG enquired about the enrolment threshold, if any, for offering an elective subject in schools and for arranging examinations in the HKDSE Examination. Dr Kenneth CHAN suggested that the Administration might consider encouraging students to sit for more elective subjects in the HKDSE Examination by waiving the examination fees, whilst ensuring that there would be sufficient fee income to defray the cost of conducting the relevant examination.

48. US(Ed) advised that the Administration had all along encouraged schools to offer more choice of NSS elective subjects. They were also encouraged to network with other schools so as to widen the range of NSS subjects that could be taken by their students. Meanwhile, students'

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enrolment for individual NSS subjects was one of the issues which would be studied in the Mid-term Review on NAS being carried out by EDB and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority ("HKEAA"). US(Ed) further said that the HKDSE Examination was administered by HKEAA on a self-sufficient basis and the examination fees had not been adjusted in the past two years.

49. Mrs Regina IP opined that it might not be appropriate to compare the candidature of the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination ("HKALE") with that of the HKDSE Examination as set out in the Administration's paper. US(Ed) explained that since the academic structures behind the two public examinations and the participation rate of students were different, an analysis based on the actual number of students registered for individual subjects might be misleading. In the Administration's paper, the enrolment figures had been expressed as percentages of the total number of elective subject entries.

*Chinese History*

50. Mrs Regina IP noted with concern that there had been a gradual decline in the number of students taking humanities subjects as elective NSS subjects. Should this trend continue, student intake of the relevant undergraduate programmes would inevitably be affected. She also expressed concern about the drop in the number of students taking Chinese History as an elective subject, and sought further information on the number of secondary schools that offered Chinese History subject at junior secondary levels.

51. US(Ed) advised that as stipulated by EDB, secondary schools must provide Chinese history education in junior secondary levels. In recent years, about 85% to 88% of secondary schools offered Chinese History as an independent subject at junior secondary levels; while the remaining used other curricular modes including the combined curriculum of Chinese and world history to teach Chinese history.

52. In response to Dr Helena WONG's enquiry, PAS(CD) confirmed that Chinese History and History were compulsory components of the junior secondary curriculum although they might not necessarily be taught as independent subjects.

53. The Chairman noted with concern that in 2014, only 10% of the candidates of the HKDSE Examination sat for the examination on Chinese History; whereas in 2010, some 30% of candidates took the subject in



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HKCEE. Referring to SED's recent visit to Nanjing which had also been participated by students and teachers from secondary schools in Hong Kong to learn about the culture and history of the place, the Chairman was concerned whether the Administration had drawn any useful reference on how to enhance students' interest in the Chinese History subject.

54. US(Ed) said that it might not be appropriate to compare the candidature of HKCEE with that of the HKDSE Examination as the academic structures underpinning the two public examinations were different. He advised that the Mid-term Review on NAS and NSS curriculum and assessment was in progress, and that concerns about the curriculum and enrolment of the Chinese History subject would be looked into.

*Liberal Studies*

55. Mrs Regina IP said that according to some teachers, the marking guidelines provided by HKEAA on the practice papers of the LS subject placed heavy emphasis on how the candidates had justified their stance on an issue, at the expense of their knowledge across different disciplines. In this regard, Secretary General, HKEAA ("SG/HKEAA") said that in the assessment of the LS subject, there was no standardized or model answer. The marking guidelines of the practice papers were for teachers' reference only. In marking the examination scripts, due regard would be given to the clear presentation of views and the reasoning.

56. Mrs Regina IP noted that according to the Administration's reply to a written question raised by her at a recent Council meeting, an answer script of the LS subject in the HKDSE Examination might be marked up to 16 times by 16 different markers. In this connection, she enquired about the number of answer scripts of the LS subject that had been marked in such a manner in the HKDSE Examination in the past three years. SG/HKEAA agreed to provide the requested information after the meeting.

HKEAA

*Other NSS subjects*

57. Mr Albert HO and Mrs Regina IP noted with concern the considerable drop in the number of students taking Chinese Literature as an elective subject. Mr HO suggested that the Administration should explore ways to raise the interest of students in the subject, or to consider integrating the Chinese Literature subject with the Chinese History subject. In this regard, PAS(CD) advised that 12 classical set texts would be included in the curriculum of the Chinese Language subject at Secondary 4

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in the 2015-2016 school year. This arrangement would be conducive to students' exposure to Chinese literature.

58. Mr Albert HO noted with concern that only a few hundreds of students took the Physical Education ("PE") subject in the HKDSE Examination. US(Ed) said that the number of students taking the PE subject in the HKDSE Examination was comparable to that of HKCEE, and that there was a mild increase in the enrolment for the subject in the HKDSE Examination.

59. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan considered that more guidance should be provided to students in their selection of NSS elective subjects. PAS(CD) said that life planning and career guidance services would be provided to students starting from the junior secondary levels with a view to assisting them to make an informed choice of NSS elective subjects and future progression pathways.

60. Mrs Regina IP pointed out that knowledge in calculus was essential for undertaking undergraduate programmes in certain engineering disciplines. However, some undergraduates pursuing these programmes were not conversant with calculus because they had not taken the Extended Part, i.e. Module 1 and Module 2, of the Mathematics subject in the HKDSE Examination.

61. PAS(CD) explained that the enrolment rate for the Extended Part of the Mathematics subject in the HKDSE Examination was broadly comparable to that for the HKCEE subject of Additional Mathematics and the HKALE subjects of Applied/Pure Mathematics. As a result of the strengthening of life planning and career guidance services in secondary schools, it was expected that students would be in a better position to choose their NSS elective subjects as well as the Extended Part of the Mathematics subject to cater for their further education and career needs.

## **VI. Parent education**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)210/14-15(06) -- Paper provided by the Administration )

### Briefing by the Administration

62. At the invitation of the Chairman, US(Ed) briefed members on the policy framework, objectives and measures to promote parent education by

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EDB, as set out in LC Paper No. CB(4)210/14-15(06).

Discussion

*Education for parents*

63. Mr Michael TIEN said that nowadays, many parents did not know how to guide and nurture the whole-person development of their children. Instead of relying on Parent-Teacher Associations ("PTAs") to promote parent education at the school level, Mr TIEN suggested that the Administration should provide parents with an integrated basic training course lasting for not more than 10 hours. To provide an incentive for parents, Mr TIEN further suggested that the Administration should consider allocating additional points to those children applying for Primary One Admission if their parents had satisfactorily completed the training course.

64. In response, US(Ed) said that the Administration would take note of Mr TIEN's suggestion and would convey his views to the Committee on Home-School Co-operation ("CHSC").

65. The Deputy Chairman said that according to his observation, there were different types of parents. Some parents held strong views about how to educate their children and develop their potentials and could hardly be convinced otherwise. Some parents were concerned but lacked the resources and time to learn how to guide their children. Some other parents were indifferent to their children's needs and the intervention of social workers was required. The Deputy Chairman enquired how the Administration would provide parent education to cater for different types of parents.

66. US(Ed) advised that the Administration would endeavour to provide information for all parents through different channels. For instance, information could be disseminated via the Internet for parents who were busy. As for parents who did not pay active attention to their children who might have learning or behavioural problems, individual case management by social workers would be required.

*Support for parent education*

67. The Deputy Chairman remarked that parents of children with special educational needs had organized mutual support groups and were prepared to learn how best to support their children. In this regard, he was

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concerned whether other economically disadvantaged or under-privileged parents could have access to appropriate support, and enquired about the existing mechanism, if any, to gauge the needs of different parents and to provide support to them accordingly.

68. US(Ed) advised that CHSC had been set up as a platform to promote home-school interface as parent-school co-operation had significant contributions towards the whole-person development of students. CHSC had also encouraged and supported the establishment of PTAs in different schools to promote parental involvement in a wide range of school activities. With the support of CHSC and EDB, Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations ("FPTAs") had been established in 18 districts of Hong Kong to promote parent education through various district-based activities.

69. Dr Kenneth CHAN said that he was doubtful whether the existing measures could achieve the objectives of parent education, and enquired about the financial resources earmarked for parent education. In response, US(Ed) advised that in the 2013-2014 school year, over \$23 million were provided to schools' PTAs and FPTAs for organizing home-school and parent education activities.

70. Dr Kenneth CHAN considered that the provision of \$23 million might not be sufficient for promoting parent education. Dr Helena WONG expressed her concern that EDB's annual grant of \$4,989 for subsidizing the recurrent expenditure of existing PTAs could merely support the organization of a few activities.

71. Dr Helena WONG remarked that currently, teachers were too overloaded with their duties to take care of students who had family or personal problems. She considered that the Administration should deploy resources to provide schools with more social workers to assist these students through other means such as home visits.

72. In response, US(Ed) explained that the objective of parent education was to enable parents to understand the learning and development needs of their children so that they could help their children learn effectively and grow healthily. PTAs were set up as a bridge between parents and teachers to foster communication and mutual support in promoting the educational well being of students. For students requiring individual support, school social workers and student guidance teachers would follow up, and where necessary through case management.

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**VII. Any other business**

73. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:45 pm.

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