

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)617/14-15
(The minutes have been seen by
the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 12 January 2015, at 4:30 pm
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon IP Kin-yuen (Deputy Chairman)
Hon 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
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai
Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP

Members absent : Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Dennis KWOK

Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP

Public Officers : Agenda item IV
attending

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP
Secretary for Education

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

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

Agenda item V

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP
Secretary for Education

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

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

Dr Richard ARMOUR, JP
Secretary-General
University Grants Committee

Agenda item VI

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Mrs Michelle WONG
Deputy Secretary for Education (3)

Mr Benjamin YUNG
Principal Assistant Secretary
(Professional Development and Training)
Education Bureau

Agenda item VII

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Mrs Michelle WONG
Deputy Secretary for Education (3)

Mr Benjamin YUNG
Principal Assistant Secretary
(Professional Development and Training)
Education Bureau

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) 3

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes

(LC Paper No. CB(4)320/14-15 -- Minutes of meeting on 10
November 2014)

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

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

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

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(Appendix I to LC Paper No. -- List of outstanding items
CB(4)321/14-15 for discussion

Appendix II to LC Paper No. -- List of follow-up actions)
CB(4)321/14-15

3. The Chairman informed members that the Administration had proposed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting to be held on 9 February 2015 at 4:30 pm –

(a) Chinese History Education; and

(b) Progress report on implementation of Life Planning Education.

4. 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", and members would be notified accordingly. Members agreed with the above arrangements.

(Post-meeting note: Upon finalization by the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, the agenda for the meeting to be held on 9 February 2015 was issued to members vide LC Paper CB(4)404/14-15 on 26 January 2014.)

5. The Chairman further informed members that the Panel would hold a special meeting at 8:30 am on Friday, 16 January 2015 to receive a briefing by the Secretary for Education ("SED") on the Chief Executive's 2015 Policy Address in respect of the policy initiatives on education. Another special meeting would be held at 9:00 am on Saturday, 7 February 2015 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 the consultancy study on "Local and International Good Practices in the Governance and Quality Assurance of

the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Sector".

6. Before proceeding to the discussion items, the Chairman drew members' attention to Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure which provided that a Member shall not move any motion or amendment relating to a matter in which he had a pecuniary interest, whether direct or indirect, or speak on any such matter, except where he disclosed the nature of that interest. He reminded members to declare interests, if any, in the matter under discussion.

IV. Progress on various initiatives to broaden the opportunities for local students to receive subsidized higher education

(LC Paper No. CB(4)321/14-15(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)321/14-15(02) -- Background brief entitled "Various initiatives to broaden the opportunities for local students to receive subsidized higher education" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat)

7. Members noted the background brief prepared by the Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(4)321/14-15(02)].

Briefing by the Administration

8. At the invitation of the Chairman, SED briefed members on the progress of implementation of the initiatives announced in the 2014 Policy Address to broaden the opportunities for local students to receive subsidized higher education, as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)321/14-15(01)].

Discussion

Provision of publicly-funded undergraduate places

9. Dr Kenneth CHAN said that a large number of secondary school graduates could not gain admission to publicly-funded undergraduate

programmes despite having met the minimum entry requirements. He urged the Administration to increase the number of publicly-funded first-year-first-degree ("FYFD") places. The Deputy Chairman opined that notwithstanding the expected decline in the number of local secondary school graduates and the launch of different initiatives to broaden the opportunities for subsidized higher education, the number of publicly-funded FYFD places should not remain unchanged at 15 000.

10. SED explained that in addition to the 15 000 publicly-funded FYFD places, the number of publicly-funded senior year undergraduate intake places would be progressively increased from 4 000 to 5 000 by the 2018-2019 academic year. About 8 500 undergraduate intake places were also provided by self-financing institutions in the 2014-2015 academic year. Currently, some 38% of young people in the relevant cohort had access to degree-level education, including both publicly-funded and self-financing degree programmes. About 70% of them had access to post-secondary education, if sub-degree education was also included. This participation rate was comparable to those of other jurisdictions which ranged from 58% to 71%.

11. Referring to the progressive increase of 1 000 University Grants Committee("UGC")-funded senior year undergraduate intake places in the 2015-2016 academic year and the following triennium, Mr WONG Kwok-hing considered the initial increase of 265 to 4 265 places in the 2015-2016 academic year far from sufficient, and urged for a faster pace of increase. Mr Albert HO also considered the increase of senior year undergraduate places inadequate.

12. In this regard, SED advised that the number of subsidized senior year undergraduate intake places would be increased progressively so as to allow time for the institutions to recruit teaching staff and enhance the necessary facilities to cope with the increase. After the 2015-2016 academic year, the remaining 735 additional places would be phased-in in the context of the academic planning exercise for the 2016-2017 to 2018-2019 triennium.

Sub-degree programmes

13. Dr Helena WONG expressed her concern about the articulation pathways for sub-degree qualifications and sought information on the number of sub-degree holders who could not pursue further study due to insufficient publicly-funded senior year undergraduate places. She questioned whether sub-degree programmes should be regarded as an

ultimate opportunity for higher education, or as an articulation pathway to undergraduate programmes.

14. SED advised that all along, the Government had been striving to provide secondary school leavers with flexible and diversified articulation pathways with multiple entry and exit points. Deputy Secretary for Education (1) ("DS(Ed)1") informed members that about 60% to 70% of sub-degree holders would pursue further study.

15. Given that the demand for sub-degree holders in the employment market might not be great and the number of local secondary school graduates would continue to decline from about 62 000 in 2014 to 42 700 in 2022, Ms Starry LEE cautioned that apart from increasing the number of UGC-funded senior year undergraduate places, the Administration should consider ways to enhance the quality of sub-degree programmes, as well as review the positioning of sub-degree education.

16. SED advised that the Administration had all along attached great importance to the quality and development of sub-degree programmes. The decline in the number of secondary school graduates might lead to more competition among institutions in recruiting students for their sub-degree programmes. The Administration would maintain communication with the institutions on the anticipated decrease of secondary student population. As regards the positioning of sub-degree qualifications, SED advised that the relevant qualifications, including those in vocational/professional-oriented disciplines, would be pegged to the Qualifications Framework so as to facilitate recognition and articulation among qualifications awarded by different institutions and training providers.

Issues related to the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors ("SSSDP")

17. Referring to the number of places to be subsidized in each selected discipline under SSSDP in the 2015-2016 academic year, Mr WONG Kwok-hing enquired whether the Administration would increase the number of places and extend SSSDP to cover other disciplines such as construction, as the industry was in urgent need of trained manpower.

18. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan said that the Administration should collect information on the demand for trained manpower by various industries and take steps to increase the number of subsidized places under SSSDP accordingly. She also sought information on the details of implementation

of SSSDP. Dr CHIANG considered that the Administration should critically review its policy on the provision of publicly-funded university education and vocational training with regard to the prospect of the graduates and the future demand for manpower in Hong Kong.

19. SED and DS(Ed)1 advised that the key disciplines subsidized under SSSDP had been selected after consultation with the relevant policy bureaux to meet Hong Kong's imminent economic and social needs. To be eligible for subsidy, the programmes must be full-time locally accredited self-financing undergraduate programmes in the relevant disciplines. SSSDP would be implemented on a pilot basis for three cohorts and then be subject to a review on its effectiveness. The programmes and number of places to be subsidized would also be subject to annual review.

20. In this connection, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung remarked that the Administration should provide more detailed information on SSSDP for members' reference, such as the basis for setting the number of subsidized places for each selected discipline, the purpose and criteria of the review to be conducted on SSSDP.

21. In response to Mr Albert HO's enquiry on the levels of tuition fees for selected programmes subsidized under SSSDP, DS(Ed)1 advised that the tuition fees for different programmes ranged from about \$70,000 to \$110,000 per annum in the 2015-2016 academic year. The Administration would provide to the institutions a subsidy of up to \$40,000 per student per annum ("pspa") for non-laboratory-based programmes while a higher subsidy of up to \$70,000 pspa would be provided for programmes with higher cost, such as those relating to science and healthcare services. As such, students admitted to the self-financing undergraduate programmes under SSSDP would be required to make up the shortfall in tuition fees of about \$40,000 or less per annum, which was comparable to the tuition fees paid by students pursuing UGC-funded undergraduate programmes.

22. Dr Kenneth CHAN noted that under SSSDP, the government subsidy would be provided to the institutions offering the selected undergraduate programmes. He observed that on one hand, some institutions had decided to freeze the tuition fees of the programmes covered by SSSDP; on the other hand, the tuition fees of the programmes on health care offered by the Open University of Hong Kong ("OUHK") under SSSDP would increase by about 78%. The Deputy Chairman shared Dr CHAN's concern about the exorbitant increase in tuition fees of the relevant OUHK programmes. He was concerned about the objective of SSSDP, and questioned whether it had been introduced to enhance the

quality of selected self-financing programmes or to provide financial assistance to students pursuing these programmes.

23. SED explained that SSSDP aimed to nurture talent in support of specific industries with an urgent or keen demand for trained manpower and to encourage the self-financing education sector to offer programmes in selected disciplines that meet Hong Kong's social and economic needs. In the past, the tuition fee level of OUHK's full-time programmes had been the lowest among self-financing institutions. After conducting a review on its tuition fee policy, OUHK decided to adjust the levels of its tuition fees. A new mechanism would be put in place starting from the 2015-2016 academic year under which the annual tuition fee payable by a student would remain at the same level throughout the duration of his study programme. OUHK had also decided to earmark \$200 million from its tuition fee income to enhance and upgrade its learning and laboratory facilities, etc. for the programmes subsidized under SSSDP.

Initiatives supporting students to pursue studies outside Hong Kong

24. While expressing his support for the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme ("MUSSS"), the Chairman noted with concern that there was a big difference between the amounts to be awarded to recipients under the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme ("HKSES") and under MUSSS, i.e. up to \$450,000 and \$15,000 respectively. He sought explanation from the Administration on this difference.

25. SED explained that the subsidy under HKSES comprised a scholarship for academically outstanding students to cover tuition fees, subject to a maximum of \$250,000, and a means-tested bursary of up to \$200,000 pspa to study in universities around the world. As a financial supporting measure, MUSSS provided means-tested subsidy of up to \$15,000 (about RMB12,000) pspa to students admitted by universities in the Mainland only. DS(Ed)1 supplemented that the subsidy under MUSSS had taken into account the tuition fees and living expenses in the Mainland; while the amount of scholarship and means-tested bursary awarded under HKSES had been set with reference to the tuition fees and living expenses in overseas places including Europe and North America.

V. Recurrent funding for University Grants Committee-funded institutions in the 2015/16 roll-over year

(File Ref.: EDB(HE)CR 2/2041/14 -- Legislative Council Brief issued by the Education Bureau in December 2014)

Briefing by the Administration

26. At the invitation of the Chairman, SED briefed members on the recurrent funding totaling \$17,105.9 million to be provided to UGC-funded institutions in the 2015-2016 roll-over year and the new policy for admission of all new non-local students in undergraduate, sub-degree and taught postgraduate programmes by over-enrolment outside the approved UGC-funded student number targets starting from the 2016-2017 academic year, as set out in the Administration's paper [File Ref.: EDB(HE)CR 2/2041/14]. Members noted that the financial implications arising from the recurrent funding would be incorporated in the Estimates of Expenditure for the relevant financial years.

Discussion

Mechanism for allocation of resources for the roll-over year

27. Dr Fernando CHEUNG declared that he was teaching at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Dr CHEUNG sought clarification on whether any change would be made to the mechanism for allocation of resources to UGC-funded institutions for the 2015-2016 roll-over year and the following triennium to the effect that the allocation would be pegged to the performance of academic staff members of individual institutions in the Research Assessment Exercise 2014. He expressed his grave concern that this arrangement, if implemented, would be tilted in favour of those institutions with stronger capability and track record in research. In response, Secretary-General, UGC ("SG/UGC") said that there was no plan to peg the funding allocation to the research performance of academic staff in individual institutions.

Admission of non-local students to UGC-funded programmes

28. Members noted that under the existing policy, UGC-funded institutions might admit non-local students to their subsidized sub-degree, undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes up to a level

equivalent to 20% of the approved student number. The 20% comprised up to 4% within the approved UGC-funded number and up to 16% outside the number (i.e. the so-called 4%-in-16%-out policy). Dr Kenneth CHAN welcomed the decision to abolish the 4%-in-16%-out policy starting from the 2016-2017 academic year, meaning that all new non-local students would be admitted through over-enrolment outside the approved UGC-funded student number targets, capped at a level equivalent to 20% of the approved UGC-funded student number targets for these programmes, by study level ("20%-out policy"). However, Dr CHAN cautioned that notwithstanding the 20%-out policy, the institutions could still admit non-local students to certain undergraduate programmes in excess of the 20% ceiling as long as the overall number of non-local students admitted by the institution concerned was within the 20% upper limit.

29. The Deputy Chairman queried the rationale for the existing policy allowing allocation of up to 4% of UGC-funded FYFD places to non-local students, and considered it appropriate to migrate to the 20%-out policy so that all approved UGC-funded places could be fully utilized to admit local students. He enquired whether the facilities of universities could cope with the overall increase in student intake after implementation of the 20%-out policy in the 2016-2017 academic year.

30. DS(Ed)1 advised that the existing arrangement for admission of non-local students was to give effect to the policy on internationalization of the higher education sector. Over the years, there had been concerns that the "4%-in" would lead to displacement of local students. As the UGC-funded institutions had achieved a reasonably good level of internationalization by now, the Administration considered it timely to review and fine-tune the existing policy. DS(Ed)1 further advised that in the past five years, UGC-funded institutions had on average admitted non-local undergraduate students up to a level equivalent to about 6% to 17% of the approved UGC-funded student number. After implementation of the 20%-out policy, admission of non-local students by institutions through over-enrolment outside the approved UGC-funded student number targets would continue to be subject to a ceiling of 20%.

31. Dr Helena WONG expressed her support for the 20%-out policy. Referring to the provision of 5 595 UGC-funded research postgraduate ("RPg") places in 2015-2016, Dr WONG noted with concern that about 80% of students pursuing UGC-funded RPg programmes were from the Mainland. Ms Cyd HO doubted whether the perceived benefits of internationalization could be achieved if students were predominantly from a single place of origin. Dr WONG and Ms HO were concerned that

non-local students might have taken up precious public resources at the expense of local students. They considered that public resources should be deployed for the betterment of local students, such as increasing the number of publicly-funded FYFD places.

32. SED advised that with a view to boosting the research capability of Hong Kong's higher education sector, individual institutions had been striving to attract high quality non-local students to their RPg programmes, thereby increasing the exposure of local students and enhancing the overall competitiveness of the economy in the long run. Currently, non-local students in UGC-funded institutions came from over 30 countries worldwide. SG/UGC supplemented that in line with international practice, admission of RPg students by UGC-funded institutions was on a merit basis regardless of the students' place of origin.

33. Ms Cyd HO was of the view that to ensure real internationalization, the Administration should consider setting a ceiling on the proportion of students from a single place for admission to UGC-funded RPg programmes. She sought statistical information on the enrolment of non-local students in UGC-funded institutions by level of study and place of origin. The Administration/UGC would provide the requested information after the meeting.

Admin/
UGC

34. Noting the recent comments by a former senior Mainland official on the education policy of Hong Kong and the supervisory oversight of the Central People's Government on SED, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung expressed grave concern that the formulation of education policy in Hong Kong, including the policy on admission of students from the Mainland, might be driven by the views of the Mainland authorities.

Tuition fees for UGC-funded programmes

35. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan noted from paragraph 12 of the Administration's paper that non-local students admitted to UGC-funded programmes would need to pay tuition fee at a level that was at least sufficient to recover all additional direct costs. In this regard, she enquired why the institutions did not seek to recover the full costs from the tuition fees charged on non-local students.

36. DS(Ed)1 explained that currently, the tuition fee for local students pursuing UGC-funded undergraduate programmes was \$42,100 pspa and that for non-local students ranged from \$110,000 to \$146,000 pspa. Certain core costs, such as the costs for maintaining academic buildings

and teaching facilities, were incurred in connection with operating the study programmes irrespective of whether non-local students were admitted. Hence, only the additional direct costs which could be attributed to supporting the additional places for non-local students were to be recovered from the tuition fees charged on these students.

37. The Deputy Chairman enquired whether the tuition fee for non-local students would be increased in the 2016-2017 academic year upon implementing the 20%-out policy. In this regard, SED said that the tuition fee for local students would remain unchanged for the 2015-2016 roll-over year. The level of tuition fee for non-local students was subject to regular review by the institutions and they had the autonomy to make adjustment to keep pace with price changes and the operating costs of individual programmes.

38. Dr Helena WONG said that in Singapore, foreign students pursuing postgraduate programmes were required to pay a higher level of tuition fee than local students. In this regard, she enquired whether the Administration would review the prevailing tuition fee policy with reference to that in Singapore. The Administration was requested to provide its written response after the meeting.

Admin

Provision of undergraduate places

39. Dr Helena WONG said that Members of the Democratic Party disagreed with the decision to maintain the UGC-funded FYFD places at 15 000 per annum in the 2015-2016 academic year without any increase. Dr Kenneth CHAN shared her view. Both members opined that the demand for subsidized university education could hardly be met if the Administration would not increase the provision of UGC-funded FYFD places.

40. In this regard, SED explained that given the declining student population and upon full implementation of the measures announced in the 2014 Policy Address to increase subsidized higher education opportunities, and assuming the performance of secondary school leavers in meeting the minimum entrance requirements for undergraduate programmes was comparable to the current level, the Administration envisaged that there would be sufficient publicly-funded and self-financing FYFD places for these secondary school leavers by the 2016-2017 academic year.

41. In response to the Chairman's enquiry about the split between publicly-funded and self-financing FYFD places in the 2016-2017

academic year, DS(Ed)1 advised that there would be about 16 000 subsidized places, made up of 15 000 FYFD places in UGC-funded institutions and up to 1 000 subsidized places under SSSDP. In addition, about 8 000 FYFD places would be provided by self-financing institutions.

42. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan said that according to her understanding, about 85% of university students in the United States could not complete their study within the prescribed period. She also observed that in Hong Kong, some students pursuing undergraduate programmes would spend about six to seven years to complete their study. Dr CHIANG was therefore concerned whether public resources had been put to good use, in particular if these students were on publicly-funded programmes. In this regard, DS(Ed)1 advised that individual institutions had put in place specific rules and mechanisms to deal with extension of study by their students and on the maximum duration for completing study programmes.

43. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan considered that the policy on post-secondary education should not focus only on the provision of undergraduate places. The Administration should provide secondary school leavers with opportunities and choices for pursuing undergraduate programmes, sub-degree programmes and vocational education as so to meet the needs of the community.

Issues related to self-financing post-secondary education

44. Dr Kenneth CHAN expressed concern that the expected decline in the number of secondary school leavers would adversely affect the recruitment of students by self-financing post-secondary institutions. Noting that one of the institutions had recently entered into alliance with an overseas university, Dr CHAN enquired whether the Administration would formulate an effective strategy to steer the development of self-financing post-secondary education. The Deputy Chairman shared similar concern about the adverse impact on the development of self-financing sub-degree programmes as a result of the decline in the number of secondary school leavers.

45. SED said that the Administration was mindful of the expected decline in the number of secondary school leavers. He further explained that post-secondary institutions, whether publicly-funded or self-financed, had a high degree of autonomy in their strategic planning. Issues of common concern would be discussed at appropriate forums such as UGC and the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education. All along, the Administration had encouraged institutions to plan their programmes

with reference to the projected demand for places and the needs of the community.

46. To allow sufficient time for discussion, the Chairman decided to extend the meeting for 15 minutes beyond the appointed end-time.

VI. Employment opportunities for young teachers

(LC Paper No. CB(4)321/14-15(03) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)321/14-15(04) -- Background brief entitled "Issues related to the employment of teachers in public sector schools" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat)

47. Members noted the background brief on the subject prepared by the Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(4)321/14-15(04)].

Briefing by the Administration

48. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the employment opportunities for young teachers as set out in LC Paper No. CB(4)321/14-15(03).

Discussion

Employment situation of contract teachers

49. In response to Mr MA Fung-kwok's enquiry on the years of service before a graduate from a local teacher education institution ("TEI") could be appointed as a regular teacher, US(Ed) said that if a TEI graduate was initially appointed as a contract teacher, he/she could probably be offered a regular teaching post after some three to five years of service. The Deputy Chairman remarked that as far as he understood, some young teachers could only be appointed as regular teachers after some eight or nine years' service.

50. Mr MA Fung-kwok sought information on the difference, if any, in salary between contract teachers and regular teachers; as well as statistics

on contract renewal and whether contract teachers had to serve in different schools under different contracts. US(Ed) said that the Administration would provide the information requested by Mr MA after the meeting as far as practicable. Deputy Secretary for Education (3) ("DS(Ed)3") supplemented that the Education Bureau ("EDB") could provide the Panel with the relevant weblink of the Hong Kong Institute of Education ("HKIEd") on the employment situation of its graduates.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's written response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)515/14-15(01) on 13 February 2015.)

51. The Deputy Chairman said that he was disappointed with the Administration's paper which had not reflected the actual difficulties faced by young teachers. He relayed the predicament depicted by a young teacher who wrote to him earlier on expressing concerns about young teachers' lack of job security, failure to get a permanent teaching post after many years of service and being laid off as a result of reduction in classes. The Deputy Chairman further said that there were about 400 teachers at the age of 25 teaching at public sector secondary schools; among them, only 179 were appointed as regular teachers within the approved teaching establishment. As the vast majority of young teachers could only be employed as contract teachers, the Deputy Chairman reiterated his grave concern that an unstable teaching force was not conducive to the accumulation of experience and knowledge. It would also result in a succession gap in the teaching profession, which was detrimental to the quality and long-term development of education.

52. In response, US(Ed) said that as it might take three to five years before a young teacher could be appointed as a regular teacher, it could be expected that not all TEI graduates could become regular teachers at the age of 25, assuming that they joined the profession upon graduation at the age of 22. He reiterated that EDB would continue to monitor the long-term manpower situation of teachers.

Ratio of graduate teacher posts in public sector primary schools

53. Mr Michael TIEN said that according to his understanding, about 10 000 teachers in public sector primary schools were degree holders but could only take up teaching posts at the level of Certificated Master/Mistress ("CM") as there were not enough approved Graduate Master/Mistress ("GM") posts on the establishment of primary schools. He noted with concern that albeit performing the same duties, teachers

filling CM posts were on lower starting and maximum salary points than their GM counterparts. Mr TIEN asked whether the Administration had any plan to raise the ratio of graduate teacher posts in public sector primary schools to 85%, on par with that of public sector secondary schools.

54. In this regard, US(Ed) advised that the current ratio of graduate teacher posts in public sector primary schools was 50% and some of these posts had not been filled. The Administration had kept the teaching establishments of primary and secondary schools under regular review.

Employment situation of young teachers

55. Noting from the Administration's paper that each year, there were around 1 000 TEI graduates and about 2 000 public sector primary and secondary schools teachers leaving the profession, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan asked how the shortfall in teachers could be met. In response, US(Ed) advised that apart from TEI graduates, teaching vacancies could also be filled by teachers who rejoined the profession and by university graduates holding degrees in other disciplines and with the relevant Postgraduate Diploma in Education qualification.

56. Noting that the employment rate of graduates of HKIEd was over 90% in the past few years, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan enquired about the employment rates of graduates of the other four local TEIs. The Deputy Chairman was concerned that the employment rate of 90% might include TEI graduates who were employed as contract teachers, teaching assistants and tutors in tutorial schools.

57. US(Ed) explained that unlike HKIEd which was the major TEI specialized in training teachers, the other institutions also offered other study programmes. Hence, depending on the methodology adopted by individual institutions in surveying the employment situation of their graduates, the employment rate of graduates who took up teaching might not be readily available.

Professional development of teachers

58. The Chairman expressed concern that at present, teachers from both public sector schools and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools were subject to immense pressure arising from heavy teaching and administrative duties and the implementation of initiatives such as integrated education. The Chairman urged the Administration to plan and provide professional development and re-training programmes to enhance teachers' capabilities,

sustain their commitment in the teaching profession and reduce staff wastage. In this connection, US(Ed) advised that the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals ("COTAP") had been tasked to give steer on strategies to enhance the competencies and capabilities of the teaching profession at various career stages.

VII. Progress Report of the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals

(LC Paper No. CB(4)321/14-15(05) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

Briefing by the Administration

59. At the invitation of the Chairman, US(Ed) briefed members on the progress of work of COTAP, as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)321/14-15(05)].

Discussion

Work of COTAP

60. The Deputy Chairman considered that the Administration's paper did not contain sufficient information on the progress of work of COTAP, and sought clarification on whether this paper was meant to serve as the first Progress Report of COTAP as mentioned in paragraph 16 of the paper. In reply, US(Ed) said that COTAP would promulgate its first Progress Report in early 2015. The Administration's paper was intended to provide members with a timely overview on the progress of work of COTAP.

61. In this connection, the Chairman remarked that he would expect to receive a progress report with more concrete details. On the work of COTAP, the Chairman was concerned about the strategy to be adopted by COTAP to enhance teacher education and continuing professional development for teachers with a view to enabling them to meet the changing needs of students and parents. He opined that in addition to providing more training opportunities, the Administration should also enhance the quality of teacher training.

62. DS(Ed)3 advised that professional development courses on various themes were made available. However, the major difficulty faced by teachers was the lack of time to participate in these professional

development programmes. To facilitate quality professional learning and development of teachers, COTAP would conduct evidence-based strategies for quality teacher training such as exploring new types and modes of training, setting up a one-stop portal for sharing of information and resources and self-paced professional development. In addition, feedback from participants would be collected for informing the design and delivery of teacher education and professional development.

63. To allow sufficient time to complete the discussion and with the consent of all members present, the Chairman further extended the meeting for five more minutes.

Areas of focus under T-excel@hk

64. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan noted that one of the areas of focus under T-excel@hk was to develop a unified set of standards for the teaching profession which was described as an innovative attempt worldwide. Dr CHIANG sought further information on this area of focus.

65. Principal Assistant Secretary (Professional Development and Training) advised that in 2003, the then Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications ("ACTEQ") had developed a Teacher Competencies Framework ("TCF") for teachers. For the on-going and long-term professional development of teachers and principals and in line with international good practices, COTAP had found it necessary to conduct in-depth studies on relevant competency frameworks or standards from a selection of countries, and review the TCF with a view to updating and developing a unified set of standards that suited the unique Hong Kong context, stipulating the attributes, values and conduct expected of the whole teaching profession at different stages of the teaching career along the continuum of professional growth for the kindergarten, primary and secondary sectors.

66. Noting that the unified set of standards to be developed for the teaching profession would also cover the kindergarten sector, Dr Kenneth CHAN enquired whether issues related to the establishment of a salary framework of kindergarten teachers would be examined by COTAP.

67. US(Ed) advised that as issues related to the suggestion to establish a salary framework for kindergarten teachers were being studied by the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education, the unified set of standards to be developed by COTAP would not deal with this subject. Instead, COTAP would formulate strategies on the long-term professional

development of teachers and school leaders with reference to the school-based management policy and in line with international good practices. DS(Ed)3 supplemented that the professional development of kindergarten teachers would be covered in the work of COTAP. Members of COTAP also included front-line educators from the kindergarten sector.

68. The Deputy Chairman sought further information on the dataset to be built on territory-wide system survey, as mentioned in paragraph 13(b) of the Administration's paper. In reply, DS(Ed)3 advised that the dataset would include collecting information on the effectiveness of programmes provided by TEIs. It was envisaged that the dataset would provide feedback to inform the policies and strategies on the professional development of teachers and school leaders at different career stages.

69. Referring to the 3-tier mentorship scheme targeting at student and novice teachers, middle leaders and newly appointed principals as stated in paragraph 13(e) of the Administration's paper, the Deputy Chairman noted with concern that deputy school principals had not been included under the scheme. In this regard, DS(Ed)3 said that COTAP would further deliberate on details of the scheme with reference to the successful experience of other jurisdictions and the previous mentorship scheme implemented by the then ACTEQ.

VIII. Any other business

70. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:48 pm.