

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)1085/14-15

(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 16 March 2015, at 5:30 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 TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, 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

Members absent : Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan, JP
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP

Public Officers attending : Agenda item IV

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP
Secretary for Education

Mrs Angelina CHEUNG
Deputy Secretary for Education (6)

Agenda item V

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP
Secretary for Education

Dr K K CHAN
Deputy Secretary for Education (5)

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

Agenda item VI

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Education

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

Ms Pecvin YONG
Principal Assistant Secretary (Further Education)
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

Ms Sandy HAU
Legislative Assistant (4)4

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes

(LC Paper No. CB(4)617/14-15 -- Minutes of the meeting on 12 January 2015)

The minutes of meeting held on 12 January 2015 were confirmed.

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

(LC Paper No. CB(4)573/14-15(01) -- Letter dated 3 February 2015 from Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan to the Panel Chairman concerning the University Grants Committee Research Assessment Exercise 2014

LC Paper No. CB(4)573/14-15(02) -- Letter dated 4 February 2015 from Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok to the Panel Chairman concerning the University Grants Committee Research Assessment Exercise 2014

LC Paper No. CB(4)573/14-15(03) -- Administration's consolidated response dated 25 February 2015 to the letters from Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan dated 3 February 2015 and Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok dated 4 February 2015 respectively concerning the University Grants Committee Research Assessment Exercise 2014)

2. Members noted the above papers issued since the last meeting.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(Appendix I to LC Paper No. CB(4)620/14-15 -- List of outstanding items for discussion

Appendix II to LC Paper No. CB(4)620/14-15 -- List of follow-up actions)

Action

3. The Chairman informed members that the Administration had proposed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting to be held on 13 April 2015 at 4:30 pm –

- (a) Student hostels on northern campus (Blocks A3 and A4) of the Chinese University of Hong Kong; and
- (b) Student financial assistance for post-secondary students.

4. Dr Kenneth CHAN referred members to his letter dated 4 February 2015 stating his concerns about the University Grants Committee ("UGC") Research Assessment Exercise ("RAE") 2014 and the Administration's response thereto, both of which were listed under agenda item II above. He considered that the Administration's written reply had not fully addressed his concerns about the unauthorized leakage of the results of RAE 2014, and suggested that the Panel should follow up the matter. To facilitate his consideration, the Chairman requested Dr CHAN to set out in writing the relevant issues proposed to be followed up.

5. Dr Helena WONG shared Dr CHAN's views. She also considered it necessary for the Administration/UGC to brief members on the results of RAE 2014 and its implications, if any, on the allocation of funding to various UGC-funded institutions. The Chairman noted Dr WONG's views.

6. 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 arrangements as advised by the Chairman.

(Post-meeting note: Upon finalization by the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, the agenda for the meeting to be held on 13 April 2015 was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)687/14-15 on 23 March 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.

IV. Education-related issues in the 2015-2016 Budget

(LC Paper No. CB(4)620/14-15(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

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Other relevant document

"THE 2015-16 BUDGET"

Speech by the Financial Secretary, the Hon John C TSANG moving the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill 2015

Briefing by the Administration

8. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the expenditure on education and related initiatives as stated in 2015 Budget delivered by the Financial Secretary on 25 February 2015 [LC Paper No. CB(4)620/14-15(01)].

Discussion

Expenditure on education

9. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan noted that the recurrent expenditure on education took up the largest share among all policy areas, accounting for over 20% of the recurrent government expenditure in the 2015-2016 Budget. Given the decline in student population in recent years, the unit cost per student had risen. Against this background, Dr CHIANG considered that the Administration should critically review whether there had been improvement in the performance of students, and whether Hong Kong's prevailing level of expenditure on education was comparable to those of other jurisdictions.

10. SED advised that the Government had all along attached great importance to education. It had increased its investment in education despite the decline in secondary student population in order to preserve the strength of the education sector.

Post-secondary education

11. Dr Helena WONG noted with concern the heavy financial burden of students pursuing self-financing post-secondary programmes. She was of the view that the Administration should consider providing subsidy in the form of education voucher instead of subsidizing a few selected undergraduate programmes through the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors ("SSSDP"), which would only benefit up to 1 000 students per cohort.

12. SED explained that SSSDP aimed to nurture talents in support of specific industries with an urgent or keen demand for trained manpower, and was one of the initiatives announced in the 2014 Policy Address to broaden the opportunities for local students to receive subsidized higher education. Currently, some 38% of

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young people in the relevant cohort had access to degree-level education, including both publicly-funded and self-financing degree programmes. A number of assistance schemes were also in place to provide financial assistance to needy post-secondary students.

13. The Deputy Chairman recalled that he had suggested the provision of a one-off subsidy of \$30,000 to each student pursuing self-financing post-secondary programme in the 2015-2016 Budget. He asked whether the Education Bureau ("EDB") had conveyed his suggestion to the Financial Secretary.

14. SED reiterated that the Administration had launched a basket of initiatives as announced in the 2014 Policy Address to broaden the opportunities of local students to receive higher education. Financial assistance was available in the form of scholarships, grants and loans to post-secondary students pursuing publicly-funded programmes and self-financing programmes. SED further said that while the Administration had received quite a number of suggestions regarding the 2015-2016 Budget, due to limited resources, it had to prioritize the allocation of resources for different purposes.

15. Mr Albert HO noted that the majority of postgraduate students pursuing publicly-funded postgraduate programmes were non-local students, many of whom might not stay to work in Hong Kong after completion of their postgraduate studies. In this regard, he sought information on the public resources deployed to subsidize non-local postgraduate students. Mr HO was concerned about the relatively low number of local graduates pursuing publicly-funded postgraduate programmes, and considered that public resources should be deployed to provide more subsidized places for local graduates.

16. SED explained that it was a common practice for academic institutions to boost their research capacity through attracting high calibre talents from around the world. Many research projects lasting for several years were carried out by research teams which comprised both local and non-local postgraduate students. He pointed out that the admission of non-local students to publicly-funded postgraduate programmes had not displaced local students. The success rate for application for admission to publicly-funded postgraduate programmes of local graduates was higher than that of non-local graduates. On the public resources deployed to subsidize non-local postgraduate students, SED agreed to provide further information after the meeting.

17. Dr Helena WONG recalled that at past meetings of the Panel and the Finance Committee, she had urged that the 100 awardees of the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme ("HKSES") should not be confined to students pursuing undergraduate programmes. In this regard, Dr WONG sought information on the proportion of undergraduate and postgraduate awardees under HKSES.

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18. SED clarified that there was no pre-determined split or quotas for undergraduate and postgraduate awardees. So far, over 600 applications had been received from local students under HKSES for pursuing studies at overseas universities in the 2015-2016 academic year. As these applications were still being processed, information was not yet available on the number of applicants/awardees at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. SED agreed to provide the requested information in due course.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's written responses were issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)756/14-15(01) on 9 April 2015.)

Life planning education and vocational education

19. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che noted that starting from the 2014-2015 school year, a recurrent Career and Life Planning ("CLP") Grant at about \$500,000 per annum was provided to each public sector school operating classes at senior secondary levels to strengthen life planning education. To ascertain the cost-effective use of resources, Mr CHEUNG considered that the Administration should provide a progress report on the implementation of life planning education.

20. The Chairman observed that schools were at different stages of development in implementing life planning education. He nevertheless invited EDB to brief Mr CHEUNG after the meeting regarding his concerns. On the deployment of the CLP Grant, the Chairman said that many schools might have used the bulk of the grant on engaging additional teaching staff, leaving very little resources for other activities on life planning education.

21. SED advised that with the provision of the recurrent CLP Grant, it was expected that designated teaching staff would be recruited to strengthen life planning education in secondary schools. He understood that the incorporated management committees/school management committees of schools had deliberated on including life planning education into the school's strategic planning under which work plans with clear objectives and strategies had been put in place. According to the findings of a survey on 100 secondary schools, more than 90% had started recruiting teachers to promote life planning education. SED added that the Administration had submitted a paper on the implementation of life planning education for the Panel meeting in February 2015(i.e. LC Paper No. CB(4)457/14-15(04)).

22. Mr WONG Kwok-hing opined that mobilizing the support of the business sector was very important in life planning education. He sought information on the participation of enterprises and industries in the implementation of life planning education in secondary schools. He also considered it necessary for the Administration to promote life planning education to parents and students.

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23. SED advised that all public sector secondary schools were expected to implement life planning education. The setting up of 19 Industry Training Advisory Committees covering 20 industries provided a useful platform for the participation of the relevant industries in life planning education. To enhance students' understanding of different trades, EDB would mobilize more business organizations to forge closer partnership with schools under the Business-School Partnership Programme.

24. Mrs Regina IP noted that the Hong Kong Jockey Club ("HKJC") had announced its launch of a large scale life planning programme. She enquired whether EDB would collaborate with HKJC in this programme. In this regard, SED said that HKJC had announced to spearhead a new Career and Life Planning Programme with a funding of HK\$500 million. It was understood that the programme would be conducted on a pilot basis and would be participated by a certain number of schools upon invitation.

25. Mrs Regina IP noted that some 38% of young people in the relevant cohort had access to degree-level education. She was concerned about the possibility of an over-supply of university graduates in future, and enquired whether the Administration would also consider deploying more resources to promote vocational education. SED advised that one of the Government's priorities was to nurture talents to meet Hong Kong's requisite manpower needs. The Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education, which was set up in June 2014 with a view to mapping out a strategy to promote vocational education and raise the public awareness and recognition towards vocational education, would submit its report to the Administration by mid-2015.

Support for students with special educational needs ("SEN students")

26. Dr Fernando CHEUNG was pleased to note that provisions had been made in the 2015-2016 Budget to take forward various initiatives announced in the 2015 Policy Address to strengthen support for SEN students. However, he was of the view that in addition to launching initiatives in a piecemeal manner, the Administration should conduct a comprehensive review on the policy on integrated education.

27. In this regard, SED recapitulated that the Chief Executive had announced in the 2015 Policy Address to invite the Community Care Fund ("CCF") Task Force to consider the provision of a cash grant on a pilot basis for ordinary schools with relatively more SEN students and students with financial needs so that the schools concerned could deploy a designated teacher to co-ordinate matters relating to the support for SEN students. The Labour and Welfare Bureau would strengthen the services for children with special needs, such as providing additional places for subvented pre-school rehabilitation services. The various support measures would be implemented in a progressive manner to tie in with the

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availability of trained professionals to provide the various requisite services.

28. Mr Dennis KWOK noted that middle-class families were not the target beneficiary of CCF and would not be eligible for assistance under the Fund. He was concerned that the high fees for professional services such as speech therapy and occupational therapy for SEN students might not be affordable for many middle-class families. Mr KWOK opined that the Administration should also put in place measures to alleviate the financial burden of middle-class families in supporting their SEN children.

29. On the assistance provided to SEN students, SED advised that in the 2013-2014 school year, there were over 17 390 and 16 440 SEN students in mainstream primary schools and secondary schools respectively. Many of these students had Specific Learning Difficulties. Currently, a 3-tier intervention model was adopted in supporting SEN students. As the services required for each type of SEN students were different, the costs incurred also varied considerably. EDB would continue to work closely with other relevant bureaux/departments to provide support for SEN students.

Sister schools scheme

30. Dr Kenneth CHAN noted that a pilot scheme would be implemented on promoting Hong Kong-Mainland sister school exchanges with a total expenditure of \$200 million. He also noted the suggestion of a deputy of the National People's Congress that training activities in the Mainland should be arranged for local teachers to gain a better understanding of conditions in the motherland. Dr CHAN was concerned whether the formulation of education policy would be driven by certain public figures or the Mainland authorities. In this regard, SED confirmed that the formulation of education policies in Hong Kong was the responsibility of EDB. Meanwhile, members of the public could express their views to the Government for consideration.

V. Implementation of Applied Learning in the Senior Secondary Curriculum

(LC Paper No. CB(4)620/14-15(02) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

Briefing by the Administration

31. At the invitation of the Chairman, SED briefed members on the progress of the implementation of Applied Learning ("ApL") as a component of the senior secondary curriculum leading to the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education ("HKDSE") as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)620/14-15(02)].

Action Discussion

Implementation of ApL in schools

32. The Deputy Chairman was concerned about the provision of financial support to schools for implementing ApL. He referred to Appendix 5 of the Administration's paper and noted that the enrolment of ApL had dropped by about 27% from 6 690 in the 2010-2012 cohort to 4 883 in the 2014-2016 cohort. In this regard, he enquired whether the drop in student enrolment for ApL was consistent with the declining trend in senior secondary student population during the same period.

33. Principal Assistant Secretary (Curriculum Development) ("PAS(CD)") advised that to support schools to implement ApL courses, the Government provided a Diversity Learning Grant ("DLG") to schools upon application. On student enrolment, PAS(CD) advised that the percentage of students taking ApL courses in relation to the student population had remained stable. For example, of the 79 322 and 69 159 Secondary Five ("S5") students in the 2010-2012 and 2013-2015 cohorts respectively, the ApL enrolment was 6 690 and 5 142, accounting for about 8.4% and 7.4% of the S5 student population in the respective cohort. The Deputy Chairman requested the Administration to provide further information in writing on the number and percentage of students taking ApL courses in various cohorts after the meeting.

34. Mr Charles MOK enquired about the factors that the Administration had taken into account when deciding the ApL courses to be offered, such as whether the relevant industries had been consulted. Deputy Secretary for Education (5) ("DS(Ed)5") advised that a committee on ApL comprising members from different industries had been set up under the Curriculum Development Council. ApL courses were linked to six broad professional fields relevant to the social and economic development of Hong Kong. The courses offered to each cohort of students might vary according to the prevailing needs.

35. In response to Mr Charles MOK's enquiry about the implementation arrangements of ApL courses, SED advised that to provide more choices for students, some schools might form networks and arrange their students to take ApL courses offered by other schools in the same district. Mr Charles MOK requested the Administration to provide further information in writing on the implementation arrangements of ApL courses. With reference to the ApL courses listed in Appendix 1 of the Administration's paper, Mr Charles MOK sought information on the student enrolment for each of the listed courses and the number of secondary schools offering such ApL courses. SED agreed to provide the requested information after the meeting.

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36. Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered that ApL courses were very important for SEN students as they might have difficulties in taking traditional elective subjects. He enquired on the number of SEN students in mainstream schools taking ApL courses. With reference to Appendix 2 of the Administration's paper, Dr CHEUNG noted that in the 2014-2016 cohort, out of over 60 special schools, only 30 students from seven special schools took ApL courses. He was concerned that the low enrolment rate might be due to the difficulties experienced by special schools in arranging their students to attend lessons which were usually conducted in the premises of the ApL course providers. He urged the Administration to look into the situation and consider rendering appropriate support to special schools in this regard.

37. In response, DS(Ed)5 advised that the Administration was reviewing the implementation arrangements, and would take action to facilitate the enrolment of students from special schools where appropriate. The Administration was requested to revert to the Panel on its review on implementing ApL and to provide the information requested by Dr CHEUNG after the meeting.

38. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen referred to his past experience in teaching ApL courses on hosting and production of radio programmes, and observed that support for SEN students had been inadequate. For instance, a wheelchair-bound student could not participate in the practical session because there was no barrier-free access to the studio. He said that in his view, the ApL courses resembled interest classes and could at most provide students with very basic understanding and skills of the subjects concerned. Noting that there were about 40 ApL courses offered with an enrolment of some 4 000 to 5 000 students, Mr CHAN sought information on whether there was any pre-determined quota for student enrolment to individual ApL courses and whether any course had been cancelled due to under-enrolment.

39. DS(Ed)5 advised that the ApL courses offered for each cohort had been regularly reviewed and refined to provide a balanced portfolio of courses that met the expectation of stakeholders and the social and economic needs of Hong Kong. Towards this end, course providers were provided with the flexibility to offer relevant courses for students to enrol if there was a demand for such courses. Where a particular course was highly subscribed by the students of a school, the school concerned might discuss with the course provider to arrange classes exclusively for its students.

40. Dr Kenneth CHAN said that ApL might help students explore their academic or vocational study pathways and career aspirations. However, he was concerned about student enrolment for ApL and the cost-effectiveness of offering ApL courses. To encourage the uptake of ApL, Dr CHAN considered that the Administration should explore measures such as subsidizing, freezing or waiving the examination fees for ApL subjects.

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41. In this regard, SED explained that when a new ApL course was launched, student enrolment might initially be low and the start-up costs incurred would be higher. However, after the ApL course had been up and running and taken up by more students, economy of scale could be achieved in its implementation. Nevertheless, it should be noted that sometimes, an ApL course might not be financially viable if its student enrolment was far too low. SED said that it might take time to promote ApL which was relatively new to schools and students. The Administration would continue to monitor and review the implementation of ApL.

Qualifications and progression pathways

42. Dr Kenneth CHAN sought information on the recognition of the students' results in ApL subjects in the HKDSE Examination, and enquired whether any tracking study had been conducted on the progression pathways of ApL graduates.

43. DS(Ed)5 advised that currently, senior secondary students could take a flexible combination of elective subjects which might include traditional subjects and ApL subjects according to their interest, aptitudes and aspirations. Their attainments in ApL subjects in the HKDSE Examination were recognized when they furthered their studies or sought employment. She would provide information after the meeting on the tracking study conducted on ApL graduates.

44. The Chairman noted that the Administration would explore the possibility of introducing one more attainment level for reporting ApL results in HKDSE. He enquired about the reason for this proposed arrangement and whether it would be applicable to all, or only some, ApL subjects. DS(Ed)5 advised that currently, students attaining the result of "Attained with Distinction" in ApL was accepted as having attained the competencies required at the HKDSE Level 3 or above for further studies and/or work. The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority was reviewing students' performance in various ApL subjects and exploring the possibility of introducing one more attainment level to reflect students' better performance equivalent to Level 4 or above in HKDSE.

45. In this connection, the Chairman drew the Administration's attention to his concern that if the introduction of one more attainment level would only apply to some, instead of all, ApL subjects, those subjects with only two attainment levels might become less attractive to students in future.

(Post meeting note: The Administration's written responses were issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)924/14-15(01) on 6 May 2015.)

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VI. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government Scholarship Fund and Self-financing Post-secondary Scholarship Scheme

(LC Paper No. CB(4)620/14-15(03) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

Briefing by the Administration

46. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the key features of the HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund ("GSF") and the Self-financing Post-secondary Scholarship Scheme ("SPSS") for the post-secondary education sector, as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)620/14-15(03)].

Discussion

Selection mechanism of scholarships and awards

47. The Deputy Chairman noted that the same set of criteria for awarding scholarships was applicable to both local and non-local students. Referring to Annex C of the Administration's paper, he observed that the amount of scholarships awarded to non-local students pursuing programmes at degree or above level was much higher than that awarded to local students. The Deputy Chairman was concerned that such arrangement would disadvantage local students and discourage them from making applications. He also considered that the Administration should set up designated scholarships for local postgraduate students.

48. Dr Helena WONG considered it necessary for the Administration to ensure the fairness and transparency of the selection mechanism of various scholarship and awards schemes under GSF and SPSS.

49. US(Ed) advised that for the scholarships and awards under GSF, the number of scholarships and awards were distributed among the publicly-funded institutions with reference to the number of students enrolled at each institution. The Government would provide the funding to each publicly-funded institution in the form of an annual grant. It would be for individual institutions to select the awardees based on the relevant criteria of the respective scholarships and awards. For those scholarship and award schemes under SPSS, nominations would be invited from self-financing institutions. Selection of awardees would be conducted by the Subcommittee on Self-financing Post-secondary Scholarship Scheme.

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50. In response to Dr Helena WONG's enquiry about the selection mechanism and implementation of HKSES, US(Ed) explained that a Steering Committee had been set up in September 2014 to advise the Administration on the policy, strategy and administration of HKSES. The Steering Committee would also be responsible for the selection of awardees. US(Ed) further said that the Administration had provided a paper (i.e. LC Paper No. CB(4)321/14-15(01) and reported the progress of implementing HKSES in January 2015.

51. Dr Kenneth CHAN referred to the selection criteria set out in paragraph 8 of the Administration's paper and questioned whether all institutions had equitably applied the stipulated criteria when selecting awardees for scholarships and awards under GSF and SPSS. He was particularly concerned whether the political background and stance of students would be factors for consideration in the nomination and selection process.

52. US(Ed) said that GSF and SPSS operated on a merit basis. The political background and stance of students was not part of the criteria for awarding the scholarships. While the Administration respected institutional autonomy, it was believed that individual institutions would not base their nomination and selection of awardees for scholarships/awards on political considerations. DS(Ed)1 supplemented that objective and clearly formulated criteria were in place for various scholarships and awards. The institutions or selection committees concerned had to abide by these criteria in nominating and selecting candidates.

53. The Chairman referred to the Talent Development Scholarship ("TDS") under GSF and noted that the largest number of recipients were from the non-academic area of "sports and games" while the smallest number were from "culture, arts and design". He was concerned whether this disparity was due to the existence of a quota for each non-academic area, the performance of students in culture, art and design, or the lack of prestigious competitive events for students to participate. He considered that the Administration should review the appropriateness of the selection criteria for the area of culture, arts and design, and step up publicity on the different non-academic areas under TDS.

54. US(Ed) advised that there was no ceiling on the number of recipients under each non-academic area. He took note of the Chairman's views and said that as only two cohorts of students had been awarded scholarships under TDS since its establishment in the 2012-2013 academic year, more time was needed to collect information on the distribution of awardees under different non-academic areas.

55. The Chairman sought information on the selection criteria of the Best Progress Award ("BPA") under SPSS, and enquired whether meritorious students who could excel further in their academic performance would also be eligible for BPA. In reply, DS(Ed)1 advised that the target recipients of BPA were mostly students with average academic performance but who had demonstrated notable

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Scholarships/Awards for SEN students

56. Dr Fernando CHEUNG noted that while the total number of scholarship/award recipients topped 7 000 students, only 100 scholarships/awards were provided to SEN students under the Endeavour Scholarship ("EDS") and Endeavour Merit Award ("EMA"). He also considered that the amount of award at \$10,000 was hardly sufficient to provide assistance to SEN students pursuing post-secondary programmes. In his view, all SEN students studying post-secondary programmes deserved to be awarded scholarships. Mr Dennis KWOK shared Dr CHEUNG's views. He considered that the Administration should increase the number of recipients and amount of scholarships/awards under EDS and EMA for SEN students. The Deputy Chairman considered that apart from provision of scholarships/awards to SEN students, the Administration should provide more learning support for SEN students pursuing post-secondary programmes.

57. US(Ed) advised that different scholarships and awards had their respective objectives and targeted recipients. The EDS and EMA were established in the 2013-2014 academic year to give recognition to meritorious SEN students in the pursuit of academic and other excellence. US(Ed) further informed members that currently, about 15% of SEN students pursuing post-secondary programmes were scholarships/awards recipients. The percentage of awardees among SEN students was in fact much higher than that of the entire post-secondary student population. Whilst the Administration's initial plan was to award the scholarships/awards to about 100 SEN students every year, the number of awardees would increase in the longer term. The EDS and EMA also complemented other existing scholarships and financial assistance that were available to all students including SEN students.

VII. Any other business

58. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 7:20 pm.