

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(4)1399/14-15  
(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

**Panel on Education**

**Minutes of meeting**  
**held on Monday, 8 June 2015, at 4:30 pm**  
**in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

**Members present** : 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 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 MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP  
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** : Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, SBS, JP (Chairman)  
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che  
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP

**Public Officers attending** : Agenda item IV

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

Dr C S TONG  
Secretary General  
Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority

Agenda item V

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP  
Secretary for Education

Ms Jessie WONG Hok-ling  
Deputy Secretary for Education (2)

Dr K K CHAN  
Deputy Secretary for Education (5)

Ms IP Ling-bik  
Principal Assistant Secretary  
(Education Commission and Planning)  
Education Bureau

Mr Sheridan LEE  
Principal Education Officer  
(Curriculum Development) 1  
Education Bureau

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 HONG CHAN Tsui-wah  
Deputy Secretary for Education (4)

Ms Teresa CHAN  
Principal Education Officer (School Administration)  
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

Miss Mandy NG  
Council Secretary (4)4

Ms Sandy HAU  
Legislative Assistant (4)4

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Action

The Deputy Chairman chaired the meeting as the Chairman was not able to attend the meeting.

Action

**I. Confirmation of minutes**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)1085/14-15 -- Minutes of meeting on 16 March 2015)

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2015 were confirmed.

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

(LC Paper No. CB(4)1099/14-15(01) -- Letter dated 15 May 2015 from Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok concerning the issues related to redevelopment and reprovisioning of primary schools in public housing estates

LC Paper No. CB(4)1099/14-15(02) -- Administration's written response dated 1 June 2015 to the letter dated 15 May 2015 from Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok concerning the issues related to redevelopment and reprovisioning of primary schools in public housing estates

LC Paper No. CB(4)1103/14-15(01) -- Letter dated 14 May 2015 from Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan concerning the policy on funding support provided to post-secondary institutions by the University Grants Committee

LC Paper No. CB(4)1103/14-15(02) -- Administration's written response dated 1 June 2015 to the letter dated 14

Action

May 2015 from Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan concerning the policy on funding support provided to post-secondary institutions by the University Grants Committee)

3. 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)1098/14-15 -- List of outstanding items for discussion

Appendix II to LC Paper No. CB(4)1098/14-15 -- List of follow-up actions)

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

- (a) progress of the New Academic Structure Medium-term Review: Senior Secondary Curriculum and Assessment; and
- (b) promotion of vocational education.

5. Mr Gary FAN referred to a letter he wrote to the Chairman in April 2015 requesting the Panel to arrange a public hearing to receive views on the policy on the teaching of the Chinese Language subject in Putonghua. He urged for an early decision on his request.

6. Dr Kenneth CHAN referred to his letter dated 15 May 2015 and the Administration's response thereto [LC Paper Nos. CB(4)1099/14-15(01) and (02)] concerning issues related to the redevelopment and reprovisioning of primary schools operating in the so-called "matchbox-style school premises" in public housing estates, which were listed under item II of the agenda of this meeting. He noted that the subject was included as item 14 on the Panel's "List of outstanding items for discussion" and urged for an early discussion.

Action

7. The Deputy Chairman took note of members' suggestions and views, and said that he would finalize with the Chairman the items to be discussed at the next regular meeting. Members would be notified of the arrangements in due course.

*(Post-meeting note: Upon finalization by the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, the agenda for the meeting to be held on 13 July 2015 was issued to members vide LC Paper CB(4)1213/14-15 on 23 June 2015. The regular meeting was subsequently rescheduled to 15 July 2015.)*

8. Before proceeding to the discussion items, the Deputy 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. The Liberal Studies subject under the New Senior Secondary curriculum**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)1098/14-15(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)1098/14-15(02) -- Background brief entitled "Issues related to the Liberal Studies subject under the New Senior Secondary curriculum" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat)

9. Members noted the background brief prepared by the Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(4)1098/14-15(02)].

Briefing by the Administration

10. At the invitation of the Deputy Chairman, Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the progress of the review on the curriculum and assessment of the Liberal Studies ("LS") subject, as well as concerns about the implementation of the LS subject and support measures, as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)1098/14-15(01)].

Action

Discussion

*Curriculum and assessment of LS subject*

11. Mr WONG Kwok-hing was concerned that there might be duplication in the curriculum contents of the "Modern China" and "Hong Kong Today" modules of the LS subject with that of the Chinese History subject under the New Senior Secondary ("NSS") curriculum. He cautioned that this might adversely affect the teaching and learning of the two subjects. Mr WONG recalled that when a motion debate on the review of the LS subject was held at a Council meeting in March 2015, he had urged the Administration to delineate the curriculum contents of the LS and Chinese History subjects to avoid duplication.

12. Deputy Secretary for Education (5) ("DS(Ed)5") advised that as one of the first-batch recommendations arising from the Medium-term review on the New Academic Structure, the Education Bureau ("EDB") had announced in April 2015 that school-based assessment would not be implemented in several elective subjects, including Chinese History, at S4 starting from the 2015-2016 school year. This would help relieve the workload on teachers and students.

13. Dr Priscilla LEUNG expressed serious doubt on maintaining LS as a mandatory subject for admission to local undergraduate programmes. Referring to the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education ("HKDSE") Examination questions on the LS subject in the past few years, she considered that the questions had failed to reflect a balanced coverage of all the six modules in the curriculum to cater for the diverse abilities and interests of students. Dr LEUNG urged for a thorough review of the curriculum and assessment of the LS subject, and said that the Panel should arrange a public hearing to receive deputations' views on the curriculum and assessment of the LS subject. Noting that the LS curriculum covered a wide range of specialized topics, Dr LEUNG expressed her concern about the professional capacity of teachers in teaching LS as they might not be well-versed or well-trained in all the topics.

14. Dr Helena WONG expressed support for implementing LS as one of the existing four core NSS subjects as well as the six modules which made up the subject. She stressed the importance of safeguarding the curriculum development, teaching and learning of the LS subject against outside pressure or political interference. Dr WONG remarked that some members had been criticizing the LS subject with a view to abolishing it altogether as a mandatory core subject.

Action

15. Dr Priscilla LEUNG referred to Dr WONG's remarks and said that a Member should not impute improper motives to another Member. She asked the Deputy Chairman to consider whether Dr WONG's remarks were in violation of procedural rules. The Deputy Chairman said that he did not consider that Dr WONG's remarks had imputed improper motives to other members.

16. On the assessment of the LS subject, the Deputy Chairman sought the Administration's view on the suggestion to include optional questions in the HKDSE Examination of the subject. In response, Secretary General, Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority ("HKEAA") said that the Curriculum Development Council and HKEAA launched an extended consultation from March to April 2015 to solicit further views from schools and teachers on how to refine the design of the examination questions to cater for the diverse interests and abilities of the candidates. On whether optional questions should be included in Paper 1 of the LS examination, the initial view was that it might not be appropriate to introduce any change to the structure of the examination paper.

*Teaching resources and textbooks for the LS subject*

17. Ms Starry LEE said that there was a lack of teaching and learning resources for the LS subject. She was also concerned that at present, there was no prescribed textbook for LS and EDB did not accept the submission of LS textbooks for review. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan was concerned about the support available to schools and teachers as they often had to prepare their own teaching materials for the LS subject.

18. SED advised that to relieve teachers' workload in preparing teaching materials, EDB had developed the Web-based Resource Platform for Liberal Studies to which over 2 000 items had been uploaded for teachers' use. EDB would also publish the Liberal Studies Curriculum Resources Booklet Series providing ready-to-use learning and teaching resources for each of the six modules in the LS curriculum. The above measures could help reduce teachers' and students' reliance on LS textbooks which had not been reviewed but were available in the market. He further said that in the long run, EDB would explore the feasibility of accepting LS textbooks to be submitted for review.

*Concerns about the handling of controversial issues*

19. Ms Cyd HO noted from the Administration's paper that EDB had made an appeal to stakeholders not to allow political controversies in



Action

society to infuse curriculum development. She queried the appropriateness of such an appeal and saw no reason why students should shun the discussion of issues such as government policies which were often politically controversial. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung remarked that the Administration should defer to the professionalism of teachers and schools in assisting their students in analyzing controversial topics. The Deputy Chairman saw no reason why controversial issues in society should not be discussed in the course of the teaching and learning of the LS subject.

20. Dr Kenneth CHAN pointed out that it was not possible to evade the discussion of controversial issues as they could be found in all the modules in the LS curriculum. Mr Albert HO was concerned whether it was the Administration's intention that some topics or controversial political issues should be prohibited from discussion. Dr Helena WONG opined that in implementing LS, political issues should not be excluded from discussion in classes.

21. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen said that the implementation of the LS subject, including the conduct of the Independent Enquiry Study, could help arouse students' interest in controversial political and social issues. He was concerned whether LS teachers could give their personal opinions on controversial issues during discussion with their students. Mr Michael TIEN reflected the concerns expressed by some quarters of the community that some teachers might have sought to impose their political stance and viewpoints on their students when teaching LS. The Deputy Chairman remarked that the Curriculum Guide of the LS subject had set out clear guidelines on how to handle controversial issues for teachers' reference.

22. Noting members' concerns, SED clarified that EDB had made the appeal to stakeholders in response to concerns expressed by the school sector that teaching and learning should be conducted in a professional manner, free from any outside pressure or political interference. The Administration had no intention to impose any restriction on the choice of discussion topics. While the expression of personal opinions on controversial issues should be respected, students should be encouraged to grasp the objective facts and evidence, analyze issues from multiple perspectives and then make their own judgments and criticism.

23. Noting that one of the objectives of the LS subject was to enhance students' critical thinking skills, Mr Gary FAN referred to the Administration's use of "明辨性思考" rather than "批判性思考" as the Chinese rendition of "critical thinking" in its paper, and questioned whether the Administration was trying to downplay the importance of students' ability to criticize inadequate policies and practices.

Action

24. In this regard, SED advised that students were not encouraged to criticize for criticism's sake. LS emphasized supporting students' development of higher order thinking skills. Students should grasp the objective facts and evidence, analyze issues using appropriate thinking skills and apply multiple perspectives in making their own judgments and criticism. When stating their views, they were expected to present arguments clearly and demonstrate respect for evidence and open-mindedness. SED and DS(Ed)5 advised that the expression "critical thinking" could be rendered in Chinese as "明辨性思考", "慎思明辨" or "批判性思考". The essential point was that students should be encouraged to apply multiple perspectives in analyzing facts and making their own judgments independently.

**V. Progress on enhancing Chinese learning and teaching for non-Chinese speaking students**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)1098/14-15(03) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)1098/14-15(04) -- Background brief entitled "Issues related to enhancing Chinese learning and teaching for non-Chinese speaking students" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat)

25. Having regard to the heavy agenda and to allow sufficient time for discussion, the Deputy Chairman decided to extend the meeting for 15 minutes beyond the appointed end-time.

26. Members noted the Administration's paper on the progress of implementation of support measures to enhance Chinese learning and teaching for non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") students [LC Paper No. CB(4)1098/14-15(03)] and agreed that it would not be necessary for the Administration to give a briefing. They also noted the background brief prepared by the Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(4)1098/14-15(04)].

*Support measures for schools with NCS students*

27. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan sought further information on the implementation of the Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language

Action

Learning Framework ("the Learning Framework") in schools. SED informed members that the Learning Framework was implemented in primary and secondary schools starting from the 2014-2015 school year. Teachers had adopted diversified modes of intensive learning and teaching of Chinese for their NCS students taking into account their learning progress so described in the Learning Framework. EDB would continue to refine the assessment tools in conjunction with the Learning Framework and learning materials as appropriate to facilitate teachers' support for NCS students in learning Chinese, having regard to the experience and feedback collected from schools in implementing the Learning Framework.

28. Dr Kenneth CHAN noted with concern that the Administration had introduced the Learning Framework in primary and secondary schools instead of developing a "Chinese as a Second Language" curriculum and assessment as pledged in the Chief Executive's election manifesto. While EDB provided all schools admitting 10 or more NCS students with an additional funding ranging from \$800,000 to \$1,500,000 per annum to facilitate their implementation of the Learning Framework, Dr CHAN asked if similar funding support was available to schools admitting less than 10 NCS students.

29. SED informed that in the 2014-2015 school year, a total of 173 public sector schools and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools offering local curriculum and admitting 10 or more NCS students were provided with the additional funding to facilitate their implementation of the Learning Framework and creation of an inclusive learning environment in school. Deputy Secretary for Education (2) supplemented that the NCS students studying in schools admitting less than 10 NCS students would benefit from the immersed Chinese language environment of their schools. These schools, starting from the 2014-2015 school year, might apply for an additional funding of \$50,000 per annum for organizing diversified after-school support programmes for their NCS students. The funding level was set by drawing reference to the time-limited Project of After-school Extended Chinese Learning for NCS Students.

30. The Deputy Chairman opined that provision of \$50,000 per annum to a school was hardly sufficient for recruiting additional staff to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning Chinese for NCS students. Mr Abraham SHEK remarked that although the amount of additional funding was not necessarily the key to the effectiveness of NCS students' learning of Chinese, sufficient funding should be provided for this purpose. He urged that the Administration should make reference to the experience of the international schools that offered Chinese and Putonghua as

Action

compulsory subjects for all students.

31. SED advised that to step up the educational support for NCS students, the Government had adopted a multi-pronged approach which included, among others, the implementation of the Learning Framework and provision of after-school support programmes.

32. The Deputy Chairman enquired whether the Administration would capitalize on the recent injection to the Language Fund to support the development of teaching and learning materials to facilitate implementation of the Learning Framework. In reply, DS(Ed)5 advised that one of the key areas of initiatives under the Language Fund was to cater for learner diversity, including the needs of NCS students. Various learning and teaching packages on Chinese listening, speaking, reading, writing would continue to be refined and developed to facilitate NCS students' learning of Chinese.

33. Nothing that the Learning Framework adopted a "small-step" approach in teaching with a set of incremental learning targets and expected learning outcomes at different stages, Dr Fernando CHEUNG was concerned that the Learning Framework fell far short of a Chinese curriculum for second language learners. He was also concerned about the lack of professional support, engagement of NCS parents and evaluation. In addition, NCS students studying in special schools were facing even greater difficulties than their local counterparts. Provision of adequate resources was vital to special schools to enhance the support for their NCS students. Dr CHEUNG also pointed out that according to a survey, about 80% of the kindergartens issued their circulars to parents in Chinese, which were not readily understood by NCS parents. Besides, NCS children might be disadvantaged when seeking admission to KGs as about 60% of the kindergartens conducted their admission interviews in Cantonese. He considered these practices not conducive to early integration of NCS students into the local education system. He also urged the Administration to strengthen its support for kindergartens admitting NCS students.

34. SED informed members that in the 2014-2015 school year, 23 special schools were provided with additional funding for enhancing support for their NCS students' learning of Chinese. EDB was developing the Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Adapted Learning Framework (for NCS Students with Intellectual Disabilities) ("Adapted Framework") for special schools not offering ordinary school curriculum. The development of the Adapted Framework was expected to complete by the end of 2016. In parallel, special schools had been sharing their

Action

school-based experience in supporting NCS students. As regards kindergartens, they generally created a language-rich environment for adoption of an integrated approach in the learning and teaching of a language.

*Professional support for teachers*

35. Dr Priscilla LEUNG said that according to her understanding, some Chinese Language teachers teaching NCS students had not received training in teaching Chinese as a second language. She expressed concern about the professional capacity and readiness of these teachers in teaching Chinese Language to NCS students.

36. DS(Ed)5 advised that EDB had been providing diversified and progressively advanced professional development programmes and would ensure that all Chinese Language teachers teaching NCS students were provided with adequate training opportunities to enhance their professional capacity in teaching Chinese as a second language. In addition, the Professional Enhancement Grant Scheme for Chinese Teachers (Teaching Chinese as a Second Language) was launched in 2014 under the Language Fund to encourage continual professional development of serving Chinese Language teachers.

*Applied Learning Chinese (for NCS Students)*

37. Mr Michael TIEN welcomed the introduction of an Applied Learning Chinese (for NCS Students) ("ApL(C)") subject by phases at senior secondary levels starting from the 2014-2015 school year. He suggested introduction of additional levels of attainment broadly comparable to Level 4 or above in HKDSE to further enhance the recognition of ApL(C). Mr Albert HO expressed concern about the recognition of ApL(C), which was currently pegged at Levels 1 to 3 of the Qualifications Framework, for the purposes of seeking admission to post-secondary institutions and employment.

38. DS(Ed)5 said that EDB and HKEAA were reviewing students' performance in various Applied Learning subjects and would explore the possibility of having one more attainment level, i.e. broadly comparable to Level 4 or above in HKDSE, to better reflect students' performance. Information on NCS students' performance in the newly introduced ApL(C) subject would be collected when available for consideration in this regard. SED said that attaining the levels of "3-3-2-2" in the four core subjects of Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies

Action

respectively was the general entrance requirement for local undergraduate programmes and individual institutions might have other requirements for admission to individual programmes.

39. Regarding career pursuits, DS(Ed)5 advised that the Civil Service Bureau had accepted "Attained" and "Attained with Distinction" in ApL(C) as meeting the Chinese language proficiency requirements of Level 2 and Level 3 respectively in Chinese Language in the HKDSE for appointment purpose. She further advised that the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research had commissioned local post-secondary institutions to develop and operate Vocational Chinese Language courses for NCS school leavers to enhance their employability.

**VI. Access to teachers' registration information**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)1098/14-15(05) -- Paper provided by the Administration )

Briefing by the Administration

40. At the invitation of the Deputy Chairman, Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the existing teacher registration mechanism and the proposal on public access to teachers' registration information, as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)1098/14-15(05)].

Discussion

41. The Deputy Chairman said that many teachers were concerned about the level of details of information on individual teachers that would be disclosed if the list of teachers with registration was available for public inspection. There were concerns about the possible disclosure of information other than teachers' registration status, such as the teachers' academic qualifications, working experience and marital status, etc. The Deputy Chairman further said that apart from concerns about the protection of teachers' privacy, the sector considered that the requests for access to teachers' information should not be handled by individual schools. Instead, EDB should put in place a centralized mechanism for handling such requests.

42. Ms Cyd HO said that it was the responsibility of the schools concerned to verify the qualifications and registration status of applicants

Action

for teaching posts in the recruitment process. She noted that when engaging private tutors for their children, some parents might wish to have access to the teacher registration information, where applicable, of the tutors concerned. However, she considered that if individual schools were well-resourced to enhance support for low academic achievers, parents might not need to engage private tutors to help their children. Ms HO said that when studying how to enhance the transparency of teachers' registration information, EDB should also give due consideration to the views of relevant parties such as The Ombudsman and the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, etc.

43. US(Ed) said that EDB and schools had endeavoured to ensure that all serving teachers in schools were teachers with registration. Disclosing the list of teachers with registration was a complex and controversial issue. He cited the example that a permitted teacher ("PT") could register only through the school in which he/she was employed and the permit would lapse upon cessation of his/her employment with the school specified therein. Allowing access to the registration information of the PT would inevitably lead to the disclosure of his/her employment status. EDB was fully aware of the concerns of parents about the right of access to teachers' registration information on one hand; and the concerns of teachers over their personal data and privacy on the other. It would strive to strike a balance between the interests of both parties. Before deciding on the way forward, EDB would conduct public consultation to solicit the views of the public, including teachers and professional bodies, on this matter.

**VII. Issues related to the use of funds under the Fee Remission/Scholarship Schemes in Direct Subsidy Scheme Schools in sponsoring overseas educational visits**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)1098/14-15(06) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)975/14-15(01) -- Letter dated 11 May 2015 from Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan)

44. Members noted a letter dated 11 May 2015 from Hon Tommy CHEUNG on the subject [LC Paper No. CB(4)975/14-15(01)].

Action

Briefing by the Administration

45. At the invitation of the Deputy Chairman, US(Ed) briefed members on the issues related to the use of funds under the fee remission and scholarship ("FRS") schemes in Direct Subsidy Scheme ("DSS") schools in sponsoring study tours outside Hong Kong, as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)1098/14-15(06)].

Discussion

46. Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that teachers were required to accompany students to participate in study tours according to the ratio of one teacher to 10 students. He was concerned that some DSS schools having operating deficit might not have sufficient funding to pay for the expenses of teachers participating in study tours. As a result, it would be most likely that the costs would be borne by the participating students. Mr CHEUNG was of the view that the Administration should consider relaxing the use of funds under the FRS schemes in DSS schools to sponsor teachers' participation in study tours if necessary.

47. The Deputy Chairman said that as reflected by some teachers, they were required to pay for their own expenses for participating in the schools' study tours. He considered such practice unacceptable and suggested that the Administration should consider providing an allowance to teachers for accompanying students on study tours.

48. Mr Albert HO concurred that teachers accompanying students on study tours should not be required to pay for their expenses. He opined that the relevant guidelines on the use of funding under FRS schemes by DSS schools should allow flexibility for deploying funds under the FRS schemes to defray the expenses of teachers' participation in study tours if the schools followed the ratio of one teacher to 10 students. Schools would top up the expenses of additional teacher participants if a higher teacher-to-student ratio was adopted for the study tours. Dr Helena WONG expressed her concern about the deployment of funds under FRS schemes by DSS schools and the transparency of their financial position.

49. US(Ed) explained that the FRS schemes in DSS schools were set up to support students so that they would not be deprived of the opportunity to attend DSS schools because of their inability to pay fees. As reflected in the schools' audited accounts for the 2013-2014 school year, about 70% of DSS schools utilized 100% or more of their required FRS reserve. Principal Education Officer (School Administration) supplemented that



Action

DSS schools were given the flexibility to devise their school-based mechanism to use the funds under the FRS schemes. The eligibility criteria for assistance under the FRS schemes should be no less favourable than the Government's financial assistance schemes for these students and these criteria should be made known to students and parents.

50. On the arrangements for study tours, US(Ed) advised that schools should arrange teachers' participation in study tours according to the teacher-to-student ratio of one to 10 so as to facilitate students' learning. As teachers were accompanying students on study tours as their learning facilitators, the expenses of teachers should be borne by schools. Noting members' concerns on the funding arrangements for study tours, US(Ed) pointed out that the objective of the FRS schemes was to provide financial support for needy students and hence, the beneficiaries of the schemes should be limited to students. Expenditure for teachers performing the assigned duties of leading study tours was outside the ambit of the FRS schemes and should be covered by the schools using other sources of funding.

51. Noting the Administration's explanation, Dr Helena WONG sought information on other sources of funding, if any, for DSS schools to pay for the expenses of teachers leading study tours. Dr Kenneth CHAN was concerned about those DSS schools which did not have sufficient funding to defray the expenses of teachers accompanying study tours, and considered it necessary for EDB to explore ways to assist these schools.

52. US(Ed) advised that under the existing policy, schools could deploy their own resources to organize study tours for students and to defray the expenses of teachers accompanying their students. Deputy Secretary for Education(4) supplemented that aided schools, with the approval of their School Management Committees ("SMCs")/Incorporated Management Committees ("IMCs"), could deploy the surplus of the Operating Expenses Block Grant or Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant to cover the expenses of teachers who were assigned to lead educational visits. As for DSS schools, the relevant expenses could be charged to the schools' operating reserve, subject to the endorsement of their SMCs/IMCs. For Mainland Exchange Programmes which were either commissioned by EDB or organized by individual schools with subsidies from EDB, teacher participants from aided schools and DSS schools were subsidized by EDB up to 70% of the unit cost of the programmes. It was a usual practice for schools to top up the remaining 30% of teachers' expenses with their own funds. So far, EDB had not received any feedback from schools that they were unable to top up the remaining amount.

Action

53. Notwithstanding the Administration's explanation, Mr Tommy CHEUNG stressed that the crux of the matter was that some DSS schools had operating deficit and were not able to sponsor the participation of teachers in study tours. Given that the participation of teachers in study tours was a requirement stipulated by EDB, Mr CHEUNG reiterated his strong view that the Administration should review its policy on the use of funds under the FRS schemes so that where justified, DSS schools should be allowed to deploy funds under the FRS schemes to defray the expenses of teachers accompanying study tours.

**VIII. Any other business**

54. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:42 pm.

Council Business Division 4  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
10 August 2015