

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)321/14-15(04)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Meeting on 12 January 2015

**Background brief on issues related to
the employment of teachers in public sector schools**

Purpose

This paper highlights salient issues raised by members regarding the employment of teachers in public sector primary and secondary schools.

Overview

2. Under the existing policy and practices, teachers in public sector (government, aided and caput¹) primary and secondary schools are provided with teachers through two major means -

- (a) regular teacher establishment to be computed mainly according to the number of classes and the class-to-teacher ratios²; and
- (b) various cash grants (some examples are given in **Appendix I**) for meeting specific policy objectives.

3. The teacher manpower of public sector secondary schools also include a number of additional teachers for implementing various education initiatives, such as additional teachers for adopting more Chinese as the medium of instruction, for supporting academic low achievers, for implementing the whole school approach to integrated education. In the 2012-2013 school year, the Administration provided about 1 200 additional regular teaching posts for public sector secondary schools for adopting more Chinese as the medium of

¹ Caput schools are non-profit-making private secondary schools. They are not allowed to charge fees in excess of those in the government/aided schools. In return, the Government provides them subsidy by making up the difference between the approved expenditure for the school places bought by the Government and the standard school fees that they have collected from students.

² Starting from the 2012-2013 school year, the class-to-teacher ratios specified by the Government are 1.7 teachers per junior secondary class and 2.0 teachers per senior secondary class. The current class-to-teacher ratio of whole-day primary schools is 1.5 teachers per class.

instruction and supporting academic low achievers³.

4. In addition to using various cash grants disbursed by the Administration to employ teachers, schools can also create contract posts with other funding such as the Quality Education Fund and private funds secured by the schools. The Education Bureau ("EDB") informed the Panel on Education ("the Panel") that in the 2012-2013 school year, out of the 42 000 teachers employed in public sector schools, around 4 000 teachers (1 500 and 2 500 primary and secondary school teachers respectively) were employed using cash grants or other funding⁴.

5. Regular teachers employed within the approved establishment are subject to the terms and conditions as set out in the relevant Codes of Aid applicable to secondary schools, primary schools and special schools or the Civil Service Regulations for government schools. Teachers employed under various cash grants are required to contribute to the mandatory provident fund schemes similar to the majority of the workforce. Meanwhile, schools are advised to follow the same salary scales applicable to regular teachers and provide similar leave entitlement to teachers appointed on contract terms.

Deliberation on relevant issues

6. After commencement of the Fifth Legislative Council ("LegCo"), the Panel raised concerns about the employment of teachers in primary and secondary schools at its meetings held on 10 and 22 June 2013. It had also received views from deputations. At the LegCo meeting on 26 March 2014, Hon IP Kin-yuen raised a question on issues related to the employment of teachers. The major views and concerns are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Employment situation

7. At the Panel meeting held on 10 June 2013, the Administration informed members that according to the information on major recruitment websites, the number of vacancies of teaching staff for April, May and the first week of June 2013 were 222, 785 and 1 050 respectively. Of the 1 050 vacancies, 563 and 487 were teaching posts in secondary and primary schools respectively.

8. Some members questioned whether the vacancies were inclusive of teaching posts within or/and outside the approved teacher establishment and posts of teaching assistants. As advised by EDB, most of the recruitment advertisements had not specified whether the posts were establishment or non-establishment posts. The number of vacancies did not include the posts of

³ See LC Paper No. CB(4)685/12-13(06).

⁴ See LC Paper No. CB(4)756/12-13(04).

teaching assistants and posts in kindergartens and tutorial schools. According to EDB, there were about 2 000 teacher vacancies arising from the retirement or resignation of teachers every year. There was also a rising demand for primary school teachers due to the increase in primary student population. The Administration considered that the overall employment situation of young teachers had been very satisfactory, with an employment rate of over 90% for graduates of the largest teacher education provider.

Teacher establishment and the creation of teaching posts

9. Given the many challenges confronting teachers in recent years such as various educational reforms, the implementation of the New Senior Secondary curriculum, supporting students with special educational needs, as well as heavy teaching and non-teaching duties, a number of Panel members urged EDB to critically review the existing regular teacher establishment and create more permanent teaching posts. As the class-to-teacher ratios served as an important basis for calculating regular posts on the teacher establishment, some members were of the view that the ratios should be improved taking into account present-day needs.

10. In submitting views to the Panel at its special meeting on 22 June 2013, many deputations stressed the need to improve the regular teacher establishment in secondary schools and the existing class-to-teacher ratios. The Administration was urged to engage an external party to conduct an independent review on the teacher establishment in secondary schools and the manpower requirements under the New Academic Structure. The Panel passed a motion urging the Administration to, amongst others, review expeditiously how to improve the teacher establishment of schools.

11. In its response, the Administration highlighted that the current class-to-teacher ratios were formulated after extensive consultation with the primary and secondary school sectors. It also stressed that the teaching staff resources available to a school were not confined to those calculated with reference to the relevant class-to-teacher ratios, but should also include the additional regular teachers provided for specific programmes such as supporting academic low achievers and adopting more Chinese as the medium of instruction, as well as the additional teachers and ancillary staff engaged by schools using various cash grants to support teaching and learning.

12. Some members were gravely concerned that instead of creating teaching posts on the regular establishment, the Administration had often relied on the disbursement of non-recurrent cash grants to schools for creating short-term contract teaching posts. However, quite a number of cash grants, such as the Liberal Studies Curriculum Support Grant, the English Enhancement Scheme and the Refined English Enhancement Scheme, were of a time-limited nature.

Upon their expiry in the past few years, the temporary teaching posts created under them lapsed, resulting in a considerable number of teachers/teaching assistants losing their jobs.

13. In this connection, EDB explained that the purpose of providing cash grants to schools in addition to the regular teacher establishment was for meeting specific policy objectives. The time-limited nature of certain cash grants had been made clear at the outset upon their launch. Providing cash grants could allow schools greater flexibility in deploying their resources to facilitate the implementation of educational initiatives and school-based development. According to EDB, within the overall teaching force, a significantly high proportion of serving teachers were employed within the approved establishment and were regular teachers.

Concerns about contract teachers

14. According to some Panel members, there was a growing practice of teachers being employed on contracts instead of on the regular teacher establishment. Some deputations also expressed grave concern about the development of the teaching profession in the long run and the difficulties encountered by fresh graduates in seeking regular teaching posts. Some members pointed out that while some teachers had been employed on successive contracts, they might work in a different school or teach a different subject for each contract. This was not conducive to sustaining teachers' morale and the accumulation of expertise, and would eventually result in a succession gap in the teaching profession. However, there was another view that schools had employed teachers on contracts because they would wish to ascertain the suitability of the teachers before deciding whether to appoint them on regular establishment.

15. The Administration clarified that some of the teachers employed by schools under defined contract period ("DCP") were actually regular teachers⁵ who were entitled to benefits such as contributing to the Grant/Subsidized Schools Provident Fund. The DCP arrangements would enable schools to prepare for their future development and to cater for a flexible subject mix under the NSS curriculum. EDB had been monitoring the employment situation of teachers. Schools were also reminded that the employment of regular teachers on DCP must be based on a prudent assessment of the school development needs and with cogent reasons. For persistent cases where the schools had employed a high percentage of regular teachers on DCP terms for a prolonged period without valid reason, EDB would intervene. For instance, at the Panel meeting held on 22 June 2013, EDB informed members that it had issued letters

⁵ For instance, EDB informed the Panel that in the 2012-2013 school year, there were 14 800 and 19 300 regular teachers in aided primary schools and aided secondary schools respectively. Among them, 5.7% were employed by schools under defined contract period. See LC Paper No. CB(4)756/12-13(04).

to 88 secondary schools reminding them that where appropriate, they should consider appointing some of their contract teachers on the regular teacher establishment.

16. On concerns about the career prospect of contract teachers, EDB advised that the wide range of professional development programmes for teachers were generally open to all teachers, irrespective of their terms of employment. According to EDB, the teaching experience accumulated by a contract teacher would be duly recognized when the teacher later took up a regular post.

17. In his question raised at the LegCo meeting on 26 March 2014, Hon IP Kin-yuen was concerned that quite a number of young people aspiring to join the teaching profession could only be appointed on fixed-term contracts due to the lack of permanent teaching posts. There had been a persistent wastage of young teachers as they had not been provided with a stable working environment to give full play to their strength and expertise. In his reply, the Secretary for Education informed members that the number of young people joining the teaching profession had remained steady. Nearly 90% of the newly joined teachers each year were aged 29 or below. Most of the serving primary and secondary school teachers were within the range of 25 to 45 years of age. About 90% of secondary and primary school teachers were employed on the regular staff establishment. Overall speaking, the Administration considered that teaching had remained a relatively stable profession.

Latest position

18. The Panel will discuss issues related to the employment opportunities for young teachers at the meeting to be held on 12 January 2015.

Relevant papers

19. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in the **Appendix II**.

Examples of cash grants provided for schools to employ additional teaching / ancillary staff and/or to hire educational services

Grant	Purpose and Ambit	Amount
<p>Capacity Enhancement Grant ("CEG") (Recurrent) [Applicable to primary and secondary schools]</p>	<p>To hire outside services and/or employ personnel on a temporary basis outside the permanent staff establishment.</p>	<p>CEG is released to schools in accordance with a schedule of rates, which is adjusted along with the movement of the Composite Consumer Price Index (CCPI) annually. The grants for a 24-class secondary school and a 24-class primary school are about \$0.55 million and \$0.68 million respectively in the 2014-2015 school year.</p>
<p>Learning Support Grant (LSG) (Recurrent) [Applicable to primary and secondary schools]</p>	<p>To employ teachers or teaching assistants, hire professional services and/or purchase learning and teaching materials to support students with special educational needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A basic provision of \$156,000 per school per annum for the first one to six student(s) requiring tier-3 support; ● a grant of \$26,000 per student per annum for the seventh and each of the other students requiring tier-3 support; ● a grant of \$13,000 per annum for each student requiring tier-2 support; and ● a ceiling at \$1.5 million per school per annum. <p>For primary schools, eligible academically low achievers will also be counted as students requiring tier-2 support in calculation of the grant.</p>
<p>Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant (SSCSG) (Recurrent) [Applicable to secondary schools only]</p>	<p>To recruit teachers or teaching assistants, procure services and/or learning and teaching materials to facilitate the implementation of the New Senior Secondary ("NSS") curriculum.</p>	<p>The grant is a cash provision equivalent to the mid-point salary of 0.1 Graduate Master / Mistress ("GM") per NSS class. The disbursement of the grant had been advanced for one year to the 2008-2009 school year and enhanced to 0.15 GM per NSS class for a 4-year transitional period from the 2008-2009 to 2011-2012 school years.</p>

Grant	Purpose and Ambit	Amount
Liberal Studies ("LS") Curriculum Support Grant ("LSCSG") (Non-recurrent) [Applicable to secondary schools only]	To enable schools to create favourable conditions for the introduction of LS in the early stage of the new academic structure and to lay a sound foundation for its future development. Schools can recruit staff, hire services and/or purchase learning and teaching materials to assist in the implementation of LS curriculum.	Each school was entitled to a subsidy of \$0.32 million in the 2010-2011 school year. An additional LSCSG (not exceeding \$0.16 million) had been provided upon schools' application in the 2012-2013 school year.

List of relevant papers

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Education	10.6.2013 (Item VII)	Agenda CB(4)756/12-13(04) CB(4)873/12-13(01) Minutes
Panel on Education	22.6.2013 (Item I)	Agenda CB(4)685/12-13(06) CB(4)798/12-13(01) CB(4)944/12-13(01) Minutes
Legislative Council	26.3.2014	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 30-42 (Question 3)

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
9 January 2015