

For discussion on
1 February 2016

Legislative Council Panel on Education

Policy on Kindergarten Education

Purpose

In the 2016 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced the implementation of the free quality kindergarten (KG) education policy with effect from the 2017/18 school year. This paper sets out the key features of the policy and related measures.

Background

2. In an effort to provide affordable and quality KG education to all eligible children, the Government introduced the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) in 2007. Under PEVS, parents are provided with direct fee subsidy, in the form of vouchers, to ease their financial burden and enhance their choice of KGs. On top of the voucher subsidy, families with financial difficulties may apply for fee remission. In the 2013 Policy Address, the Chief Executive said that during his election campaign, the education sector and parents requested further improvements to our early childhood education, particularly the provision of 15-year free education. That would be on the basis of the current 9-year compulsory education and an extension to the 12-year free education. As follow-up to the 2013 Policy Address, the Education Bureau (EDB) set up the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education (the Committee) in April 2013 to study related issues and make proposals on how to practicably implement free KG education. The Committee submitted its Report to EDB on 28 May 2015. Public consultation was then conducted. Having regard to the recommendations of the Committee and views collected through public consultation, EDB has formulated the new policy and specific measures on providing free quality KG education as set out below.

Free quality KG education policy

3. The Government will implement the free quality KG education policy to replace PEVS with effect from the 2017/18 school year. The policy objectives are to provide good quality and highly affordable KG education, and enhance the accessibility of students to different modes of services that suit their specific needs. It is estimated that about 70% to 80% of half-day (HD) KG places will be free¹. The key features of the new policy and funding arrangements are as follows –

(a) Scope of free quality KG education

The Government subsidy would cover HD service in local non-profit-making (NPM) KGs as the basic provision for all eligible KG students. To unleash the potential of the local labour force under the population policy, additional resources will be provided for eligible KGs offering whole-day (WD) and long WD (LWD) services to encourage them to offer more such services at a more affordable rate (paragraphs 6 to 11).

(b) Enhancement to the quality of KG education

(i) Staffing, remuneration and career ladder

The overall teacher-pupil (TP) ratio for eligible KGs would be substantially enhanced from 1:15² to 1:11 (principal not included). A salary range for each position would be provided for KGs, which would continue to have the discretion to determine the remuneration of their staff within the range (paragraphs 12 to 16 and 29 to 31).

(ii) Quality assurance and curriculum review

The Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum will be reviewed and the existing quality assurance framework be enhanced

¹ There are five assumptions in making the estimation, i.e. (i) KGs can flexibly deploy Government funding, except for the portion on teacher salary and specific grants designated for specific purposes; (ii) the rentals of KGs remain stable at the 2014/15 level; (iii) KGs employ teachers in accordance with the recommended TP ratio of 1:11; (iv) the average salary of KG teachers within the KG concerned is the same or below the mid-point salary of the respective rank; (v) the expenditure on teaching assistants and supply teachers is about half of the respective subsidy.

² At present, the minimum number of teachers required to be present and on duty in a KG shall, in relation to the number of pupils present at any time in the KG, be one teacher for every 15 pupils or part thereof. The principal of the KG can be counted as one of the teaching staff and at least one teacher has to be present in a class.

(paragraphs 17 to 18).

(iii) Teacher professionalism

The enhancement of the qualification requirement of KG teachers to degree level would be a long-term goal. Meanwhile, more support would be provided for KG teachers to upgrade their professional capacity (paragraphs 19 to 20).

(iv) Accommodation and facilities

The Operation Manual for Pre-primary Institutions would be reviewed with a view to enhancing the physical accommodation and facilities of new Government-owned KG premises. As an additional medium-/long-term measure, we will explore the feasibility of setting up resource centres to provide a variety of experiential learning activities for KG students, teacher training as well as parent education activities (paragraphs 21 to 22).

(v) Governance and monitoring

KGs will be required to enhance their administration, management and accountability under an effective governance framework with transparency. The Government will step up monitoring (paragraphs 23 to 25).

(c) Funding arrangement

(i) Mode of funding

We will provide direct subsidy for eligible KGs under the new policy. Funding would be provided basically on a per student basis for supporting students' HD schooling in the form of a basic unit subsidy (basic HD unit subsidy). Some grants on a school-specific basis will also be provided to cater for the special circumstances of the KGs or the students (paragraphs 26 to 27).

(ii) "Basic HD unit subsidy"

The "basic HD unit subsidy", which is calculated on a per student unit cost basis, will cover teaching staff salary, supporting staff salary and other operating expenses (paragraphs

28 to 32).

(iii) School-specific grants³ (on top of the “basic HD unit subsidy”)

I. Additional resources for WD and LWD services

An additional grant will be provided for eligible KGs offering WD and LWD places (paragraph 8).

II. Premises-related support for KGs

Rental subsidy will be provided for KGs joining the new subsidy scheme. For eligible KGs operating in self-owned school premises or premises owned by their school sponsoring bodies with zero/nominal rent, a premises maintenance grant will be provided to alleviate the financial burden arising from major repairs. The existing arrangement for claiming refund of rates and Government rent by NPM KGs will continue (paragraphs 34 to 35).

III. Cook for KGs with a kitchen

A grant comparable to the recommended salary of one cook will be provided for LWD and WD KGs with a kitchen that complies with all the Government requirements (paragraph 16).

IV. Non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students⁴ in KGs

A grant comparable to the recommended salary of one teacher will be provided for KGs admitting eight or more NCS students (paragraph 37).

(d) Catering for student diversity

(i) KG students from needy families

Fee remission will continue to be provided under the existing Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme

³ The subsidy currently available to the child care centre portion of the KG-cum-CCCs under the Child Care Centre Subsidy Scheme will be maintained.

⁴ For the planning of educational support measures, students whose spoken language at home is not Chinese are broadly categorised as NCS students.

(KCFRS). In addition, a grant will be provided for KG students from needy families to help the parents pay for the expenditure incurred from KG education for their children (paragraph 36).

(ii) NCS students in KGs

Apart from providing a grant for KGs admitting eight or more NCS students to strengthen the support for their NCS students, school-based professional support will continue to be provided and further enhanced. Teacher training programmes on the teaching and learning of the Chinese language for NCS students in KGs will also be enhanced (paragraph 37).

(iii) KG students with special needs or at risk of developmental delay

Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) has launched a pilot scheme under which on-site rehabilitation service is provided to benefit over 2 900 children with special needs who are studying in KGs or kindergarten-cum-child care centres (KG-cum-CCCs) as early as possible⁵. The services also cover parents of those children and the teaching staff in the KGs and KG-cum-CCCs. The enhancement of the TP ratio to 1:11 will create more space for KG teachers to collaborate among themselves to take care of the diverse needs of students (including those at risk of developmental delay), and to enable better professional collaboration with the inter-disciplinary teams in the above pilot project to support the students with special needs.

EDB will offer more structured in-service training programmes for KG teachers to enhance their capacity to cater for students' diverse learning needs and to facilitate early identification of children with special needs. The Government will also set up a cross-Bureau/Department platform to give advice on the development of initiatives to cater for KG children with special needs (paragraphs 38 to 39).

⁵ Funded by the Lotteries Fund with over \$420 million for a period of two years, projects under the Pilot Scheme are being implemented in phases: five non-governmental organisations (NGOs) launched their projects in November 2015, six in December 2015, and the remaining five NGOs in January 2016.

(e) Provision of more KG places and KG premises

The planning standards for provision of KG places will be reviewed and revised as necessary as a long-term goal from the present 250 WD and 730 HD to 500 WD and 500 HD places respectively for every 1 000 children aged between three and six. We will also devise feasible policy measures with a view to increasing the supply of Government-owned KG premises which are up to the standard as stipulated by the Government in the long run (paragraphs 40 to 41).

(f) Parents' involvement and parent education

Parent education will be promoted to help parents understand the development needs of their children. EDB will also encourage KGs to set up Parent-Teacher Associations, and promote parents' involvement in the learning of their children (paragraph 42).

(g) Local research on KG education

More researches on the latest trends in child development and to examine the impact of the new policy on the quality of KG education will be encouraged (paragraph 43).

(h) Other implementation issues

To maintain the flexibility and diversity of the KG sector and free choice for parents, KG student admission will remain a school-based matter. We will issue guidelines to KGs to ensure a proper and transparent student admission mechanism is in place (paragraph 44).

Details of the New Policy

4. KG education lays vital foundation for children's balanced development and learning in future. Capitalizing on the strengths of the existing KG education in terms of vibrancy and diversity, we should formulate a sustainable policy that caters for the uniqueness of KG education in Hong Kong as well as the diverse needs of children, and that provides for equitable access to quality holistic KG education which promotes lifelong development of a person. Quality KG education will lay the foundation of lifelong learning by fostering in children an inquisitive mind, an interest in learning and exploration, a balanced development, a healthy self-concept, and the ability as well as confidence to adapt to the ever-changing world, such that children can be nurtured to become adults who can contribute to the community.

5. We consider that there are two key elements in deliberating the subject. First, there must be significant enhancement to the quality of the KG education as currently provided under PEVS, or else it would not be meaningful for the Government to inject more funding into KG education. Secondly, due to the diverse operation mode of KGs at present, it does not represent prudent use of public money if the Government were to undertake totally free KG education for every student or to commit to subsidizing every facet of the present and future KG education. The basic tenet of the new policy is that the Government's subsidy to each eligible KG would be sufficient for it to provide quality KG education according to the standards prescribed by the Government. Such standards cover aspects such as staffing structure for principals and teachers, TP ratio, training provision for teaching staff, and measures to cater for learning diversity, etc. Under the new policy, unlike the aided school sector that is subject to various controls under the Codes of Aid and stringent planning under the School Places Allocation Systems, KGs will continue to have discretion and flexibility in operational matters and provision of services having regard to the service needs and subject to rules and regulations stipulated by the Government. It is envisaged that not all KG places will be totally free. For example, some KGs will need to charge tuition fees to cover rental cost in excess of the rental subsidy. While KGs may charge school fees to cover rental costs exceeding Government subsidies or other operating expenses as approved by EDB, children from needy families may apply for financial assistance to ensure that no child will be deprived of the access to KG education due to a lack of financial means.

Scope of free quality KG education

Basic provision for HD service

6. Existing evidence from researches and studies precludes drawing conclusions that WD programmes are more favorable to young children than HD programmes. Studies show that family education plays a crucial and complementary role in shaping young children. A HD programme can achieve the requirements of the curriculum and would allow relatively more family time for young children to play and interact with their family in a less-structured and more relaxing setting to nurture their bonding and sense of security. Although many countries offer WD services for parents as an option, it is not a common practice internationally to provide free WD KG services for all children from three to six years of age.

7. Having considered the developmental needs of children and overseas practices, we are of the view that the Government subsidy under the new policy should cover HD service as the basic provision for all eligible children.

Additional resources for WD and LWD services

8. The provision of WD/LWD services should be on a co-payment basis and a grant will be provided for eligible KGs offering WD/LWD places. In this regard, we note that under PEVS, the level of tuition fees of WD KG services has been about 60% higher than that of HD KG services. Premised on the principle that parents should bear part of the cost of WD service, the additional subsidy for each WD place is set at 30% of the HD unit subsidy. This would in effect mean that the Government and the parents would each bear about half of the additional cost. For LWD KGs, a LWD grant will be provided on top of the HD subsidy and WD grant. We will pitch the grant for each LWD place at 30% of the HD unit subsidy, which represents around half of the additional cost of LWD over WD having regard to the estimated manpower and other operating costs required for maintaining service for the longer operating hours and more operating days. In other words, the additional subsidy for each LWD place is set at 60% of the HD unit subsidy. With the provision of WD and LWD grant, the services will be more affordable for parents who need them.

Eligibility criteria

(i) Eligibility of children

9. Reference is made to existing arrangement under PEVS. Every child, aged between three and six years⁶, and with the right of abode, right to land or valid permission to remain without any condition of stay (other than the limit of stay) in Hong Kong, attending a KG covered by the new policy will be eligible.

(ii) Eligibility of KGs

10. To be eligible to join the new scheme, KGs should be NPM and offering a local curriculum that conforms with the KG curriculum guidelines published by EDB, with proven track records on providing quality KG education. This is in line with the existing practice and policy of the Government. In addition, we will

⁶ Existing policy provides for three years of pre-primary education for children from the age of two years eight months at kindergartens or kindergarten-cum-child care centres (which are collectively termed KGs) to tie in with the minimum age for admission to primary one, which is five years and eight months.

require KGs to pass the Quality Review (QR) of EDB. Moreover, while charging of school fees for HD schooling should be the exception rather than the norm under the new policy, we will set school fee ceilings for participating KGs. We will also make reference to some of the eligibility criteria of PEVS such as requirements in teacher qualifications, TP ratio, etc. to set the entry requirements.

11. EDB will strengthen control by requiring KGs under the new policy to sign with the Government a service agreement setting out the terms and conditions for receiving Government funding. We will also put in place proper procedures to deal with non-compliance and exclusion from the scheme upon repeated non-compliances.

Enhancement to the quality of KG education

Staffing, remuneration and career ladder for KG teachers

(i) Teaching staff

12. To support the delivery of high quality KG education, Government subsidy will be provided for KGs to enable them to employ additional teaching staff required for complying with an improved TP ratio of 1:11 (principal not included). KG teachers would have more capacity for lesson preparation, development of school-based curriculum, professional collaboration and development, communication with parent and catering for the diverse needs of the students, including those with special needs or at risk of developmental delay, etc. The principal would be excluded from the TP ratio so that they can devote their time fully to the administration and management as well as supervision of the day-to-day operation of the KG.

13. Studies have indicated that providing early intervention is helpful to lessen the effects of the developmental delay and prevent them from escalation to greater and more significant difficulties. Appropriate support or intervention for such children, particularly those whose problem is of a marginal nature, can lead to considerable improvements which may reduce, if not obviate, the need for further services at a later stage.

14. To support KG students with special needs and those at risk of developmental delay, LWB has launched a pilot scheme to provide on-site rehabilitation services to benefit children with special needs who are studying in KGs and KG-cum-CCCs (paragraph 3(d)(iii) above). The service is delivered by

inter-disciplinary teams (comprising occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech therapists, clinical / educational psychologists, social workers and special child care workers). It is targeted to support students on the waiting list for subvented pre-school rehabilitation services studying in KGs or KG-cum-CCCs with flexibility to be given to a small portion waitlisted for assessment from Child Assessment Centres under the Department of Health or Hospital Authority. Professional support and assistance is also provided for the parents of these children and for teachers/child care workers of the participating KGs or KG-cum-CCCs. We consider that the needs of the above groups of students should in general be addressed through the on-site rehabilitation services subject to regularization of the pilot scheme if justified on merits and cost-effectiveness. The enhancement of the TP ratio to 1:11 will create space for KG teachers to collaborate among themselves to take care of the diverse needs of students (including those at risk of developmental delay), and to enable better professional collaboration with the inter-disciplinary teams in the above-mentioned pilot project to support the students with special needs. KGs will be required to set up a school-based mechanism to support the students with special needs as well as those at risk of developmental delay. Such school-based mechanism and practices will be subject to the monitoring of EDB.

15. For retaining and attracting quality teachers and maintaining a stable teaching force for providing quality KG education, a career ladder and competitive remuneration for the teachers are essential. In this regard, a three-level teaching staff structure with principal, senior teachers and class teachers is considered appropriate for a KG. For large-scale KGs, a vice-principal may be needed to assist the principal in overseeing the school administration, curriculum development and operation matters. KGs should make reference to the above teaching staff structure, with due regard to their specific needs, to appoint teachers of different ranks commensurate with their scale of operation. For appointment or promotion to the senior teacher posts, if any, KGs would be encouraged to accord priority to suitable teachers with a degree qualification. The qualification requirement of KG principals should continue to be a bachelor of education degree in early childhood education [BEd(ECE)] or equivalent. As for vice-principal in large KGs, given that they are successor to the principal, they should be degree-holders.

(ii) Supporting staff

16. KGs should employ sufficient supporting staff, including clerk and janitor staff, to maintain a desirable learning environment for children and provide necessary administrative support. For LWD and WD KGs with a kitchen that complies with all the Government requirements, a cook will be required, though

KGs of very small size should consider employing a part-time cook. KGs may also employ other supporting staff, such as teaching assistants, to assist in various tasks on full-time or part-time basis or through hire of service.

Quality assurance and curriculum review

17. To enhance the quality of KG education, the existing quality assurance framework would be enhanced. We will involve an external independent member in the QR inspection team as an external observer and update the Performance Indicators which form the basis of school self-evaluation and external review. A task group has been formed to review the Performance Indicators that will take into account the latest world trend, and will dovetail the review of the Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum to be completed in 2016 by the Curriculum Development Council. EDB will continue to make the QR reports available on the websites for public information.

18. The curriculum review will take into consideration the experience of learning and teaching in KG, the changes in society, the on-going professional upgrade and improved competencies among teachers, as well as the performance and future needs of children. It would also consider setting clear but non-prescriptive learning outcomes for KG graduates so that both KGs and primary schools may make reference to them in providing suitable learning and teaching activities for the students, especially during the transition years.

Teacher professionalism

19. The professional capability of KG teachers and effective leadership of KG principals are crucial to the provision of high-quality KG education. In view of this, we consider it important to enhance the professional competence of KG principals and teachers, and as a long term goal, the qualification requirement of KG teachers should be raised to degree level. In this connection, we are mindful that various teacher education institutions are currently offering Government-subsidized Certificate in Early Childhood Education [C(ECE)] programmes, the graduates of which are proven to be able to discharge their KG teaching duties effectively, and that provision of more teacher training places to achieve the goal of having an all graduate KG teaching force would require long-term planning. Balancing professional consideration and practical constraints, the requirement at this stage will be (i) the minimum qualification for KG teachers should remain to be C(ECE) at the present stage; (ii) KG principals and the new posts of vice-principals should be degree holders; and (iii) senior teachers should preferably possess a degree. We

will keep in view the long-term goal of having an all-graduate KG teaching force after the implementation of the new KG education policy.

20. Meanwhile, we will support KG teachers to upgrade their professional competence through various means. For this purpose, we will (a) develop a continuous professional development policy with appropriate targets (such as a soft target of around 150 hours for every three years) for KG teachers and principals; (b) formulate a Teacher Competencies Framework and a Principal Competencies Framework to set forth the skills and knowledge specifically suggested for KG teachers and principals (covering the domains in learning and teaching, child development, school development and professional relationships and services); and (c) revise the Certification Course for KG principals to further enhance the effectiveness of school leadership in the sector.

Accommodation and facilities

21. We consider that the physical accommodation and facilities of KGs should be enhanced in order to provide a more conducive environment for children's learning and development. As a long-term target, it would be desirable for KGs to have an outdoor play area for the students. That notwithstanding, we are mindful that there is a need to strike a balance between the competitive use of scarce land resources and the need to improve the learning environment, as any proposed increase in indoor floor area for each student and provision of outdoor play area would have implications for the size and configuration of KG premises (in terms of gross floor area within housing estates) or sites (in terms of site area for stand-alone buildings or buildings with provision of KG premises) and in turn land/space requirement for KGs. We consider that the indoor floor area for each student might be increased by 20%, and the enhancement requirements would apply to new Government-owned KG premises such as those in public housing estates if feasible. EDB will, in consultation with relevant bureaux and departments, review the requirements of KG premises in the Operation Manual for Pre-primary Institutions to consider whether to revise the recommended schedule of accommodation by increasing the indoor floor area for each student by 20% having regard to its practicability and the financial implications. Subject to the outcome of the review, new and existing KGs in other premises can also improve their accommodation and facilities on their own having regard to their own circumstances. The implication for provision of an outdoor play area for students would also be further deliberated and explored in the departmental consultation.

22. As a medium-/long-term measure to meet the needs of KGs for more space

for various activities, we will explore the feasibility of setting up resource centres for conducting a variety of experiential learning activities for KG students, teacher training as well as parent education activities.

Governance and monitoring

23. With the substantial increase in Government funding under the new KG education policy, it is essential that KGs should enhance their administration, management and accountability under an effective governance framework with transparency, and well-defined roles and responsibilities of school personnel. In the medium or long-term, each KG should have a Management Committee comprising representatives from different KG stakeholders. To ensure that KGs have well-established mechanism in handling various administrative matters, comprehensive administrative guidelines and operation manuals would be drawn up for compliance by KGs. To enhance the transparency of KG operations, EDB will require KGs to provide key operational information on their school websites, and consider prescribing the key information or items that all participating KGs would be required to disclose to the public, such as the miscellaneous charges for optional school items and paid services.

24. EDB's monitoring will also be stepped up to ensure KGs' compliance with the rules and regulations. On control of KG fees, at present only those items directly relating to teaching and learning, school operation and maintenance of education services are recognised for tuition fee revision purpose. In future, KGs generally would have sufficient resources to provide quality HD services and a majority of them should not need to charge school fees. To prevent KGs from charging school fees unnecessarily, EDB will vigorously vet individual KGs' proposals for collecting tuition fees. Only those necessary expenditures with strong justifications (e.g. KGs located in commercial premises not getting full rental subsidy) would be considered by EDB individually. We will also set tuition fee ceilings for participating schools.

25. For other charges for trading operations, EDB's approval is not necessary since the purchase of the items or services is on a voluntary basis. Parents can select individual item or service as they require. That notwithstanding, there are regulations governing the sale of school items and paid services by KGs. To step up Government control, EDB will review and update the list of common school items and paid services that should and should not be sold at KGs. We will also consider various measures aiming at increasing transparency and sanction for improper collection of other charges, and enhancing accountability.

Funding arrangement

Mode of funding

26. In considering the mode of funding under the new policy, it is imperative that the diversity, vibrancy and uniqueness of the KG sector should be maintained. In this regard, we consider that the aided school subvention mode is not applicable to KGs. The aided school funding mode contains several inter-connected components and is subject to a basket of stringent control measures under the Government's prudent and balanced planning of school places. For instance, the class structure has to be approved by EDB annually, which will require setting of enrolment threshold, and would result in packing of classes and teacher redundancy in times of enrolment drop. Also, KGs will become less flexible in operating HD and WD classes to meet the needs of parents if the aided school funding mode is adopted in the KG sector. What is more, the aided school funding mode is premised on a system to centralize the allocation of places through the creation of school nets to ensure fairness. If such is adopted in the KG sector, it will inevitably affect the sector's overall operating flexibility to cope with the rise and fall of the student population in different districts and upset the existing diversified choices available to parents. The lack of Government premises also makes any central planning and allocation of school places not feasible.

27. Given the complexity and diversity in KG operation as manifested in KGs offering HD, WD, LWD services and a mix of different types of services, we consider that the mode of funding currently adopted by aided schools or under PEVS would not fully meet the needs of KGs. The new funding mode, whereby Government subsidy will be provided basically on a per student basis (i.e. unit subsidy approach) supporting students' HD schooling, with some grants provided on a school-specific basis to cater for the special circumstances of the KGs or the students, is considered more desirable and conducive to the sustainable development of the KG sector.

“Basic HD unit subsidy”

28. The “basic HD unit subsidy” will be calculated on a per student unit cost basis, including teaching staff salary, supporting staff salary and other operating expenses. According to the present estimation, the “basic HD unit subsidy” in the

2017/18 school year will be about \$32,900⁷.

Staff salary

29. We recommend a pay range for each position with a boundary for KGs to set reasonable salary for their staff within the range. As compared to a mandatory salary scale in which teacher salary is determined solely in accordance with seniority, it is appropriate and fit for purpose to use a reference salary range which would ensure competitiveness and at the same time allow flexibility for the KG management to decide on their staff remuneration, taking into account their teaching experience, performance, additional job duties, qualifications, and training and special skills, etc.

30. That notwithstanding, we are aware that we should properly address the concerns of KG teachers about their experience not being recognised by KGs in determining their remuneration. In this regard, specific implementation guidelines and clear rules and regulations would be set out to ensure that KGs use Government funding appropriately on staff remuneration.

31. We recommend the following reference salary ranges for KG teaching and supporting staff positions –

Teaching Staff	Recommended Salary Range (2013/14 price level)
Class Teacher	\$18,000 – \$32,000
Senior Teacher	\$24,000 – \$38,000
Vice Principal	\$30,000 – \$42,000
Principal II	\$34,000 – \$47,000
Principal I	\$40,000 – \$53,000
Supporting Staff	Recommended Salary Range (2013/14 price level)
Clerk	\$10,000 – \$18,000
Janitor	\$10,000 – \$13,000
Cook	\$12,000 – \$14,000

For very small scale KGs, the rank of Principal will be comparable to Vice Principal.

⁷ The amount of subsidy for 2017/18 is estimated based on the subsidy calculated at 2013/14 price level as well as change in price level projected for the years to 2017/18. When the new subsidy scheme is rolled out, the actual amount of subsidy for 2017/18 will be adjusted as appropriate.

Other operating expenses

32. Apart from the staff salary-related expenses, Government subsidy will be provided for KGs to meet their other operating expenses. The amount of subsidy is set at a certain percentage of the total funding for teaching and supporting staff salaries for individual KGs, making reference to past expenditure patterns of KGs. Also, we will provide extra resources for KGs to employ supply teachers and teaching assistants in order to create capacity for teachers' professional development as well as for school development. The funding for the above-mentioned operating expenses is subsumed into the "basic HD unit subsidy".

Tide-over grant

33. We note the KG sector's concern that KGs with a large number of long-serving teachers might not be able to meet the high expenditure on staff salaries if the provision is based on the mid-point salary. We will introduce a one-off time-limited tide-over grant (ToG) for eligible KGs for two years starting from the 2017/18 school year when the new policy is launched. The ToG aims to provide additional financial support for eligible KGs, which have a large number of long-serving teachers who are receiving higher salaries, in defraying their expenses on such staff in the early period of introduction of free quality KG education. During the period covered by the ToG, KGs should formulate their school-specific financial and staffing policy as well as management systems/practices for migration to the new policy.

Premises-related support for KGs

34. Rental subsidy will be provided for KGs joining the new subsidy scheme. Details are as follows –

- (a) In order to lessen the KGs' rental-related financial burden, thereby reducing as far as possible the number of KGs having to charge school fees to make up for the rental expenses, it is reasonable that we should enable those KGs in housing estates operating in premises allocated under the EDB-administered school allocation or nomination mechanisms to be free from rental payment so that they could more likely provide quality KG education free. Specifically, this group of KGs (227 in the 2014/15 school year), which are paying rental at concessionary rate as assessed by the Hong Kong Housing Authority (around 50% of market rent) and stipulated in the tenancy agreements, should be eligible for full rental

subsidy subject to the fill-up rate as in the long-standing arrangements applicable to them under the existing Rent Reimbursement Scheme (RRS). While there are only two tiers of fill-up rate under the existing RRS (i.e. KGs with fill-up rate of 50% or above will be provided with full rental subsidy while KGs with fill-up rate of below 50% will be provided with 50% of rental subsidy), we will introduce more tiers of fill-up rate to guard against using public funds to subsidize over-provision of KG places.

- (b) As for the LWD KGs which are former aided child care centres under the Social Welfare Department (SWD) currently in receipt of rental reimbursement (139 in the 2014/15 school year) and mainly situated in premises of public housing estates paying less than 50% of market rent, they will continue to be eligible for full rental subsidy.
- (c) For other eligible KGs, the rental subsidy will be subject to a ceiling and the student enrolment to ensure proper use of public funds. To avoid circumstances where the rental component would become disproportionate to the subsidy package per KG, the rental subsidy for these KGs will be subject to “dual” caps at 50% of open market rental⁸, or 15% of the “basic HD unit subsidy”, whichever is lower. For KGs currently paying market rent under RRS (30 in the 2014/15 school year) but will be entitled to less subsidy under the new rental subsidy scheme⁹, a grace period of four years from the implementation of the new policy in the 2017/18 school year will be allowed for these KGs to migrate to the new scheme. The new rental subsidy scheme will apply to them thereafter.
- (d) The existing arrangement for claiming refund of rates and Government rent by NPM KGs will continue.

35. For local NPM KGs operating in self-owned school premises or premises owned by their school sponsoring bodies with zero or nominal rent, we will provide a premises maintenance grant (a school-specific grant) for them to alleviate the financial burden arising from major repair. The grant will be determined with reference to the depreciation expenses of school premises over the past few years. The level of grant would be set at about \$970 (at 2017/18 price level, please see Note

⁸ It is made with reference to the rentals of KGs in public housing estates (i.e. concessionary rent at around 50% of market rent).

⁹ These KGs are now provided with full subsidy subject to the average rental cost per pupil not exceeding two times of the district average.

7) per student. The disbursement of the grant will be suspended once the accumulated surplus reaches 500% of the annual amount of grant until the surplus falls under 100% of the annual amount. For KGs operating in leased premises, no such subsidy is considered necessary as major repair should be the responsibility of the owners rather than the KG tenants.

Catering for student diversity

KG students from needy families

36. Researches on social policies reveal that for those less privileged groups, education opportunities with enhanced support to them is conducive to the development of their capabilities and skills, that being a major determinant of their social mobility. To ensure that no child will be deprived of the access to KG education due to a lack of financial means, fee remission (at different levels of 100%, 75% or 50%) will continue to be provided under the existing Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme. Also, we will provide an additional grant (at different levels of 100%, 75% or 50%) for KG students who pass the means test and meet the same eligibility criteria under the KCFRS. The grant rate will be pegged at the level of grant for school-related expenses (i.e. books, stationery, school uniforms, miscellaneous and minor one-off expenses) for pre-primary students under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, which is \$3,600 in the 2015/16 school year. Before the implementation of the new policy in the 2017/18 school year, the Government will invite the Community Care Fund (CCF) to consider implementing a programme to provide a one-off grant for KG students from needy families in the 2016/17 school year to cover their school-related expenses. It is anticipated that 50 000 students will benefit. The Commission on Poverty and its CCF Task Force will consider and deliberate on details of the proposal.

Non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students in KGs

37. To enable KGs to enhance the support for their NCS students, a grant comparable to the salary of one KG teacher will be provided for KGs admitting eight or more NCS students. With the additional resources, KGs could provide teachers with more manpower support and professional training to develop effective strategies to help NCS students learn through the Chinese medium so as to lay a foundation for their study in local primary schools and to raise teachers' empathy and cultural and religious sensitivity in handling NCS students. These KGs should also deploy the additional resources to enhance the communication with the parents of NCS students and strengthen home-school cooperation. School-based

professional support will continue to be provided and further enhanced to help KGs build up the expertise in facilitating NCS students' learning of the Chinese language for a smooth transition to primary education. EDB will also enhance teacher training programmes on the teaching and learning of the Chinese language for NCS students in KGs.

KG students with special needs or at risk of developmental delay

38. The Government has been providing different services for children with developmental delay through the collaborative efforts of various Government departments. The Food and Health Bureau (FHB) and LWB are considering enhancement measures to improve the assessment and rehabilitation services respectively for the students in need of such services. As mentioned in paragraph 14 above, LWB has launched a two-year pilot scheme through the Lotteries Fund to provide on-site rehabilitation services for children with special needs at KGs in addition to the range of existing rehabilitation and related support services. Under the pilot scheme, the multi-disciplinary service teams of the non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which are composed of social workers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, clinical psychologists/educational psychologists and special child care workers, will offer on-site rehabilitation services and training to children with special needs, supplemented by training at centres with rehabilitation facilities. While the service targets were children diagnosed to have special needs who are attending KGs/KG-cum-CCCs, the participating NGOs may flexibly deploy part of the service quotas to serve those children waiting for assessment. The service teams will also give professional advice to KG teachers to assist them in taking care of children with special needs. They will also provide support for parents in fostering positive attitude and developing effective skills in raising their children with special needs. The 16 participating NGOs, which are experienced in providing subvented pre-school rehabilitation services, are providing over 2 900 training places covering more than 450 KGs. LWB will conduct a comprehensive review of the pilot scheme to help determine the mode of operation if and when the scheme is regularized.

39. On the part of EDB, apart from enhancing the TP ratio (details in paragraph 12), we will continue to work jointly with FHB to strengthen the existing training for KG teachers to facilitate early identification of KG students with developmental problems. In addition, we will devise a teacher professional development framework to enhance their understanding of the children's development needs and to empower them to identify and cater for learner diversity, including children at risk of developmental or behavioral problems. Under the framework, more structured

in-service training programmes will be offered for KG teachers and training targets will be set for each KG. In addition, we will set up a dedicated team of educational psychologists and professional staff to develop appropriate intervention models and teaching resource packages for use of KG teachers and parents to cater for the students at risk of developmental delay and deliver relevant professional training for KG teachers. Besides, a cross-Bureau/Department platform would be set up to give advice on the development of initiatives to cater for KG children with special needs.

Provision of more KG places and KG premises

40. According to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, the need for setting up KGs is taken into account in housing estates and large-scale private development projects where space is allocated for such uses. The current standard for provision of KG places is 730 HD and 250 WD places for every 1 000 children in the age group of three to under six. This planning standard will be reviewed and revised as necessary to 500 WD and 500 HD places as a long-term goal to increase WD places to meet the increasing demand and to support working parents.

41. With a view to increasing the number of KGs that will not have to charge any school fees to defray rental expenses, a stable supply of Government-owned quality KG premises is crucial. For achieving this and as a long-term strategy, adequate space would be earmarked for KG use in new public housing estates with new demand, and available KG space identified for relocation of existing KGs that require substantial improvement to their physical accommodation. We will also explore the feasibility of increasing Government-owned KG premises in accordance with the established mechanisms for site search and/or premise allocation as appropriate. The feasibility of co-location of KGs and primary schools will also be explored. As it involves a number of complicated issues touching on design, management, operational matters, etc., we will further examine the feasibility on a case-by-case basis in consultation with relevant bureaux or departments. We will also further explore the feasibility of increasing KG space in private housing estates.

Parents' involvement and parent education

42. We consider that parents play a very important role in their child's early life and are the children's role model. It is important to promote parent education to enhance their understanding on the development needs of their children. To address the diverse educational and social needs of parents, different channels such as mass and social media would be deployed so as to reach target parents effectively. Besides, EDB will encourage KGs to set up Parent-Teacher Associations and

promote parents' involvement in the learning of their children.

Local research on KG education

43. To help keep the sector well-informed of the latest trends in child development, children's learning needs and the development of KG education, more researches will be encouraged. The impact of the new policy on the quality of KG education will also be studied.

Other implementation issues

44. To maintain the flexibility and diversity of the KG sector and free choice for parents, KG student admission would remain a school-based matter. We will issue guidelines to KGs to ensure that a proper and transparent student admission mechanism is in place. The existing K1 admission arrangements will continue to be adopted in subsequent years, with suitable enhancement on a need basis.

Implications for Various Stakeholders

45. The policy of free quality KG education will bring about substantial improvement to KG education in different aspects.

(a) From parents' perspective

- (i) The quality of KG education will be strengthened with enhancement to the quality assurance framework and review of the Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum.
- (ii) With more Government subsidy for KGs, parents will pay less to no tuition fees in future, though KG education would not be completely free. Also, WD and LWD services will become more accessible and highly affordable. As KGs should have sufficient resources from the Government to provide quality HD services, EDB will vigorously vet individual KGs' application for collecting or revising tuition fees. Approval will be given only on a case-by-case basis with full justifications.
- (iii) For needy families, in addition to fee remission, a grant will also be provided to defray expenses related to KG education for their children.

- (iv) There will be better support for NCS students as KGs admitting eight or more such students will be provided with an additional grant. The diverse learning needs of children, including those with special needs or at risk of developmental delay, would also be better catered.
 - (v) We will promote more parent involvement in the learning process of their children through enhanced parent education and transparency of KGs.
- (b) School Sponsoring Bodies/KGs
- (i) The amount of subsidy for KGs will significantly increase. Apart from the per capita subsidy provided on the basis of enrolment, the Government will also provide school-specific grants, including rental subsidy, additional grant for WD/LWD service and additional resources for KGs admitting a cluster of NCS students, etc.
 - (ii) All eligible KGs can apply for rental subsidy under the new policy, which represents significant improvement over the current rental reimbursement scheme under which only about 52% of local NPM KGs are eligible. For those KGs operating in self-owned school premises or premises owned by their school sponsoring bodies with zero/nominal rent, a premises maintenance grant will also be provided.
 - (iii) School sponsoring bodies/KGs will continue to enjoy a high degree of autonomy and flexibility with regard to staff management and resource deployment. Clear guidelines and rules and regulations will be set out to facilitate management and smooth operation of the KGs.
- (c) Teachers
- (i) The capacity of teachers will be enhanced through a better TP ratio of 1:11 as compared to the existing 1:15. They will have more capacity to cater for the diverse needs of students (including those with special needs or at risk of developmental delay), engage in curriculum development, lesson planning, professional development, communication with parents, etc.
 - (ii) There will be a clear career ladder with promotion prospect to senior teacher, vice-principal (for large KGs) and principal.

- (iii) Competitive remuneration will be offered with reference to our recommended salary ranges. According to the information available, in the 2014/15 school year, about 50% of the KG teachers are being paid a salary lower than the “starting point” of the recommended salary range of \$18,000 to \$32,000 (at 2013/14 price level).
- (iv) While KGs will continue to have the discretion on their staff salary, they will be required to observe rules and guidelines to be set out by EDB to ensure that government subsidy is used appropriately on staff remuneration. For instance, KGs will not be allowed to deploy the subsidy on teacher salary for other purposes. Consideration will also be given to claw back those savings from the salary-related portion should the amount exceed a prescribed ceiling. KGs will also be required to put in place a school-based staff remuneration policy and mechanism with proper checks and balances.
- (v) To enhance the principals’ and teachers’ professional capacity, a Principal Competencies Framework and Teacher Competencies Framework will be developed, based on which a continuous professional development policy with clear targets will be formulated. We will also strengthen the KG principal certification course.

Transitional Arrangements in the 2016/17 school year

46. Before the free quality KG education policy comes into effect, the Government will continue to provide voucher subsidy for parents under PEVS in the 2016/17 school year. The voucher value will be increased from \$22,510 per student per annum in the 2015/16 school year to \$23,230 per student per annum in the 2016/17 school year, in accordance with the established adjustment mechanism by following the year-on-year rate of change in the CCPI. The fee remission ceilings under the KCFRS will be maintained at the 75th percentile of the respective school fees of HD and WD KGs concerned from the 2016/17 school year onwards.

Implementation

47. Implementation details of the free quality KG education policy will be released in the third quarter of 2016 for invitation of participating KGs in the 2017/18 school year.

Financial implication

48. The full-year recurrent expenditure on free quality KG education will be about \$6.7 billion in the 2017/18 school year. The total recurrent expenditure represents an increase of about \$2.6 billion (63%) and \$3.2 billion (91%) over the estimated recurrent expenditure on pre-primary education of \$4.1 billion in 2015-16 and \$3.5 billion in 2014-15 respectively. The additional cost arising from the increase in PEVS value will be included in the 2016-17 draft Estimates and that of the subsequent years.

Creation of directorate posts

49. Additional manpower will be required for implementation of the new KG policy, including devising implementation details, administering the new funding arrangements and disbursement of funds, strengthening the entry and exit mechanism for the new scheme, reviewing the curriculum, enhancing teacher professional development, executing the enhanced quality assurance framework, and stepping up monitoring of KGs including collection of tuition fees and miscellaneous charges, etc. In the start-up years, various guidelines will be developed, the revised curriculum guide will be produced and related professional development programmes organized, and other preparatory work will be carried out. We will create 22 non-directorate posts in 2016-17 (including four time-limited posts lasting from one to three years) and a further 37 non-directorate posts in 2017-18 (including regrading of nine posts) to support the full implementation of the new KG policy. It is proposed that one supernumerary post at the rank of Assistant Director of Education (D2) be created for three years from 2016-17 to lead the multi-disciplinary team for undertaking the preparation and start-up work and one permanent post of Principal Education Officer (D1) be created from 2016-17 to assist in steering the various tasks. Details are set out at Annex.

Advice Sought

50. Members are invited to offer views on the implementation of the free quality KG education policy, and support the proposal of creating two directorate posts set out at Annex. Subject to Members' support of the proposal, we plan to make a submission to the Establishment Subcommittee for consideration and the Finance Committee for approval.

Education Bureau
January 2016

Proposed Creation of Two Directorate Posts

PROPOSAL

We propose to create one supernumerary post at the rank of Assistant Director of Education (ADE) (D2) for three years and one permanent post at the rank of Principal Education Officer (PEO) (D1) post starting from 2016-17.

JUSTIFICATION

Challenges arising from the implementation of the new KG education policy

2. Provision of 15-year free education and quality KG education is one of the priorities of the current-term Government. EDB set up the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education (the Committee) in April 2013 to examine the various related issues and recommend practicable and sustainable proposals for implementing free quality KG education. The Committee submitted a report on “Free Kindergarten Education” (the report) to EDB in May 2015.
3. Having regard to the recommendations of the Committee and views collected through public consultation from June to July 2015, the Administration decided that a new policy on free quality KG education would be introduced to replace the existing Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) starting from the 2017/18 school year. The policy objectives are to provide good quality and highly affordable KG education, and enhance the accessibility of students to different modes of services that suit their specific needs.
4. Underpinned by the guiding principles of uniqueness, equity, quality, diversity and sustainability in KG education, specific measures under the new policy included provision of direct subsidies to eligible KGs, enhanced teacher-student ratio, measures on catering for learner diversity, improving remuneration for KG teachers, creating a career ladder for their development and advancement, stepping up quality assurance and increasing the provision of Government-owned KG premises, etc. Following the announcement in the 2016 Policy Address, there is a pressing need for EDB to formulate the implementation details for announcement within 2016 and oversee the smooth launching of the various measures in the 2017/18 school year.

5. The KG sector is marked by a very pluralistic and splintered set-up with many school sponsoring bodies and small organisations with diversified governance, management and different interests and with KGs located in a variety of premises, such as self-acquired or self-owned premises, privately leased premises, or public housing estates. Hence, formulation of the implementation details of the new KG policy is a complicated, intricate and politically sensitive task. The KG premises-related issues, for instance, involve the land policy, planning standard, legal consideration, and valuation of the market rent, etc. which calls for a lengthy study and discussion in a prudent manner before finalizing an implementation plan. Besides, close liaison across divisions within EDB as well as across bureaux/departments is crucial.

6. In addition, EDB will have to update the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Education on the progress, communicate with various stakeholder groups and major advisory bodies (such as the Education Commission) and respond to enquiries from the KG sector, stakeholders, etc. from time to time.

7. Moreover, under the new KG education policy, EDB will step up monitoring and quality assurance of KG teachers. In this connection, we will need to issue clear guidelines in consultation of the KG sector to enhance the governance, transparency and accountability of KGs, formulate a continuous professional development policy and measures to facilitate professional upgrading of KG principals and teachers, strengthen training and support for KGs to ensure effective planning and use of Government funding, etc. The additional workload is multi-folds of the existing staffing requirements under the current PEVS. Hence, the existing KG teams will be strengthened and new teams set up to take up the various new tasks.

8. A new Kindergarten Education (KGE) Division, to be headed by an ADE, designated as Principal Assistant Secretary (Kindergarten Education) [PAS(KGE)], and assisted by a PEO, designated as PEO(KGE), will be set up to take charge of the formulation of strategies/measures, planning and preparation as well as the smooth implementation of the new policy.

Need for steer at directorate level

9. The different areas of work will be undertaken by various KG teams and additional officers at directorate level are required to lead these teams. At present, there are four KG Sections, namely the Kindergarten Special Duty (KG_SD) Section, Kindergarten Administration (KGA) Section, Kindergarten Inspection (KGI) Section

and Joint Office for Kindergartens and Child Care Centres (JOKC), responsible for overseeing the KG education policy and related issues. The KG_SD Section is responsible for formulating the implementation plan and strategies for the new KG education policy, including issuing registration certificates; handling premises-related issues; preparing for disbursement of funds to KGs and the K1 admission arrangement, etc. KGA Section is mainly responsible for overseeing the administration of the new rental subsidy scheme; formulating and administering the entry and exit mechanism; developing a continuous professional development policy for KG teachers, etc. KGI Section will mainly monitor and evaluate the performance of KGs in Hong Kong through inspections, and promote quality KG education in Hong Kong. JOKC is mainly responsible for supervising the operation of Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres (KG-cum-CCCs), including processing applications from KG-cum-CCCs and conducting review on the schedule of accommodation for KGs. Given the scale, importance and complexity of the tasks involved, it is necessary to create the supernumerary ADE [PAS(KGE)] post as mentioned in paragraph 8 above for three years, so that the challenge would be met under the leadership of a directorate level officer with extensive experience in high-level educational duties, profound knowledge on the operation and dynamics of the education fields, strong leadership, sound communication as well as exceptional organizational abilities, in order to provide steer in planning, formulation, implementation and review of the new policy initiatives to ensure its smooth implementation and the effective running of various related measures in 2017/18 school year and thereafter. The permanent PEO [PEO(KGE)] as mentioned in paragraph 8 above will assist the supernumerary ADE [PAS(KGE)] on all these tasks. Upon the lapse of the ADE [PAS(KGE)] post in 2019, the PEO [PEO(KGE)] will oversee the continuous and smooth operation of the new policy after its full implementation. The main responsibilities and proposed job descriptions of the ADE [PAS(KGE)] post and the PEO [PEO(KGE)] post are at Enclosure 1.

10. The supernumerary ADE [PAS(KGE)] post will be put under the direct supervision of the Deputy Secretary of Professional Development and Special Education Branch, and the permanent PEO [PEO(KGE)] post will be under the direct supervision of the supernumerary ADE [PAS(KGE)] post.

NON-DIRECTORATE SUPPORT

11. The proposed posts of ADE [PAS(KGE)] and PEO [PEO(KGE)] will be supported by teams of non-directorate staff in the new KGE Division who carry out duties in relation to the implementation of the free quality KG education policy. The creation of one supernumerary ADE [PAS(KGE)] post and one permanent PEO

post is imminently needed to provide the necessary dedicated steer and support for the effective operation of the KGE Division. The organisation chart of EDB after the proposed creation of the posts is at Enclosure 2.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

12. We have critically examined the possible redeployment of existing directorate officers in EDB to take up the substantial work of planning and steering the implementation of the free quality KG education policy. Other directorate officers in EDB are already fully occupied with their own schedule. They are heavily committed in formulating, developing and reviewing policies, programmes and legislation in respect of education from kindergarten to tertiary level and overseeing the effective implementation of educational programmes in various aspects. Moreover, they have to closely follow up with various new initiatives and policies. There is no alternative better than the creation of one supernumerary ADE post and one permanent PEO post as proposed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. The proposed creation of the supernumerary ADE [PAS(KGE)] post and the permanent PEO post will incur an additional notional annual salary cost at mid-point of \$3,636,600 as follows -

Post	Notional annual salary cost at mid-point (\$)	No. of Posts
Assistant Director of Education	1,973,400	1
Principal Education Officer	1,663,200	1
Total	3,636,600	2

The additional full annual average staff cost of the proposal, including salaries and staff on-cost, is \$5,273,070.

14. We have included sufficient provision in the 2016-17 draft Estimates to meet the cost of the proposed creation of two directorate posts.

Job Description

Principal Assistant Secretary (Kindergarten Education)

Rank: Assistant Director of Education (D2)

Responsible to: Deputy Secretary for Education (3)

Main Duties and responsibilities

1. To provide steer in the formulation of specific details of the measures, planning the implementation strategy and overall preparation for the implementation of new free quality kindergarten (KG) education policy;
2. To steer the design, planning and implementation of the mechanism and systems for disbursement of funds and grants under the new policy;
3. To steer the formulation of the new rental subsidy scheme and the planning of the implementation details;
4. To steer the formulation of the mechanisms for monitoring the fee revisions and collection of fees;
5. To steer the design of the mechanisms for KGs' entry into, and exit from, the new subsidy scheme, and to steer the design and monitoring of the related service agreements and KGs' formation of school management committees;
6. To steer the design of strategies in enhancing KG teachers' professional development in respect of formulation of a Teacher Competencies Framework and a Principal Competencies Framework as well as development of a continuous professional development policy with appropriate targets;
7. To steer the improvements in physical accommodation and facilities for KG education, revision of the planning standards for provision of KG places and exploration of long-term measures in the supply of kindergarten premises;
8. To steer the promotion of parent education, setting up of Parent-Teacher Associations in KGs as well as enhancements in transparency in school

administration to facilitate parents' understanding of school policy and practices;

9. To derive strategies in promoting local researches on child development to facilitate the sustainable development of quality KG education;
10. To steer and oversee the implementation of new KG education policy in the early stage and communicate with relevant stakeholders on related issues;
11. To liaise with related bureaux/departments (e.g. Labour and Welfare Bureau, Rating and Valuation Department, Planning Department, etc.) in relation to the preparation for the new KG education policy and its implementation in the early stage; and
12. To serve as Division Head and oversee the work of new KG education.

Job Description

Principal Education Officer (Kindergarten Education)

Rank: Principal Education Officer (D1)

Responsible to: Principal Assistant Secretary (Kindergarten Education)

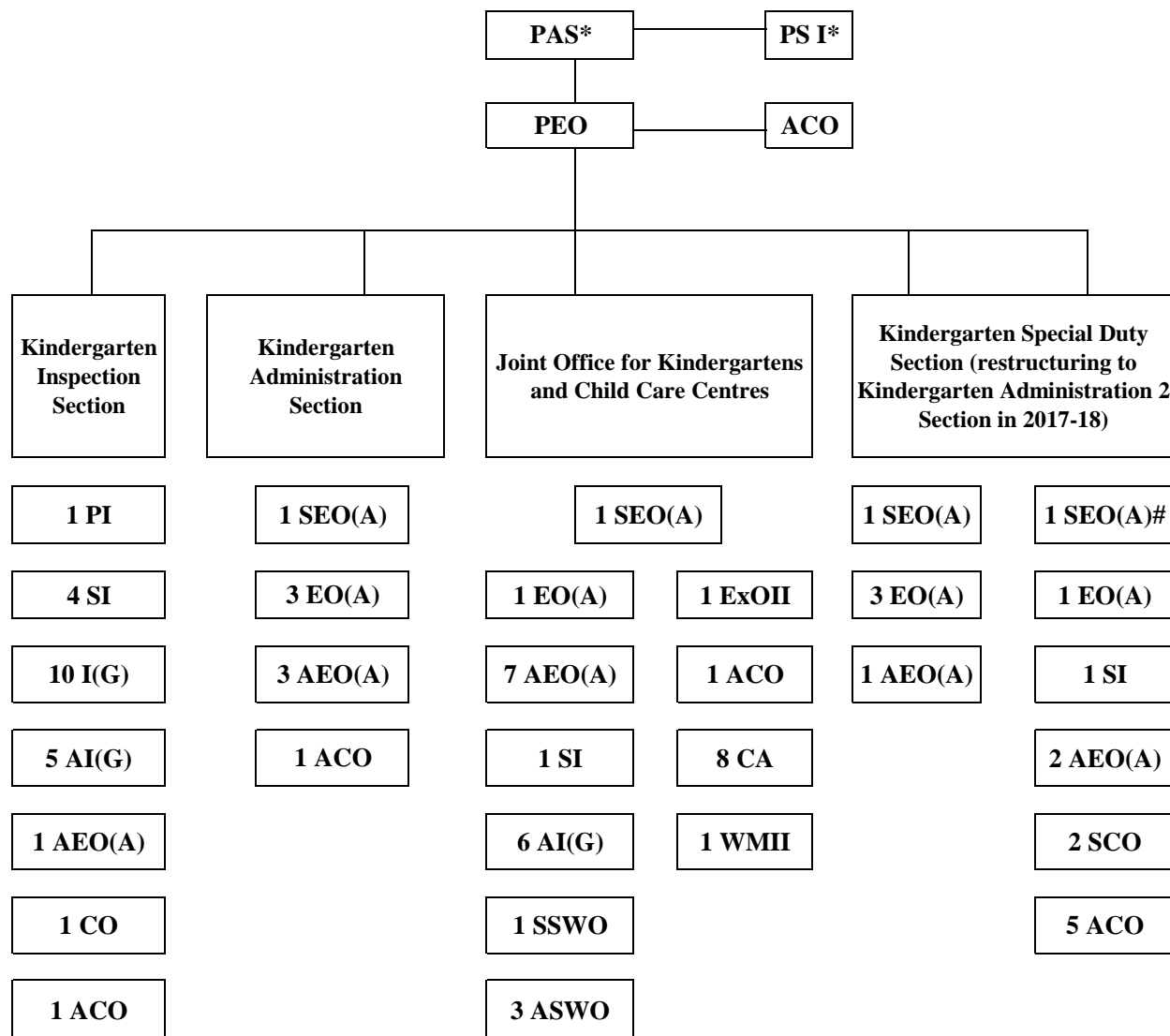
Main Duties and responsibilities

1. To assist the Principal Assistant Secretary to plan and steer in formulating specific details of measures, planning the implementation strategy and overall implementation of the new free quality kindergarten (KG) education policy;
2. To oversee the smooth operation of the policies and measures on free quality KG education including KGs' compliance with the requirements under new policy and as specified in the service agreements; operation of the entry and exit mechanism for KGs joining the new scheme;
3. To oversee the formulation of a Teacher Competencies Framework and a Principal Competencies Framework and development of a continuous professional development policy, oversee the smooth operation of these initiatives and explore strategies on further enhancements in teachers' professional development such as the long-term goal of raising the qualification requirement for KG teachers to degree level;
4. To oversee the smooth operation in disbursement of funds and grants, rental subsidy, administration of fee revision, collection of fees, etc.
5. To oversee and monitor the progress in improving the physical accommodation and facilities for KG education, revision of planning standard for provision of KG places and long-term measures in increasing the supply of kindergarten premises;
6. To oversee the promotion of parent education, setting up of Parent-teacher Associations in KGs and enhancements in transparency in school administration to facilitate parents' understanding of school policy and practices;
7. To oversee the progress of local researches on child development to

facilitate the sustainable development of KG education;

8. To liaise with major stakeholders, bureaux/departments concerned with a view to refining implementation details of various measures in relation to KG education in response to experiences in implementing the new policy and changing needs of the society;
9. To liaise with related bureaux/departments (e.g. Labour and Welfare Bureau, Rating and Valuation Department, Planning Department, etc.) in relation to the preparation for the new KG education policy and its smooth implementation; and
10. To carry out any other duties in relation to the planning and implementation of the new KG education policy.

Proposed Organisation Chart of Kindergarten Education (KGE) Division



Legend

PAS	Principal Assistant Secretary	SSWO	Senior Social Work Officer
PEO	Principal Education Officer	ASWO	Assistant Social Work Officer
PS I	Personal Secretary I	SCO	Senior Clerical Officer
SEO(A)	Senior Education Officer (Administration)	CO	Clerical Officer
EO(A)	Education Officer (Administration)	ACO	Assistant Clerical Officer
AEO(A)	Assistant Education Officer (Administration)	CA	Clerical Assistant
PI	Principal Inspector	WM II	Workman II
SI	Senior Inspector		
I(G)	Inspector (Graduate)		
AI(G)	Assistant Inspector (Graduate)		
ExO II	Executive Officer II		

* Time-limited post for three years

Time-limited post for one year

20 posts will be created in KGE Division in 2017-18 (including regrading of eight posts) to carry out various measures and new initiatives upon the full implementation of the new KG policy.