

For discussion on  
11 April 2016

## **Legislative Council Panel on Education**

### **Staff Establishment and Salary Structure in Primary Schools**

#### **PURPOSE**

This paper gives a brief account on the existing policy of establishment, teaching grades and salary structure for teaching staff in public sector primary schools.

#### **BACKGROUND**

2. The issue on teaching staff establishment in public sector primary schools was discussed at the Education Panel meeting on 9 February 2015 via Legislative Council (LC) Paper No. CB(4)457/14-15(01). The Education Bureau (EDB) also provided response to the LC Question No. 12 related to the promotion requirements and pay levels for teachers and principals in the primary and secondary schools on 24 June 2015.

#### **PROVISION OF TEACHING STAFF RESOURCES TO SCHOOLS**

3. As explained in the previous paper, under the existing policy and practices, public sector primary schools are provided with teaching staff resources through three major means :

- (a) regular teacher establishment computed according to the number of classes approved and the teacher-to-class ratio;
- (b) additional regular teachers provided under various initiatives; and
- (c) cash grants with deployment flexibility for meeting specific policy objectives.

4. Prior to the 2007/08 school year, the teacher-to-class ratio in public sector primary schools was 1.3 and 1.4 teachers per bi-sessional and whole-day class respectively. Taking into account the additional provision for supporting specialised teaching, the teacher-to-class ratio has been enhanced by 0.1 since the 2007/08 school year. At present, almost all public sector primary schools are whole-day operation.

5. On top of the teacher-to-class ratio, EDB has also been providing public sector primary schools with additional regular teachers to implement various measures for the improvement of primary education such as running class libraries, overseeing curriculum planning and management, providing guidance and counselling services for students, enhancing the English language environment and implementing integrated education, etc. Details of the additional teaching posts provided are at **Annex 1**.

6. To cater for the diversified educational needs of students and different school circumstances, it is our current practice to provide schools with cash grants in addition to the regular teacher establishment. Schools are allowed to optimise the flexibility in deployment of resources to cater for school-based needs through appointment of additional teachers outside the establishment and supporting staff or procurement of services to meet operational and quality service requirements. Details of the cash grants are at **Annex 2**.

## **TEACHING GRADES AND SALARY STRUCTURE**

7. To raise the status and professional standards of teachers for enhancement of the overall quality of education, EDB has enhanced the teaching grades over the years. For example, a new graduate grade of Primary School Master/Mistress/(PSM) grade was created within the teaching staff establishment in the 1994/95 school year. Following the announcement of the 2007 Policy Address that a new deputy head rank in the public sector primary schools should be created, the rank of Senior Primary School Master/Mistress (SPSM), a promotion rank for both the PSM rank and Assistant Master/Mistress (AM) rank of the Certificated Master/Mistress (CM) grade, was created in the 2008/09 school year. Based on the policy, a Primary School Master/Mistress (PSM) post was re-ranked to the SPSM rank for deputy heads in ordinary primary schools with 12-23 classes, and two PSM posts were re-ranked to the SPSM rank for deputy heads in ordinary primary

schools with 24 classes or more. With this provision, not only the quality of primary school education but also the promotion prospect of primary school teachers has been improved.

8. In tandem with the creation of senior posts, the ratio of graduate teacher posts has also been continuously improved to maintain the attractiveness of the career in primary education. In the 2001/02 school year, 35% of primary teaching posts were upgraded to graduate posts. The ratio was further improved to 45% in the 2008/09 school year and 50% in the 2009/10 school year. Further to the announcement of the 2015 Policy Address, the ratio of graduate teacher posts has been progressively improved from 50% starting from the 2015/16 school year to 65% in the 2017/18 school year.

9. All along, the salaries and other terms and conditions of appointments for aided school teachers are determined by the Codes of Aid and subject to rules and regulations issued by the EDB. It has been an established practice that the pay levels of individual teaching grades/ranks are dependent on objective factors such as entry requirements, academic qualifications, length of service, as well as the pay levels of other civil service grades/ranks with similar qualification requirements, recruitment situation of relevant grades/ranks. The current teaching grade structure and pay levels, which are determined after a number of factors have been considered and balanced, is operating smoothly with due regard to the development features of various ranks.

## **REQUESTS OF THE SCHOOL SECTOR**

### *Improvement of teacher-to-class ratio*

10. There are requests from the school sector and teachers' unions to increase the current teacher-to-class ratio from 1.5 teachers to 1.8 teachers per class, but the ground for such an increase is unclear. As mentioned in paragraph 3 above, it is worth noting that teacher-to-class ratio is only one of the parameters affecting the staffing situation of a school. It would be misleading to focus on the teacher-to-class ratio alone to measure the teaching staff resources which schools are entitled. Currently, almost all public sector primary schools are provided with 3 additional regular teachers, i.e. teacher

librarian, curriculum leader and native-speaking English teacher<sup>1</sup> to support the relevant policy initiatives. Besides, schools with different class sizes and student intakes are provided with different resources. For schools with a larger number of students with special educational needs (SEN), academic low achievements and non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students, they enjoy better provisions for giving the necessary support for these students. At present, more than half of the public sector primary schools are provided with additional regular teachers under the Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme (IRTP)<sup>2</sup> (about one-third have at least 2 regular teachers). Besides, about 40% of the public sector primary schools obtain more than \$0.6M of Learning Support Grant (LSG) in the 2015/16 school year. With the implementation of small class teaching (SCT)<sup>3</sup> starting from the 2009/10 school year, schools maintaining 30 students per class are provided with additional APSM posts. Due to the upsurge of primary school students in recent years, SCT schools which are allocated additional students at primary one (P1) are also provided with additional APSM posts and Additional Supplementary Learning Grant (ASLG) to support learning and teaching other than the additional funding for each additional student allocated above 30 per P1 class<sup>4</sup>. Under the principle of school-based management, schools have to plan and deploy all teaching staff provisions in a holistic manner to meet their contextualized needs.

11. To illustrate the actual staffing situation of individual schools, a few simulated examples are provided at **Annex 3** in which the additional teachers employed under various initiatives and the major cash grants, such as Capacity Enhancement Grant (CEG)<sup>5</sup> and LSG, are included on top of the basic teacher establishment. The number of teachers per class for different class sizes

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<sup>1</sup> A whole-day primary school with 3 or more ordinary classes is entitled to the provision of 1 teacher librarian; with 6 or more classes is entitled to the provision of 1 curriculum leader and 1 native-speaking English teacher.

<sup>2</sup> IRTP aims to provide more effective remedial support in learning for students with low academic achievement and learning difficulties. The size of each IRTP is 8 to 15 students who may come from different levels. With the introduction of Learning Support Grant, some schools have left the IRTP and receive the LSG to provide special support for needy students.

<sup>3</sup> Small class teaching (SCT) has been implemented progressively at P1 starting from the 2009/10 school year. The class size for SCT schools is 25 students per class. For schools maintaining 30 students per class, additional APSM posts will be provided by phases based on the total number of approved classes to facilitate the implementation of school-based measures that would enhance the quality of learning and teaching. A 24-class primary school is provided with additional 3 APSM posts.

<sup>4</sup> Take a school operating 4 classes at P1 as an example, if the school is allocated 2 additional students per class above 30, an additional funding for each of these additional student allocated would be provided to the school for the cohort of students for a period of 6 years, which is about \$0.32M per school year. This additional funding is also applicable to schools maintaining 30 students per class.

<sup>5</sup> CEG aims at enhancing schools' capacity in school development planning and implementing school-based initiative. It has become a recurrent provision since 2006. In the 2015/16 s.y. the grant for a 24-class primary school is about \$0.7 million and for a 18-class primary school, the CEG grant is about \$0.54 million.

ranges from 1.80 to 1.93.

12. While teacher-to-class ratio is considered as the key component for calculation of teaching staff resources in public sector schools in Hong Kong, it is a world-wide practice to adopt student-to-teacher ratio as an indicator of resources allocated for education and to measure teachers' workload. With the implementation of various initiatives such as specialised teaching and small class teaching, and provision of various recurrent cash grants to improve the quality of primary education in past years, the overall student-to-teacher ratio in public sector primary schools has improved progressively from 18.4:1 in the 2005/06 school year to 14.1:1 (revised estimate) in the 2015/16 school year which is comparable to most advanced countries.<sup>6</sup>

### Teachers Employed on Contract Term

13. The provision of cash grants to schools instead of posts is to give greater flexibility for schools to implement school-based initiatives and is welcome by the school management in general, but create more contract teachers. In the 2015/16 school year, out of the 19 400 teachers employed in public sector primary schools, there are around 1 600 teachers (8.2%) employed under cash grants. Since contract teachers are outside the schools' approved staff establishment, they are not eligible for the Grant/Subsidized Schools Provident Fund and may not be paid according to the salary scale of regular teachers. We note the concern about the job security and the present trend on the employment of contract teachers<sup>7</sup>.

14. All along, EDB has been encouraging schools to be good employers. In devising the duties, workload, salaries and contract period of contract teachers, schools should fully consider the relevant terms for comparable posts within the approved staff establishment to ensure that contract teachers would enjoy reasonable treatment, and try to provide a longer employment period for a more stable working environment in view of the fact that most of the cash grants are recurrent in nature. Besides, teacher wastage in the primary school sector has been relatively stable for the past few years, and there is room for new blood to be appointed as regular teachers. It is thus advisable for

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<sup>6</sup> According to the OECD Report 2015, student-to-teacher ratios in primary education in public institutions of United Kingdom is 25.9:1, United States is 16.0:1, Korea is 17.2:1, China is 16.3:1, and Japan is 17.4:1.

<sup>7</sup> Some schools also employ regular teachers on defined contract terms due to special reasons such as filling time-limited posts. All along, EDB has been monitoring the situation and request schools not to use it as a human resource management tool.

schools to establish school-based mechanism to provide contract teachers with opportunities to be appointed as regular teachers in an orderly manner. Given the concern on the job security and possible less than satisfactory treatment of contract teachers, EDB will consolidate the basic principles of being a good employer of contract teachers more systematically to be promulgated to the school sector in due course.

### Review of Salary Structure

15. There have been voices from the primary school sector that the pay levels for principals and graduate teachers in public sector primary schools, which are lower than those for their counterparts in secondary schools, should be increased. While various teaching grades have undergone different development processes, the pay levels of primary and secondary school teachers and principals are specific to the varying circumstances of individual grades. In fact, the grades and ranks of primary and secondary school teachers are determined with due regard to various factors, such as entry requirements, academic qualifications, length of service and duties. Given the differences between primary and secondary schools in terms of their curricula and operation, the variety of curriculum arrangement, students' diverse educational and developmental needs, the complexity of the public examination system, students' exit pathways, etc., the work nature, responsibilities and grade structures of principals and teachers of the primary and secondary schools are not the same. Hence, it is not appropriate to make a direct comparison of the work nature, duties and pay levels between primary and secondary school principals and teachers.

16. When considering whether the pay levels of individual teaching grades/ranks should be adjusted, apart from taking into account the above-mentioned objective factors, EDB also considers other factors, such as the remuneration of other civil service grades/ranks with similar qualification requirements, recruitment situation of relevant grades/ranks and the overall financial position of the Government. EDB has to balance the demands and concerns of various stakeholders prudently and make good use of resources in formulating and implementing practicable education policies as appropriate. Having considered all relevant factors, EDB has no plan to review the pay levels of primary school principals and teachers at this stage.

## WAY FORWARD

17. The Government is committed to enhancing the quality of education in Hong Kong. Over the years, EDB has improved the provision of teaching staff resources on a need basis and implemented a number of measures to enhance the teaching grade and remuneration of primary school principals and teachers in recognition of the challenges of school administration and demand on quality education. The unit cost for a subsidized primary school place has significantly increased by 110% from \$24,640 in the 2005-06 financial year to \$51,670 (revised estimate) in the 2014-15 financial year.

18. Education is the policy area which has always taken up the largest share of recurrent government expenditure (about 22% in the 2015-16 financial year). Due to the diverse student needs and school contexts (e.g. variation in the class size, number of students with special educational needs and non-Chinese speaking students, etc.), provision of the same resources across all schools in the territory is not well justified and any change in the teacher-to-class ratio will incur huge recurrent financial implications<sup>8</sup>. Given the constraint of government resources, there is a need to prioritise different policy initiatives within the government and different sectors within the education portfolio. How resources are deployed should be subject to the consultation with stakeholders of the whole community.

19. We will continue to keep in view all relevant factors including wastage rates and recruitment of both teachers and principals, provide support for schools to enhance their resources and personnel management, and seek additional resources through the established channel and procedures where justifiable.

Education Bureau  
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<sup>8</sup> An additional expenditure of about \$660M per annum will be incurred if the teacher-to-class ratio is increased by 0.1 for all levels of primary classes.

## Annex 1

### Additional Teaching Posts Provided to Public Sector Primary Schools under Specific Initiatives

School Year	Additional Teachers	Provision
1997/98	Additional Teacher for Integrated Education Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One additional teacher is provided to school to support integrated education.</li> </ul>
2000/01	Additional Teacher for the Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme (IRTP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One additional teacher per IRTP class is provided to school to enhance the learning efficiency of the academic low achievers.</li> </ul>
2001/02	Teacher Librarian	<p>One additional teacher is provided to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>each whole-day school with <math>\geq 3</math> approved ordinary classes;</li> <li>each bi-sessional school with <math>\geq 12</math> approved ordinary classes; and</li> <li>two bi-sessional schools housed in the same premises with a total of <math>\geq 12</math> approved ordinary classes.</li> </ul>
2002/03	Native-speaking English Teacher (NET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools with <math>\geq 6</math> approved classes are allocated with a NET post at the APSM rank.</li> </ul>
2006/07	Student Guidance Teacher (SGT)	<p>Enhancing the provision of SGT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For a school with <math>\geq 18</math> classes, 1 additional senior teacher is provided;</li> <li>For a school with 5 to 17 classes, 0.5 additional senior teacher is provided; and</li> <li>For a school with <math>&lt; 5</math> classes, the service is provided by Student Guidance Officer of EDB.</li> </ul>
2007/08	Primary School Curriculum Leader	<p>Regularising the additional Primary School Curriculum Leader post:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For a school with <math>\geq 12</math> approved classes: a permanent post at PSM rank is provided;</li> <li>For a school with 6 to 11 classes: a permanent post at APSM rank is provided; and</li> <li>For a school with <math>&lt; 6</math> classes, Curriculum Leadership Grant (CLG) is provided.</li> </ul>
2009/10	Additional teaching post(s) for schools maintaining 30 students per class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional teaching post(s) at APSM rank is/are provided for eligible primary schools by phases so that schools may adopt measures to enhance teaching and learning while maintaining 30 students per class.</li> </ul>



### Cash Grants Provided to Public Sector Primary Schools for Employing Additional Teaching/Ancillary Staff and/or to Hire Educational Services

Grant	Purpose and Ambit	Amount
Capacity Enhancement Grant <b>(CEG)</b> <b>(Recurrent)</b>	To hire outside services and/or employ personnel on a temporary basis outside the permanent staff establishment	The grant for a 24-class primary school is about \$0.7 million in 2015/16.
Learning Support Grant <b>(LSG)</b> <b>(Recurrent)</b>	To employ teachers or teaching assistants, hire professional services and/or purchase learning and teaching materials to support students with special educational needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic provision of \$160,836 per school per annum for the first 1 to 6 student(s) requiring tier-3 support;</li> <li>• A grant of \$26,806 per student per annum for the seventh and each of the other students requiring tier-3 support;</li> <li>• A grant of \$13,403 per annum for each student requiring tier-2 support; and</li> <li>• A ceiling at \$1,546,500 per school per annum.</li> </ul> <p>For primary schools, eligible academic low achievers will also be counted as students requiring tier-2 support in calculation of the grant.</p>
Top-up Student Guidance Service Grant <b>(Recurrent)</b>	To appoint student guidance personnel or hire additional student guidance services aiming at enhancing the capacity of schools in student guidance services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic provision of \$16,678 per annum for schools with 5 classes and 18 classes;</li> <li>• A grant of \$16,678 per annum per each additional class (starting from the 5th class for 5 to 17 classes; starting from the 18th class for 18 classes or more)</li> </ul> <p>The grant for a 24-class primary school is about \$0.12 million in 2015/16.</p>
Enhanced funding support to schools admitting Non-Chinese Speaking Students (NCS) <b>(Recurrent)</b>	To facilitate the implementation of the “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework” in primary and secondary schools and the creation of an inclusive learning environment in schools to support NCS students in learning Chinese.	<p>Starting from the 2014/15 school year, all public sector schools and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools offering local curriculum and admitting 10 or more NCS students will be provided with an annual additional funding as set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 - 25 students: \$0.80M</li> <li>• 26 – 50 students: \$0.95M</li> <li>• 51 – 75 students: \$1.10M</li> <li>• 76 – 90 students: \$1.25M</li> <li>• 91 or more students: \$1.50M</li> </ul>

<b>Grant</b>	<b>Purpose and Ambit</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Additional Supplementary Learning Grant (ASLG)	On top of the existing enhanced support, the EDB has, starting from the 2015/16 school year, provided eligible schools implementing SCT with the ASLG when they are temporarily allocated more students per P1 class up to a total of 30 students per class for the cohort of students concerned for a period of 6 years in order to maintain the learning effectiveness.	Schools able to retain an average of 28 or more students per class as at headcount date of the respective school year will be provided with ASLG at the rate of \$13,403 (in the 2015/16 school year) per eligible student, starting from the 26 <sup>th</sup> student and capped at the 30 <sup>th</sup> student. The grant will be adjusted by the June-on-June movement of the Composite Consumer Price Index (CCPI) each year.

## Annex 3

### Examples of Staffing Situation in Aided Primary Schools in 2015/16

*For a whole-day 18-class SCT school (with 2 classes of IRTP)*

		No. of teachers provided <sup>9</sup>	
Basic entitlement (Teacher for Specialised Teaching included)		<b>27.0</b>	
Number of additional regular teachers for specific schools / improvement programmes	Teacher Librarian	1	<b>6</b>
	Curriculum Leader	1	
	School-based Student Guidance Teacher	1	
	Native-speaking English Teacher	1	
	IRTP	2	
Estimated number of additional teaching staff employed by CEG <sup>10</sup>		<b>1.3 CMs</b>	
<b>Total:</b>		<b>34.3</b>	
<b>Overall teacher-to-class ratio:</b>		<b>1.91</b>	

*For a whole-day 24-class SCT school (with 2 classes of IRTP)*

		No. of teachers provided <sup>9</sup>	
Basic entitlement (Teacher for Specialised Teaching included)		<b>36.0</b>	
Number of additional regular teachers for specific schools / improvement programmes	Teacher Librarian	1	<b>6</b>
	Curriculum Leader	1	
	School-based Student Guidance Teacher	1	
	Native-speaking English Teacher	1	
	IRTP	2	
Estimated number of additional teaching staff employed by CEG <sup>10</sup>		<b>1.7 CMs</b>	
<b>Total:</b>		<b>43.7</b>	
<b>Overall teacher-to-class ratio:</b>		<b>1.82</b>	

<sup>9</sup> The principal is excluded from the calculation of teacher establishment.

<sup>10</sup> The total amount of CEG is about \$0.54M and \$0.70M for a 18-class school and a 24-class school respectively, which can employ 1.3 CMs and 1.7 CMs paid at the mid-point salary of \$32,560 in 2015/16.

For a whole-day 24-class non-SCT school (with provision of LSG)

		<b>No. of teachers provided<sup>9</sup></b>	
Basic entitlement (Teacher for Specialised Teaching included)		<b>36.0</b>	
Number of additional regular teachers for specific schools / improvement programmes	Teacher Librarian	1	<b>7</b>
	Curriculum Leader	1	
	School-based Student Guidance Teacher	1	
	Native-speaking English Teacher	1	
	Additional APSMs for schools maintaining 30 students per class	3	
Estimated number of additional teaching staff employed by CEG and LSG <sup>11</sup>		<b>3.2 CMs</b>	
<b>Total:</b>		<b>46.2</b>	
<b>Overall teacher-to-class ratio:</b>		<b>1.93</b>	

For a whole-day 30-class SCT school (with provision of LSG and allocation of additional P1 students)

		<b>No. of teachers provided<sup>9</sup></b>	
Basic entitlement (Teacher for Specialised Teaching included)		<b>45.0</b>	
Number of additional regular teachers for specific schools / improvement programmes	Teacher Librarian	1	<b>5</b>
	Curriculum Leader	1	
	School-based Student Guidance Teacher	1	
	Native-speaking English Teacher	1	
	Additional APSMs for schools maintaining 30 students per class	1	
Estimated number of additional teaching staff employed by CEG, ASLG and LSG <sup>12</sup>		<b>4.0 CMs</b>	
<b>Total:</b>		<b>54.0</b>	
<b>Overall teacher-to-class ratio:</b>		<b>1.80</b>	

<sup>11</sup> The total amount of CEG for a 24-class school is about \$0.70M and assuming that the school receives \$0.60M for LSG to support students with special educational needs. The school can employ 3.2 CMs paid at mid-point salary.

<sup>12</sup> The total amount of CEG and ASLG is about \$0.70M and \$0.34M respectively for a 30-class SCT school with allocation of additional 25 P1 students. Assuming that the school receives \$0.60M for LSG to support students with special educational needs, the school can employ 4.0 CMs paid at mid-point salary.