

For Discussion on  
2 July 2016

## **Panel on Education**

### **Overall Development of Education in Hong Kong**

#### **Introduction**

Nurturing of talent starts with education. The vision and mission of our education policies is to offer all-round and balanced learning opportunities for our students, so as to tap their potential for whole person development and lay the foundation for lifelong learning, so that they can learn successfully and apply what they have learnt, and contribute to Hong Kong and our country.

2. The ensuing paragraphs highlight the relevant developments in education and policy initiatives of the Education Bureau (EDB) in the past two years or so.

#### **Migration to Free Quality Kindergarten Education**

3. Kindergarten (KG) education is crucial in laying the foundation of children's balanced development and life-long learning. As all KGs in Hong Kong are privately run, the KG sector is characterised by a high level of flexibility in operation, diversity, vibrancy and timely responsiveness to changing needs of the society. To alleviate the financial burden on parents and enhancing the quality of KG education, the Government introduced the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) in 2007. The rationale is to enable all school-age children to receive affordable and quality KG education through enhancing parental choice, boosting professional development of teacher and stepping up quality assurance.

4. Starting from the 2017/18 school year, the Government will implement the free quality KG education policy to replace PEVS. This will extend the current 12 years of free education to 15. 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. Government's investment in KG education will substantially increase under the new policy. The annual recurrent expenditure is estimated to be about \$6.7 billion in the 2017/18 school year.

5. Under the new policy, eligible local non-profit-making KGs will be provided with a basic subsidy for the provision of three-year quality half-day service for all eligible children. Existing evidence from researches and studies precludes drawing conclusions that whole-day programmes are more favorable to young children than half-day programmes. Studies show that family education plays a crucial and complementary role in shaping young children. Notwithstanding this, to unleash the potential of the local labour force under the population policy, additional resources will be provided for eligible KGs offering whole-day and long whole-day services to encourage them to offer more such services at a more affordable rate. The subsidy rate for whole-day and long whole-day services is set at 30% and 60% of the half-day unit subsidy respectively. For all eligible KGs, additional grants will be provided to cater for the special circumstances of individual KGs as necessary, for example, rental subsidy, premises maintenance grant, grant for cook, support for non-Chinese speaking students, etc.

6. To ensure that no child will be denied access to KG education due to a lack of financial means, fee remission will continue to be provided under the existing Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme for needy families which can pass the means test of the Student Finance Office (SFO) of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency.

7. With the substantial investment in KGs, we will improve the quality of KG education in various aspects through the following measures -

- (i) further improving the teacher-pupil ratio to 1:11 (excluding the principal) so as to strengthen the support for students with diverse needs. We will encourage KGs to establish a career ladder and provide competitive remuneration to retain and attract quality teachers. In this connection, KGs will be required to remunerate teachers within the salary range provided by EDB;
- (ii) reviewing the Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum, taking into consideration the experience of learning and teaching in KGs, the changes of society and future needs;
- (iii) refining the Quality Assurance Framework; enhancing the governance and transparency of KGs, and the Government will step up monitoring;

- (iv) strengthening the support for students from needy families, non-Chinese speaking students, and students with diverse learning needs;
- (v) enhancing parent engagement and parent education; and
- (vi) improving school premises and facilities, and exploring feasible measures to increase the provision of KG premises in the long run.

8. Besides, to 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.

## **Meeting Challenges in Primary and Secondary Education**

### *Career and Life Planning Education*

9. To help students explore their future career and life goals according to their interest and potential, the Chief Executive announced in the 2014 Policy Address measures to strengthen support to schools in implementing life planning education. The recurrent Career and Life Planning Grant has been provided to all eligible public sector and direct subsidy school (DSS) secondary schools with effect from the 2014/15 school year. In tandem, EDB has been encouraging more business organisations and government departments to collaborate with schools under the Business School Partnership Programme (BSPP) to support students in exploring their career interest.

10. Both life planning education and BSPP are progressing well. Engagement with stakeholders within the schools, parents, business organisations and the community at large will be stepped up with a view to nurturing the culture of supporting the young generation in life planning. From September 2015 to end of May 2016, 125 companies and organisations have collaborated with EDB in organising over 740 BSPP activities involving some 220 000 student participants.

### *Measures to Foster Home-school Co-operation*

11. Home-school co-operation is of utmost importance in supporting parents to guide their children towards whole-person development. The Committee on Home-School Co-operation has been supported by EDB in

promoting home-school co-operation and financial support has been provided to schools/Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) in schools and District Federations of PTAs in organising relevant activities for nurturing students' positive values and teaching parenting skills. As parents' positive involvement and support could reinforce and consolidate the value-adding processes of school education, EDB will explore means to further strengthen home-school co-operation.

*Measures to Stabilise the School Sector and the Teaching Force in Light of Fluctuation of Student Population, and to Meet the Demand of Cross-Boundary Students*

12. To stabilise the sector and facilitate sustainable development of secondary schools amidst the transient decline of S1 students, a series of relief measures have been implemented in public sector secondary schools. They include, among others, the Voluntary Optimization of Class Structure Scheme, a district-/school-based progressive reduction of the number of students allocated per Secondary 1 (S1) class from 2013/14 to 2015/16 and extending the retention period from 1 year to 3 years for surplus teachers arising from packing of S1 classes from 2013/14 to 2015/16. As further announced in the 2016 Policy Address, the retention period of the surplus teachers in aided secondary schools with S1 classes reduced in the 2013/14 and 2014/15 school years may be extended up to the end of 2017/18 school year. The number of S1 students is projected to rebound steadily starting from 2017/18.

13. To alleviate the impact of the projected transient upsurge of demand for Primary 1 (P1) places up to 2018/19, which is mainly due to the rapid increase in Type II babies (i.e. babies born to Mainland women in Hong Kong and whose parents are non-permanent residents of Hong Kong) during 2006 to 2013 before the implementation of the “zero delivery quota” policy in 2013, including cross-boundary students (CBS)<sup>1</sup>, EDB has implemented the revised arrangement for the Central Allocation under the Primary One Admission System. In brief, parents of applicant

---

<sup>1</sup>There are schools in Shenzhen offering Hong Kong curriculum under the Scheme of Classes for Hong Kong Students in Shenzhen, including two schools for Hong Kong children. The number of schools has increased from nine in the 2014/15 school year to 11 in the 2015/16 school year, with the number of students increasing from 2 200 to about 3 100.

To cater for the transportation needs of CBS of tender age, the special quota for cross-boundary school coaches has been increased from 170 in the 2014/15 school year to 220 in the 2015/16 school year.

children residing in the Mainland are provided with a separate Choice of Schools List for the Central Allocation which consists of all schools in the School Nets close to the boundary control points as well as individual schools in other districts having CBS and are ready and willing to support CBS. In parallel, EDB and the school sector have reached a consensus that construction of new schools to meet the projected transient increase in demand should be avoided as far as possible. Instead, flexible arrangements should be adopted to increase the supply of P1 places during the transitional period, which include, among others, borrowing school places from other districts, making use of vacant classrooms, temporarily allocating more students to each P1 class with additional resources provided to eligible schools concerned to safeguard the learning effectiveness of students.

#### *Measures to Enhance Quality of Education*

14. To attract talent to join the teaching profession and enhance the overall quality of primary education, the ratio of graduate teacher posts in public sector primary schools will be increased to 65% by phases in three years starting from the 2015/16 school year.

15. To enhance the implementation of the senior secondary curriculum and strengthen life planning education and related guidance services, schools may turn the existing Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant as well as Career and Life Planning Grant into regular teaching posts starting from the 2016/17 school year. It is expected that about 1 000 additional regular teaching posts will be created.

#### *Measures to Lighten Administrative Burden of Teachers*

16. We have all along attached great importance to the issue of teachers' workload and have implemented measures to relieve teachers' administrative work. Starting from the 2014/15 school year, public sector primary schools are provided with a recurrent cash grant equivalent to the salary of a Clerical Assistant to help schools cope with the additional administrative and clerical work related to the implementation of new initiatives. The Pilot Project on Strengthening Schools' Administration Management has been implemented to help schools strengthen school administration, streamline procedures and enhance efficiency since the 2011/12 school year.

17. Premised on the successful experiences of the participating schools and school sponsoring bodies, and to facilitate the remaining

schools to kick-start their administrative re-engineering process, a one-off cash grant at \$250,000 was provided to all non-participating public sector and DSS schools in March 2016 to enable them to initiate improvement measures for enhancing school administration management and to unleash teachers' capacity.

### *Teachers' Professional Development*

18. In the area of teachers' professional development, the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals has published its first Progress Report in April 2015. As the first phase of work, two areas of focus under the overarching project T-excel@hk have been launched: (a) conducting a territory-wide system survey on professional development needs of teachers and principals to inform the design and delivery of initial teacher education and continuing professional development (CPD) programmes. Survey results are expected to be released in the third quarter of 2016; and (b) formulating professional standards for teachers and principals to provide a clear reference for teachers' CPD and school leadership development. The draft standards are expected to be released in late 2016 for consultation.

### *Exchanges with the Mainland*

19. With effect from the 2015/16 school year, we have launched a three-year pilot scheme whereby financial and professional support would be provided to local public sector and DSS schools that have formed sister schools with their counterparts in the Mainland to support the multifaceted development of the relevant activities. As at the end of June 2016, over 310 schools have applied to participate in the pilot scheme and the feedback was positive.

20. In line with the policy target of subsidising students to join at least one Mainland exchange programme each in the primary and secondary stages, EDB will continue to adopt a variety of strategies to further enhance the quality and quantity of the programmes concerned. With the number of subsidised quotas increased to about 75 000 in the 2015/16 school year, more students will be able to join the Mainland exchange activities.

### *Gifted Education*

21. EDB has been attaching great importance to the nurturing of gifted students. We have been actively supporting schools and teachers

to cater for such students. In particular, we have established the Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education in 2008, to provide off-site programmes for students with exceptional talents, and to promote the concepts and practices of gifted education to support teachers and parents.

22. As announced in the 2016 Policy Address, we plan to set up an \$800 million Gifted Education Fund in 2016/17 to nurture more gifted students to enrich the talent pool and strengthen the competitiveness of Hong Kong. The Finance Committee considered the funding proposal at its meeting held on 24 June, and would continue to do so on 28 June.

### *Schools for Social Development*

23. In the 2015/16 school year, all Schools for Social Development (SSD) serve as “Special School cum Resource Centres (SSD)” to provide support for their leavers in their first year of returning to ordinary schools and for the ordinary schools concerned, so as to facilitate the smooth integration of these students into the school life.

### **Curriculum Development and the New Academic Structure**

24. EDB also attaches great importance to providing quality education to students to nurture their lifelong learning capabilities of “learning to learn” so that they can face challenges ahead. At the same time, we aim to enable our students to attain all-round development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physical development, social skills and aesthetics, nurture them to possess positive values and attitudes as well as develop their potentials according to own interests and attributes, fulfill their aspirations and in turn make contributions to society.

25. The Curriculum Development Council (CDC) prepared the *Basic Education Curriculum Guide (Primary 1-Secondary 3)* and various Key Learning Area (KLA) curriculum guides in 2002 and implemented the four key tasks (Moral, Civic and National Education, Reading to Learn, Project Learning and Information Technology for Interactive Learning) to help students acquire necessary knowledge, independent learning skills as well as positive values and attitudes for lifelong learning.

26. As early as 2007, the CDC and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) had jointly issued the curriculum and assessment guides for various senior secondary subjects. With the implementation of the New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum in

Secondary 4 (S4) from September 2009, the New Academic Structure (NAS) includes three-year junior secondary and three-year senior secondary education as well as four-year undergraduate programmes. In the NSS curriculum, other than the four core subjects including Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies, senior secondary students can choose two or three elective subjects according to their interests and abilities. In line with the promotion of vocational and professional education and training (VPET), more than 30 Applied Learning (ApL) courses on offer annually apart, starting from the 2016/17 school year, full subsidy will be provided for senior secondary students to take a maximum of two ApL courses.

27. The EDB, CDC, and HKEAA jointly conducted the NAS Review from 2012 to 2015 and implemented relevant recommendations. After extensive consultation with different stakeholders, a range of recommendations as well as support measures of the short-term and medium-term review were implemented by stages from April 2013. These include increasing the flexibility of lesson time, trimming, streamlining or updating curriculum contents, streamlining School-based Assessment, etc to release more space for students and teachers to enhance learning and teaching effectiveness. Secondary 6 graduates gained important knowledge, skills and attitudes through the senior secondary curriculum that had positive impacts on their further studies and personal development, as reflected by the graduates themselves as well as tertiary institutions and employers. Some employers also spoke positively about the graduates' initiative, drive, commitment to their work, etc.

28. After the completion of the NAS Review, the curriculum development in primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong has advanced into a new phase of ongoing renewal. Building on the accomplishments achieved, we have to keep the curriculum in line with the latest developments to equip our students to face the fast-changing local and global challenges ahead. "To deepen, sustain and focus on" the accomplishments achieved have been set as the major direction of the "Learning to Learn 2.0". The *Basic Education Curriculum Guide (Primary 1-6)* was updated in 2014, and the *Secondary Education Curriculum Guide* and KLA curriculum guides are being updated. Schools are recommended to implement the key emphases according to their school contexts and needs of students. These key emphases include promoting science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education, information literacy, e-learning, reading across the curriculum, values education, etc. STEM education learning activities



will provide platforms for students to take their initiative to construct and apply knowledge, while mastery of information technology (IT) skills will unleash various students' potentials. These are conducive to nurturing students' self-directed learning capabilities to help them face the challenges in the future. STEM education has been included in the "Priority Themes" of the Quality Education Fund to encourage innovativeness in schools.

29. STEM education is promoted through the Science, Technology and Mathematics Education KLAs in the primary and secondary school curriculum to strengthen students' integration and application of knowledge and skills. The curriculum guides of the Science, Technology and Mathematics Education KLAs are being updated to keep abreast with the latest developments in science and technology, and to strengthen "hands-on and minds-on" activities for students to solve daily life problems for enhancing their innovativeness.

30. In parallel, the provisions of learning and teaching resources and professional development programmes (PDPs) for teachers will also be enhanced. STEM Symposia were held in July and November 2015 to share the latest development on STEM education, and the "Student Education Fair" was organised in January 2016 to showcase student achievements on STEM-related areas and promote exchange among schools and students. In March 2016, a one-off grant of \$100,000 per primary school was also provided for purchasing equipment and resource materials and organising learning activities, etc to promote STEM education according to schools' context. To provide students with more learning opportunities related to STEM education and strengthen their ability to integrate and apply what they have learned, we will continue to strengthen collaboration with tertiary institutions and professional bodies.

31. We are committed to promoting the application of IT to enhance learning and teaching effectiveness in order to enable our students to learn how to learn and excel. We launched the "Fourth Strategy on IT in Education" (ITE4) in the 2015/16 school year with the major initiative of setting up WiFi campus in around 1 000 public sector primary and secondary schools round the territory by phases to facilitate teachers' use of mobile computing devices for e-learning at class. As at the current school year, around half of the schools have completed the related works. We expect that the remaining works will be completed in the next two school years. Other initiatives under the ITE4 including increasing the supply of quality e-learning resources, enhancing PDPs for school leaders and teachers on the practice of e-learning, etc have also been rolled out as

scheduled.

32. We have already launched programming education in primary and secondary schools. At the primary level, apart from updating the modules of “Computer Awareness Programme” in 2015 to include elements of various computer languages and tools, it is also planned to update the curriculum to include coding elements and is expected to be implemented in the 2017/18 school year. We also recommend schools to allocate not less than 30% of the time in the knowledge context of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at the junior secondary level to teaching coding. The programming contents have been strengthened in the updated ICT subject curriculum at the senior secondary level, which will be implemented in Secondary 4 from the 2016/17 school year. From the 2016/17 school year onwards, we will provide PDPs on computational thinking, coding/programming, Apps development, etc for primary and secondary school teachers to enhance the promotion of IT in education. To align with the above updates on curriculum, we will provide PDPs and learning and teaching resources to help schools implement relevant initiatives.

### **Multiple Pathways for Secondary School Graduates**

33. It is the Government’s policy to support the parallel development of the publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary education sectors. In terms of opportunities for further study, the Government is committed to providing our young people with quality and diversified study pathways with multiple entry and exit points. The availability of programmes at different levels and in a broad range of disciplines helps realise the policy objectives of lifelong learning and nurturing of diverse talents.

34. At present, there are 20 local degree-awarding higher education institutions in Hong Kong, including eight University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities, the publicly-funded Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and 11 self-financing institutions. There are also 20 institutions providing full-time locally-accredited self-financing sub-degree programmes. A total of about 300 undergraduate programmes and 400 sub-degree programmes in various disciplines are provided in the 2015/16 academic year. Besides, secondary school graduates may choose from a number of other options, such as the Diploma Yi Jin programme, Diploma of Foundation Studies, non-local courses operated in Hong Kong, etc. that best suit their aspirations and abilities. Students may also choose to study in the Mainland or abroad.

35. Through the development of the local publicly-funded and self-financing sectors, about 46% of our young people in the relevant age cohort now have access to degree-level education. Even if only publicly-funded undergraduate programmes are counted, the corresponding figure has increased from around 18% in the 2005/06 academic year to around 26% in the 2015/16 academic year. Including sub-degree education, about 70% of them have access to post-secondary education. Specifically, the number of students enrolling in full-time locally-accredited self-financing sub-degree programmes has slightly increased from about 33 300 in the 2005/06 academic year to about 37 000 in the 2015/16 academic year; the number of students enrolling in full-time locally-accredited self-financing first-year-first-degree programmes has increased significantly from about 3 600 to about 24 300 over the same period of time.

### **Hong Kong as a Regional Education Hub**

36. Hong Kong has all along been striving to become a regional education hub. Our aim is to nurture talents for our industries and attract outstanding people from around the world, boosting Hong Kong's competitiveness and facilitating the long term development of Hong Kong, Pearl River Delta region and the nation as a whole.

37. Since 2008, we have introduced a series of measures to promote internationalisation of our higher education sector. Our efforts have started to bear fruit. In the 2014/15 academic year, about 31 700 non-local students from more than 70 countries or regions came to Hong Kong for post-secondary studies. Moreover, there were about 5 600 incoming students on exchange in our publicly-funded institutions and about 6 200 students taking part in exchange activities outside Hong Kong in the same year, i.e. around one out of four of our undergraduate students had the opportunity to go on exchange during their study period.

### **New Developments in Higher Education and VPET**

#### *University status*

38. In January 2016, the Chief Executive in Council agreed that the former Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) had attained the attributes and qualities commonly expected from a university. Following the passage of relevant legislative amendments, the HKIEd changed its name to "The Education University of Hong Kong" on 27

May 2016 and became the 10th university and 8th publicly-funded university in Hong Kong. The fact that there has been a steady increase in the number of institutions recognised as worthy of university status testifies to the formidable developments of the higher education sector over the years.

39. As regards the self-financing sector, taking into account the aspirations of some more mature self-financing post-secondary education institutions registered under the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320) to become private universities as well as the development and changing landscape of the higher education sector in recent years, the Education Bureau promulgated in July 2015 the Roadmap for Becoming a Private University to provide clearer criteria for these institutions to follow in acquiring university title.

### *Promoting VPET*

40. The Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education (Task Force) submitted its report in July 2015 to recommend a three-pronged strategy to promote vocational education and training (VET). As announced in the Policy Address 2016, the Government has accepted all 27 recommendations made by the Task Force. We have since then rebranded VET to VPET, and are actively implementing other recommendations on strengthening the promotion of VPET and sustaining efforts. Separately, we intend to earmark a site in the urban district to develop a VTC campus with adequate capacity and state-of-art facilities, in order to enhance the professional image and quality of VPET.

41. Through a series of stepped-up efforts in promoting VPET, we endeavour to engineer a paradigm shift in the community to recognise VPET as a valued choice for those who have good potential to develop in the relevant disciplines<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> For example, in the 2015/16 academic year, the Testing and Certification Industry joined the Pilot Training and Support Scheme (PTSS) implemented by VTC. The Government has decided to extend the PTSS, benefitting about 4 000 students for four cohorts with a total commitment of \$288 million. We shall also implement a pilot scheme providing tuition fee subsidy for students admitted to VTC's designated professional part-time programmes of the Construction, Engineering and Technology fields. The pilot scheme will be implemented from the 2016/17 academic year. It is estimated that the scheme will benefit around 5 600 students in total for three cohorts with a total non-recurrent expenditure of \$200 million.

### *Enhancing Governance and Quality Assurance*

42. Following extensive consultation and consultancy study, the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education promulgated the Code of Good Practices on Governance and Quality Assurance for Self-financing Post-secondary Education Sector in June 2015, accepted by the Education Bureau, for all self-financing post-secondary institutions to adopt on a voluntary basis. The Code covers areas of institutional governance, programme design and delivery, and staff, other resources and student support. Implementation of the Code will enhance the quality, transparency and sustainable development of the self-financing post-secondary education sector.

43. As regards the UGC-funded sector, the Education Bureau invited the UGC in 2013 to embark on a study on governance of UGC-funded institutions with a view to aiming at higher goals of institutional governance, particularly in terms of governance practices. The study aimed at identifying some international good practices in the governance of higher education institutions, with which pointers and advice were drawn up to help enhance the effectiveness of the governing councils of UGC-funded institutions and also to better equip council members with the necessary knowledge, skills and protocol for the proper discharge of their duties. The recommendations of the study have been endorsed by the EDB and the UGC has been invited to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the report in consultation with its funded universities.

### *Increasing Articulation Opportunities*

44. Bearing in mind the shrinking population of Secondary 6 leavers from about 62 000 in 2014 to 42 700 in 2022, the Government has been planning cautiously on the provision of subsidised higher education opportunities, with due emphasis on both quality and quantity. Following the announcement in the Policy Address 2014, a series of initiatives are being pursued to provide secondary school leavers with broader and more diversified articulation pathways both in and outside Hong Kong. These initiatives include, among others –

- (a) progressively increasing the number of UGC-funded senior year undergraduate intake places by another 1 000, i.e. from 4 000 to 5 000 places per annum;

- (b) introducing a new scheme to subsidise around 1 000 students per cohort to pursue self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines to meet Hong Kong's manpower needs. The scheme has subsequently been named as the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors;
- (c) launching the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme (MUSSS) to support needy students pursuing studies under the Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions; and
- (d) introducing the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme to support up to 100 outstanding local students each cohort to pursue studies in renowned universities outside Hong Kong.

45. To render better financial support to needy students and ensure that no student is deprived of post-secondary education opportunities due to a lack of means, the Government has advanced the review of MUSSS as to how to expand its scope and introduced enhancement measures to the scheme. Starting from the 2016/17 academic year, MUSSS will be expanded to benefit all needy Hong Kong students pursuing undergraduate studies at 155 designated Mainland institutions, irrespective of the channel of their admission to the institutions.

46. To widen the choices of articulation for sub-degree graduates, EDB helped open up the gateway for study in the Mainland through a pilot scheme for articulation to top-up degree programmes offered by Huaqiao University in the Fujian Province. The scheme was announced in March 2016 and is on pilot run for two cohorts of students admitted in the 2016/17 and 2017/18 academic years.

### *Recognising Excellence*

47. The HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund (GSF) was established in 2008 to attract outstanding local students to advance their studies at home, and meritorious non-local students to pursue higher education opportunities in Hong Kong. The Self-financing Post-secondary Scholarship Scheme (SPSS) was established in 2011 to recognise students pursuing full-time locally accredited self-financing post-secondary programmes with achievement in academic and extra-curricular fields. Both GSF and SPSS also give recognition to deserving post-secondary students with special educational needs.

48. To date, over 15 000 awards/scholarships have been granted under GSF for over \$417 million; and over 16 100 awards/scholarships have been bestowed under SPSS for over \$308 million.

### **Education for Students with Special Educational Needs**

49. The Government is adopting a dual-track mode in implementing special education. Specifically, EDB will, subject to the assessment and recommendation of specialists and upon parents' consent, refer students with more severe or multiple disabilities to special schools for intensive support services. Other students with special education needs (SEN) may attend ordinary schools.

#### *Education Services in Special Schools*

50. To cater for the intensive support needs of the students concerned, special schools operate with smaller class sizes. Apart from better teacher to student ratio, special schools are also provided with various types of specialist staff, such as speech therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, educational psychologists, school social workers, resource teachers for autistic students, etc. depending on the types of students with SEN they are serving.

#### *Support for Students with SEN in Ordinary Schools*

51. Ordinary schools are encouraged to implement the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education (IE), under which an inclusive culture, policy and practices are developed to support students with SEN through a 3-Tier Intervention Model, taking into account their need and the tier of support required.

52. Additional resources, including Learning Support Grant (LSG), Enhanced Speech Therapy Grant, etc. are provided. The estimated additional expenditures on support and services provided for public sector primary and secondary schools in catering for students with SEN in the 2015/16 school year is \$1,315 million which represents an increase by around 53% as compared to the expenditure of \$859 million in the 2008/09 school year. The professional staff of EDB pay regular visits to schools to render professional advice. Also, educational psychologists, audiologists and speech therapists provide case assessment, consultation and professional support services for schools.

53. EDB has implemented a teacher professional development framework on IE since the 2007/08 school year. Under the framework,

structured training courses pitched at three levels, i.e. Basic, Advanced and Thematic levels, are conducted for serving teachers and training targets are set.

54. Major improvement measures to enhance the support for students with SEN in special and ordinary schools over the past two school years mainly include improving staff establishment and increasing grants. More enhancement measures are in the pipeline for implementation in the coming years. For example, school-based educational psychology service will be further enhanced, by progressively improving the ratio of educational psychologist to school to 1:4 for public sector primary and secondary schools with a large number of students with SEN.

### **Enhancing Support for Ethnic Minority Students in Learning Chinese**

55. Education policy needs to tie in with the changing needs of the society. With the increasing population of the ethnic minorities, the Government, in 2014, announced a series of enhanced support measures to step up the support for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students<sup>3</sup> to facilitate their effective learning of the Chinese language and the creation of an inclusive learning environment in schools, as well as their early adaptation to the local education system and integration into the society.

56. EDB has, starting from the 2014/15 school year, implemented the “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework” (“Learning Framework”) in primary and secondary schools. The “Learning Framework” is developed from the perspective of second language learners to help NCS students overcome the difficulties of learning Chinese as a second language with a view to facilitating their effective learning of Chinese and enabling them to bridge over to mainstream Chinese Language classes.

57. To facilitate implementation of the “Learning Framework”, EDB has significantly increased the additional funding to schools to about \$200 million per year to step up the support for NCS students in learning the Chinese language. Schools admitting 10 or more NCS students are provided with an additional funding ranging from \$0.8 million to \$1.5 million per year. Schools admitting less than 10 NCS students may

---

<sup>3</sup> For the planning of educational support measures, students whose spoken language at home is not Chinese are broadly categorised as NCS students.



also have an additional funding on a need basis for organising diversified modes of after-school support programmes in learning Chinese to consolidate what their NCS students have learnt in classes under an immersed Chinese language environment.

58. In addition to recognition of overseas Chinese examination results as alternative Chinese language qualifications, EDB has, starting from the 2014/15 school year, implemented the ApL Chinese (for NCS students) courses by phases at the senior secondary levels to provide NCS students with an additional channel to acquire an alternative recognised qualification for articulation to multiple pathways. Besides, the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research launched in April 2016 the Vocational Chinese Language Courses for NCS School Leavers pegged at Level 1 or 2 of the Qualifications Framework with a view to enhancing the employability of NCS school leavers. EDB will, based on the established research framework, continue to collect and analyse data to evaluate the effectiveness of, and optimise the support measures.

### **Support for Financially Needy Students**

59. The Government's policy on student finance is to ensure that no student is denied access to education due to lack of means. At present, SFO administers various means-tested and non-means-tested student financial assistance and loan schemes, covering students from pre-primary to post-secondary levels and people pursuing continuing education. In 2014/15 school year, SFO has disbursed over \$6 billion in student finance to needy students at various study level.

60. From time to time, the Government reviews the student financial assistance schemes so as to ensure that students are provided with appropriate support. In addition to the standing financial assistance schemes of SFO, we have also been strengthening support for needy students through the Community Care Fund (CCF). Over the past few years, the Commission on Poverty has approved the use of CCF funding to introduce, among others, a hostel subsidy for undergraduate students, enhance the academic expenses grant for students pursuing eligible programmes in self-financing institutions, provide an additional academic expenses grant for post-secondary students with SEN, introduce a pilot scheme on SEN Coordinator in schools, enhance the School Textbook Assistance Scheme for primary and secondary students, introduce free lunch for needy primary students, and enhance the travel subsidy for students in special schools, etc. Some of these programmes have been

regularised as Government's recurrent assistance programmes. We will continue to review the effectiveness of other pilot programmes funded by CCF.

## **Investments in Education**

61. The Government attaches great importance to investing in education. Expenditure on education accounts for over one-fifth of the recurrent expenditure of the Government, taking up the largest share among all policy areas. In 2016-17, the estimated total expenditure on education amounts to \$84 billion, of which almost 90% or \$74.7 billion is recurrent expenditure.

62. The share of recurrent expenditure in the total expenditure on education remains high, taking up around 90% of the total education expenditure since 2014-15. Comparing with the corresponding figure of 78.3% in 1997-98, there is a significant increase of more than 10 percentage points, demonstrating the Government's long-term commitment to education.

63. In recent years, the population structure of Hong Kong keeps changing with aging population thereby bringing pressure on demand for social welfare and health services while the number of students is declining. Notwithstanding this, the recurrent education expenditure continues to grow annually. We shall continue to ensure that there will be sufficient resources to provide quality education and training that meet the needs of society for the purpose of promoting sustainable development of Hong Kong.

## **Conclusion**

64. Education will continue to be an important policy area in which the government will invest heavily. We will keep our policies and measures under constant review, to ensure that they are updated and forward looking in order to achieve balanced growth for our students who will be equipped with the necessary attributes, capabilities, attitudes and values to face challenges posed by the future.

**Education Bureau**  
**June 2016**