

Speaking Note of
Mr. Eddie NG Hak-kim, SBS, JP,
Secretary for Education
at the Special Meeting of the Legislative Council's Finance Committee
to examine the Estimates of Expenditure 2017-18
on 7 April 2017

Mr. Chairman,

Nurturing of talent starts with education. The Government is determined to invest in education and increases resources continuously in providing all-round and balanced education and training, with a view to promoting the sustainable development of Hong Kong.

2. Since the inauguration of the current-term Government, the recurrent education expenditure has increased from \$60.4 billion in 2012-13 to \$78.6 billion, representing a cumulative increase of 30% or an average growth of 5.4% per annum. In the current term, the share of recurrent education expenditure in total education expenditure has also increased from less than 80% in 2012-13 to 90% on average and maintained at a high level, demonstrating the Government's long term commitment to education.

3. The estimated total education expenditure will increase by \$4.9 billion to \$87.5 billion in 2017-18. Of this total, the recurrent education expenditure will increase by \$3.1 billion to \$78.6 billion, accounting for about 21.2% of the total government recurrent expenditure and taking up the largest share among all policy areas. The major new measures include:

I. Pre-primary Education

- Implement the free quality kindergarten education policy starting from the 2017/18 school year and improve the quality of kindergarten education through different measures;

II. Primary and Secondary Education

- Increase the allocations for regular major repairs and emergency repairs in schools as well as earmarking additional resources for retrofitting 26 “matchbox-style school premises”;
- Introduce a three-year paid non-local study leave scheme on a pilot basis for serving secondary school teachers benefitting some 150 teachers;
- Provide a one-off grant to all public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools for the promotion of Chinese history and culture;

III. Support for Students with Special Educational Needs

- Starting from the 2017/18 school year, the Learning Support Grant will cover students with mental illness;
- Develop a support model applicable to senior secondary students with autism;
- Provide an additional grant for schools for children with severe intellectual disability, schools for children with physical disability and schools for children with visual impairment-cum-intellectual disability to enhance the care for 24-hour ventilator-dependent students;

IV. Post-secondary Education

- Regularise the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors from the 2018/19 academic year and increase the number of subsidised places from about 1 000 per cohort to 3 000 per cohort; and
- Allocate \$500 million for the seventh Matching Grant Scheme for qualified local self-financing degree-awarding institutions.

4. For the \$700 million earmarked by the Financial Secretary from the fiscal surplus, we will actively work out detailed proposals for spending the sum in promoting vocational and professional education and training, facilitating the training and professional development of principals and teachers, and enhancing support for local post-secondary students, including those pursuing self-financing post-secondary programmes.

5. Mr. Chairman, my colleagues and I will be happy to answer further questions from Members.

Education Bureau

7 April 2017