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Education Bureau

Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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11 January 2017

Ms Angel WONG
Clerk to Panel
Legislative Council Panel on Education
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms Wong,

Panel on Education
Follow-up to Meeting on 14 November 2016

I refer to your letter dated 16 November 2016. Our responses to the motions of Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, Hon HUI Chi-fung and Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, which were moved and passed at the meeting on 14 November 2016, are respectively set out at Appendix 1, Appendix 2 and Appendix 3. Regarding the issues raised by Legislative Council members in respect of the supply and demand of kindergarten teachers and the sites earmarked for the development of kindergartens, our reply is set out at Appendix 4.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Woo Chun-sing', written over a white background.

(WOO Chun-sing)
for Secretary for Education

Encl.

**Legislative Council Panel on Education
Motion Passed under the Agenda Item
“Latest Development in Migration to Free Quality
Kindergarten Education”
at the Meeting on 14 November 2016
Moved by Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun**

The Education Bureau (EDB) has all along encouraged teachers to adopt diverse teaching practices to promote children’s learning at the kindergarten (KG) stage. The wording of the motion as moved by Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun under the agenda item “Latest Development in Migration to Free Quality Kindergarten Education” at the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Education on 14 November 2016 is at Annex 1(a). EDB’s response to the motion is as follows:

“Homework” for Students

2. “Homework” is generally defined as task(s) accomplished at home. They can be designed in different modes and are not just limited to copying exercises. Suitably designed homework helps to consolidate, extend or evaluate children’s learning performance, though it is not the only means.

3. All along, EDB has recommended teachers to adopt diversified modes of homework design to enhance student learning at the KG stage. The “Guide to the Pre-Primary Curriculum”, which is under review, will stress again that teachers should not arrange drilling or mechanical copying exercises for their students. In the official document of “List of Dos and Don’ts for KGs”, it is also clearly stated that KG teachers should not ask K1 children to write. KGs should take into account the development of K2 children in writing readiness and individual differences when planning pre-writing activities. Teachers may assign appropriate and suitable amount of writing activities to children only when the latter have reached the age of four or five and shown readiness to write.

4. Activities designed by KG teachers should be in line with children’s development and closely related to their life experiences, abilities and interests as well as their attention span and development in other areas. The activities should not be excessive or too frequent, nor should they

contain mechanical copying or drilling components. Teachers need to ensure that children could complete part of the homework at school for consolidation. KGs may arrange for children to do some relaxing and interesting 'mini learning tasks', such as reading picture books, collecting objects and passing on messages to consolidate their learning, as well as cultivate a sense of responsibility and good habit. Parents can make use of the 'mini learning tasks' to enhance parent-child relationship. In addition, children should have sufficient time to enjoy family life beyond school hours for their physical and social well-being.

Monitoring and Assessment

5. Under the free quality KG education policy, EDB will further enhance the monitoring of KGs' performance through school visits, inspection and lesson observation, so as to understand the curriculum implementation. If KGs are found to have arranged developmentally inappropriate learning content or excessive amount of assignments, they are required to stop such practices and make improvement accordingly. The Performance Indicators are being refined to state explicitly that KG should neither ask children in Nursery Class to write, nor arrange mechanical copying or arithmetic exercises for them. This forms part of the basis for School-self Evaluation (SSE) and Quality Reviews (QR). During QR, if KGs are found to have inappropriately arranged copying exercises, they will be asked to make improvements and this will be recorded in the QR report which will be uploaded onto EDB's website. Moreover, in order to enhance the transparency and effectiveness of QR, External Observers will be involved in QR in a step-by-step manner. In the 2016/17 school year, External Observers will participate in QR of 25 KGs.

6. Apart from holistically reviewing the performance of KGs through QR, more focus inspection will also be conducted. If KGs are found to have arranged activities that are inappropriate to the developmental needs of their children, including asking students in Nursery Class to write or arranging mechanical copying or arithmetic exercises, we will provide both oral and written feedback, and request the school to make improvement. In tandem, we will understand the development of KG education in Hong Kong through QR as well as focus inspections and disseminate the good practices and successful experience for sharing with the sector.

Interface Between KG and Primary Education

7. In reviewing the “Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum”, one of the crucial points highlighted is to strengthen the interface between KG and primary education. It is also emphasised that the curriculum of KG education should aim at fostering children’s balanced development, nurturing their self-confidence, learning interests, inquisitive minds, as well as positive values and proactive attitudes, instead of catching up with learning in primary schools at the KG stage. Learning of subject knowledge should begin at primary school. Relevant details have been set out in the ‘Review of the “Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum” (2006) Executive Summary (Draft for Discussion)’ at Annex 1(b). To enhance smooth interface between KG and primary education, KGs should keep close contact with primary schools, so that they can keep abreast of the latest developments of primary schools, understand the requirements of the primary curriculum and collect information on their alumni’s adaptation and learning in primary schools with a view to reviewing and adjusting their adaptation measures. As for primary schools, they should adopt whole-school and systematic approach in organising programmes to help P1 entrants gradually adapt to learning and school life in primary school and maintain their confidence and interest in learning. Both KGs and primary schools should solicit support from parents and provide various opportunities such as seminars, parents’ days, ‘Parents’ Classrooms’ to help them understand the challenges that their children would face in a new environment and encourage them to actively listen to their children’s voices.

**Legislative Council Panel on Education
Motion Passed under the Agenda Item
“Latest Development in Migration to Free Quality
Kindergarten Education”
at the Meeting on 14 November 2016
Moved by Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun**

(Translation)

According to a survey conducted by an organization, over 20% of kindergarten students have to finish more than four homework assignments each day, and nearly 30% of them have to spend two hours to finish their homework each day. It is very likely that excessive homework, both in terms of quantity and difficulty, will dampen the learning interest, physical and mental health of students as well as hinder their diversified development. To effectively implement the vision of free quality kindergarten education, which is to facilitate happy learning and balanced development among students, this Panel urges the Administration to:

- (1) critically examine the homework policies of kindergartens by explicitly stating in the revised Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum to be published in 2017 that kindergartens should neither arrange students attending nursery classes to write with pencils/pens, nor arrange mechanical drilling of copying and mathematics exercises for them, and that kindergartens should ensure that part of the academic homework that aims to consolidate classroom learning can be finished at school;
- (2) enhance quality assessments and focused inspections, including increasing the number of external observers to closely monitor the teaching quality and homework policies of kindergartens, so as to ensure that students will not be affected by excessive drilling and heavy homework load; and
- (3) monitor the interface between kindergarten and primary education to ensure that kindergartens will not, for the purpose of catching up with the academic level of primary education, prematurely teach students knowledge that is too difficult for them to grasp, and will not give out too much homework, which will bring unnecessary pressure to students.

**Enhancing the interface between kindergarten and primary education
Extracts from ‘Review of the “Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum”
(2006) Executive Summary (Draft for Discussion)’**

4.7 Enhancing the interface between kindergarten and primary education

4.7.1 Rationales

- 4.7.1.1 Since the curricula of different key stages are designed according to students’ developmental and learning needs, the rationales, implementation modes and learning expectations might vary.
- 4.7.1.2 Articulation between different key stages should be taken into account in curriculum development so as to enable children to have a smooth transition from kindergartens to primary schools to achieve a “seamless learning journey from early childhood to primary education”, and sustain their confidence and interest in learning.
- 4.7.1.3 Kindergartens should help children gain understanding of the differences of the new learning environment, grasp necessary life skills and develop good living habits, thereby helping them get prepared for primary education in a stress-free way.
- 4.7.1.4 Primary schools should make proper arrangements in areas such as school life, learning mode and pace, subject curriculum and assessment upon receiving new Primary One students and help them gradually adapt to primary school life.
- 4.7.1.5 Kindergarten and primary school teachers should uphold the principle of “primary education is the start of learning by subjects”. Kindergartens should avoid curriculum content which is too difficult, too much or beyond children’s ability in order not to exert unnecessary pressure on children.

<Points to ponder>

What problems will arise among children by advancing the primary school curriculum to kindergarten education?

- ♦ A competitive mindset is dominating our society today. Some mistakenly assume that advancing the primary school curriculum to kindergarten education, such as requiring children to write difficult words or learn vocabulary beyond their life experiences, can help children build a good foundation for progressing smoothly to the primary level.
- ♦ As a result, the curriculum of some kindergartens has been expanded with excessive homework not appropriate to children's development, such as mechanical copying and drills.
- ♦ Instead of laying a solid foundation for children's learning, such excessive drilling will undermine children's interest in learning, hinder their future learning performance and even hamper their development.
- ♦ Kindergartens should uphold their professionalism in early childhood education and design a curriculum in line with children's development to ensure that children will learn happily and grow healthily.

4.7.2 Proposals for implementation

4.7.2.1 Getting children ready

It is expected that upon completion of kindergarten education, children should be able to:

- ♦ develop good living habits and pay attention to cleanliness and personal hygiene;
- ♦ have an interest in learning and an inquisitive mind, be willing to explore and become a healthy individual with vigour;
- ♦ accept themselves and others, exhibit qualities of confidence, optimism, obedience and co-operation;
- ♦ possess good language awareness and learning attitude, especially in Chinese, for which children should have ample exposure in listening and speaking, as well as basic reading and writing experiences to prepare them well for using the language as the means of learning and communication in future. English is a second language. Regarding children's language development, children in this stage can develop their interest and initial learning of English through exposure (mainly listening and speaking) and premature and excessive reading and writing experiences in English are unnecessary;
- ♦ applying mathematical concepts they have learnt and

demonstrate abilities of elementary logical-mathematical thinking in real-life situations;

- ♦ enjoy appreciating, exploring and caring for nature; and
- ♦ derive pleasure from art appreciation and are able to express and share the beauty of life through certain art forms.

4.7.2.2 Getting schools ready

Kindergartens

- ♦ Help children enhance their self-care abilities, such as packing their schoolbags, tidying up their toys and maintaining personal hygiene before and after meals;
- ♦ Develop children's communication and social skills, so that they will be able to integrate into primary school life, such as taking the initiative to greet others, introducing themselves and starting a conversation;
- ♦ Organise activities for children to become acquainted with primary school life and study, for example, arranging visits to primary schools and inviting alumni to share with K3 children their primary school experiences; and
- ♦ Take the initiative to be in regular contact with primary schools, and provide them with information on the characteristics, aptitudes and abilities of children, particularly K3 children.

Primary schools

- ♦ With the aim of sustaining children's confidence and interest in learning, primary schools should make plans to help children adapt to primary school life and study gradually (adaptation period may last from half a school term to one school term or a school year) in terms of different areas, including:
 - living habits: assistance should be provided to let students gradually learn to have lunch independently;
 - school life: flexible timetabling and long recesses can be adopted to help children adapt more easily;
 - learning mode and pace: "learning through play" can be continued, and games and activities can be

provided as far as possible. For example, children should learn through pleasurable and real-life language activities, such as singing songs, saying rhymes, listening to, telling and/or reading stories and games; and

- subject curriculum and assessment: students' learning interest and motivation should be the focus. During the transition period, theme-based learning, with which children are acquainted, should be adopted so that the learning content of each subject can be linked together under a particular theme. As for homework, dictations and tests, special arrangements should be made in accordance with the school context. For instance, schools can defer giving homework and tests for half a school term or a school term in order for students to progressively adapt to changes. As for language learning, schools can continue to follow the principle of "starting with listening and speaking, then learning writing through reading" to help children continue to develop their listening and speaking skills, and cultivate a daily reading habit to prepare them well for reading and writing at a later stage.

- ♦ Primary schools should appreciate the diversity of P1 students in such aspects as language, culture, ability, interest and habit. Sustained efforts should be made to promote a culture of inclusion and review its effectiveness to ensure that sufficient support and guidance on primary school life and study are provided for children during the period of interface. Schools should not rigidly adhere to convention, nor should they have excessively high expectations of students, thus neglecting learner diversity and exerting unnecessary pressure on students.

4.7.2.3 Getting the families ready through home-school collaboration

- ♦ While parents are the first teachers of children and the key partners of schools, schools are the miniature of society as well as the bridge between home and society.

♦ Through close communication and parent education, kindergartens and primary schools can help parents understand that each child is unique and has different developmental and learning needs at different stages, and that reasonable expectations of children should be held. Parents should neither make comparisons nor worry too much so that children can cope with the transition from kindergarten to primary education.

♦ Schools should explain clearly to parents how to help students adapt to the new learning environment in different ways so as to gain their understanding and support. To avoid exerting pressure on children and depriving them of leisure, parents should also be reminded not to enrol their children to “learning classes” or “tutorial classes” that merely aim for preparing children to progress to primary schools.

♦ Schools should assist parents in understanding the challenges their children may face in a new setting and be a good listener. Parents should also develop progressively children’s self-care abilities by allowing them to take more responsibility in everyday life.

<Points to ponder>

Should kindergartens give homework or simple learning tasks to children?

- ♦ In the Hong Kong context, homework is usually regarded as task(s) accomplished at home. Appropriate homework can help consolidate children’s classroom learning, yet it is not the only way to do so.
- ♦ K1 children should not be required to write. Kindergartens should not assign mechanical copying and calculation to children, so as not to cause unnecessary pressure and drilling. We should allow children to have sufficient time to enjoy family life after school.
- ♦ To help children develop good habits and a sense of responsibility, as well as strengthen parent-child relationship, kindergartens may arrange children to do some simple learning tasks, which are relaxing, fun and appropriate, such as reading picture books, collecting objects, and passing on messages.

**Legislative Council Panel on Education
Motion Passed under the Agenda Item
“Latest Development in Migration to Free Quality
Kindergarten Education”
at the Meeting on 14 November 2016
Moved by Hon HUI Chi-fung**

The Government will implement free quality KG education policy from the 2017/18 school year. The annual recurrent expenditure on pre-primary education is estimated to increase from the current about \$4 billion to about \$6.7 billion. The policy objectives of the free quality KG education 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. The wording of the motion as moved by Hon HUI Chi-fung under the agenda item “Latest Development in Migration to Free Quality Kindergarten Education” at the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Education on 14 November 2016 is at Annex 2. EDB’s response to the motion is as follows:

Subsidy for Whole-day Kindergartens

2. In light of the existing diverse operating modes of KGs and different development targets of individual school sponsoring bodies, it does not represent prudent use of public money for the Government to commit totally free KG education for every student or to subsidise every facet of the present and future KG education. As explained by the Secretary for Education in the Legislative Council meeting on 15 December 2016, we should also respect the inclination of school sponsoring bodies given that KGs are privately run. Many of their individual needs and inclination make us unable to achieve the aim of offering 100% free KG education. For instance, for a KG situated in a private property with the annual rental reaching over \$5 million, even if its school sponsoring body wishes to join this new policy, we need to consider if the Legislative Council would approve the use of public money to subsidise the rental of over \$5 million. In principle, the subsidy provided by the Government under the new policy is sufficient for the delivery of quality half-day (HD) services. Existing evidence from researches and

studies precludes drawing conclusions that whole-day (WD) programmes are more favourable 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 service for all children from three to six years of age.

3. Having considered the developmental needs of children and overseas practices, we are of the view that 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 HD services according to the standards prescribed by the Government. Notwithstanding that, to unleash the potential of the local labour force under the population policy, we will provide, on a co-payment basis with parents, an additional provision of 30% and 60% for eligible KGs offering WD and long WD (LWD) services respectively. As the Government has provided additional subsidy, parents will only pay part of the school fee which should be at a low level. According to the information submitted by KGs, WD KGs' overall preliminary estimate of the school fees for the 2017/18 school year is at a low level. For instance, about 50% (i.e. about 290) of the 600 WD KGs initially estimate to charge a monthly school fee of \$1,000 or below, representing a significant increase from about 5% in the 2016/17 school year. About 4% (i.e. about 20) of WD KGs intend to charge a monthly school fee of more than \$2,000, representing a sharp decrease as compared with 40% in the 2016/17 school year. Needy families may be granted fee remission (at three subsidy levels of 100%, 75% or 50%).

Remuneration and Career Ladder for KG Teachers

4. 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, we encourage KGs to establish a career ladder for their teachers under the free quality KG education policy. Specifically, 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.

5. On remuneration, to ensure that teaching staff are remunerated reasonably, EDB provides salary ranges for different ranks of teaching staff. Taking the salary of basic rank teachers as an example, the salary will range between \$20,770 and \$36,930, which is a significant increase over the median salary (about \$20,000) of teachers of WD and HD KGs under the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) in the 2015/16 school year. We expect that KG teachers' salary will be raised under the new scheme.

6. As regards KGs which have a large number of long-serving teachers who are receiving higher salaries, we will provide a one-off tide-over grant (ToG) for two years to provide additional financial support for these KGs in defraying their expenses on staff salary in the early period of implementation of the free quality KG education policy. EDB will review the utilisation of funding in the 2018/19 school year and take follow-up actions as appropriate to ensure smooth migration of KGs to the new policy as well as achievement of the objectives of free quality KG policy.

7. Regarding the request for establishing a mandatory salary scale for KG teachers, we hope the sector would understand that salary-related practices under the funding mode of aided schools could not be applied to KGs in isolation. In the aided sector, the funding mode is tied with several inter-connected components, such as EDB's annual approval for the number of operating classes which in turn determines the staff establishment, and is subject to a basket of control measures under the Government's prudent and balanced planning of school places operated through school place allocation systems. As compared to a mandatory salary scale in which teacher salary is determined solely in accordance with seniority, it is appropriate and fit to provide KGs with salary ranges which could ensure competitiveness while at the same time allow flexibility for the KG management to decide on their staff remuneration, taking into account their qualifications, teaching experience, performance, additional duties, training received and special skills possessed, etc.

Enhancement to the Quality of Education

8. Under the new policy, apart from the afore-mentioned career ladder and salary ranges for KG teachers, the Government will enhance the quality of KG education by providing direct funding support to eligible local non-profit-making KGs, raising the requirement of teacher to pupil ratio from the current 1:15 (including the principal) to 1:11 (excluding the principal), reviewing the Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum, refining the Quality Assurance Framework and Performance Indicators, strengthening the support for students with diverse learning needs, enhancing parent engagement and parent education, and improving school premises and facilities as well as exploring feasible measures to increase the provision of KG premises in the long run.

**Legislative Council Panel on Education
Motion Passed under the Agenda Item
“Latest Development in Migration to Free Quality
Kindergarten Education”
at the Meeting on 14 November 2016
Moved by Hon HUI Chi-fung**

(Translation)

That this Panel expresses regret that the 15-year free education has not been fully implemented; and as the free kindergarten policy has neglected the demand for whole-day kindergartens, failed to alleviate the financial burdens of parents and their burdens in caring for their young children, and offered little help in enhancing the labour force participation rate of women, this Panel demands the provision of full subsidies for whole-day and long whole-day kindergartens as well as the establishment of a professional development ladder and remuneration system for kindergarten teachers, so as to progressively improve the quality of early childhood education.

**Legislative Council Panel on Education
Motion Passed under the Agenda Item
“Latest Development in Migration to Free Quality
Kindergarten Education”
at the Meeting on 14 November 2016
Moved by Hon Starry LEE Wai-king**

The Government will implement free quality KG education policy from the 2017/18 school year. To facilitate smooth implementation of the new policy, EDB has kept close communication with stakeholders and has held over 50 meetings with the sector to gauge their views on the implementation details. Taking into account views collected, EDB issued a circular (EDB Circular No. 7/2016) on 20 July 2016, setting out the key features of the free quality KG education policy and criteria for KGs to join the Free Quality KG Education Scheme. The wording of the motion as moved by Hon Starry LEE Wai-king under the agenda item “Latest Development in Migration to Free Quality Kindergarten Education” at the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Education on 14 November 2016 is at [Annex 3](#). EDB’s response to the motion is as follows:

Operating Scales and Amount of Subsidy of KGs

2. Under the new policy, the annual recurrent expenditure on pre-primary education is estimated to increase from the current about \$4 billion to about \$6.7 billion. In principle, the Government subsidy is sufficient for the delivery of quality HD services. The basic HD unit subsidy under the new policy covers teachers’ salary and general operating costs. Apart from the basic HD unit subsidy, additional grants, such as additional subsidy for WD and LWD services, rental subsidy, premises maintenance grant, grant for a cook and additional grant for supporting non-Chinese speaking students, will also be provided to cater for the special circumstances of individual KGs. About 70% to 80% of the subsidised HD KG places will be free. Even for KGs of relatively small scale, the amount of subsidy will be much more than that under PEVS. Taking a KG with 90 students as an example, its full-year subsidy under PEVS is about \$2 million regardless of whether it offers HD, WD or LWD services. Under the new policy, the amount of its subsidy will increase to about \$2.9 million, \$4 million and \$4.9 million respectively, representing

an increase of about 45%, 100% and 140%, for HD, WD and LWD services respectively.

Subsidy for Whole-day Kindergartens

3. In light of the existing diverse operating modes of KGs and different development targets of individual school sponsoring bodies, it does not represent prudent use of public money for the Government commit totally free KG education for every student or to subsidise every facet of the present and future KG education. As explained by the Secretary for Education in the Legislative Council meeting on 15 December 2016, we should also respect the inclination of school sponsoring bodies given that KGs are privately run. Many of their individual needs and inclination make us unable to achieve the aim of offering 100% free KG education. For instance, for a KG situated in a private property with the annual rental reaching over \$5 million, even if its school sponsoring body wishes to join this new policy, we need to consider if the Legislative Council would approve the use of public money to subsidise the rental of over \$5 million. 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. Hence, as mentioned in paragraph 2 above, 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 HD services. Notwithstanding that, to unleash the potential of the local labour force under the population policy, we will provide, on a co-payment basis with parents, an additional provision of 30% and 60% for eligible KGs offering WD and LWD services respectively. As the Government has provided additional subsidy, parents will only pay part of the school fee which should be at a low level. According to the information submitted by KGs, WD KGs' overall preliminary estimate of the school fees for the 2017/18 school year is at a low level. For instance, about 50% (i.e. about 290) of the 600 WD KGs initially estimate to charge a monthly school fee of \$1,000 or below, representing a significant increase from about 5% in the 2016/17 school year. About 4% (i.e. about 20) of WD KGs intend to charge a monthly school fee of more than \$2,000, representing a sharp decrease as compared

with 40% in the 2016/17 school year. Needy families may be granted fee remission (at three subsidy levels of 100%, 75% or 50%).

Remuneration and Career Ladder for KG Teachers

4. 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, we encourage KGs to establish a career ladder for their teachers under the free quality KG policy. Specifically, 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.

5. On remuneration, to ensure that teaching staff are remunerated reasonably, EDB provides salary ranges for different ranks of teaching staff. Taking the salary of basic rank teachers as an example, the salary will range between \$20,770 and \$36,930, which is a significant increase over the median salary (about \$20,000) of teachers of WD and HD KGs under PEVS in the 2015/16 school year. We expect that KG teachers' salary will be raised under the new scheme.

6. As regards KGs which have a large number of long-serving teachers who are receiving higher salaries, we will provide a one-off ToG for two years to provide additional financial support for these KGs in defraying their expenses on staff salary in the early period of implementation of the free quality KG education policy. EDB will review the utilisation of funding in the 2018/19 school year and take follow-up actions as appropriate to ensure smooth migration of KGs to the new policy as well as achievement of the objectives of free quality KG policy.

7. Regarding the request for establishing a mandatory salary scale for KG teachers, we hope the sector would understand that salary-related practices under the funding mode of aided schools could not be applied to KGs in isolation. In the aided sector, the funding mode is tied with several inter-connected components such as EDB's annual approval for the number of operating classes which in turn determines the staff establishment, and is subject to a basket of control measures under the Government's prudent and balanced planning of school places operated

through school place allocation systems. As compared to a mandatory salary scale in which teacher salary is determined solely in accordance with seniority, it is appropriate and fit to provide KGs with salary ranges which could ensure competitiveness while at the same time allow flexibility for the KG management to decide on their staff remuneration, taking into account their qualifications, teaching experience, performance, additional duties, training received and special skills possessed, etc.

Maintaining Communication with Stakeholders

8. To facilitate smooth implementation of the free quality KG education policy, EDB will continue to maintain close communication with stakeholders and strive to enhance the quality of KG education for providing children with a good foundation for their balanced development and lifelong learning.

**Legislative Council Panel on Education
Motion Passed under the Agenda Item
“Latest Development in Migration to Free Quality
Kindergarten Education”
at the Meeting on 14 November 2016
Moved by Hon Starry LEE Wai-king**

(Translation)

That, although the Government plans to implement free kindergarten education in 2017, the school sector and parents still intend to further refine some of the details; in this connection, this Panel urges the Government to improve the relevant plan, including providing sufficient subsidies for whole-day and long whole-day kindergartens, providing sufficient manpower resources for smaller scale nursery schools to maintain their basic operating conditions, establishing a professional development ladder and remunerations system for kindergarten teachers, and providing remuneration protection for experienced kindergarten teachers.

Legislative Council Panel on Education
Information Requested by Members under the Agenda Item
“Latest Development in Migration to Free Quality
Kindergarten Education”
at the Meeting on 14 November 2016

Under the agenda item “Latest Development in Migration to Free Quality Kindergarten Education” at the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Education on 14 November 2016, some Members requested EDB to provide the projected number of KG teachers in the next few years and information of the sites earmarked for KG premises in the next five years. EDB’s response is as follows:

Projected Number of KG Teachers

2. Training provided by institutions offering teacher training programmes on early childhood education (including Bachelor Degree in Early Childhood Education, Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Early Childhood Education) and Certificate in Early Childhood Education (C(ECE))) is adequate to meet the demand for trained teachers from KGs. Taking the 2015/16 school year as an example, there were about 12 500 teachers in local KGs and the wastage rate of KG teachers possessing C(ECE) or comparable (or above) qualifications was 7.4%. Given that about 1 600 to 1 800 students have been admitted to the relevant University Grants Committee-funded and self-financing pre-service programmes each year over the last three years and the fact that the self-financing programmes are responsive to the demand of the KG sector, we expect that the demand for teachers could be fully met.

KG Premises and Sites

3. The development of the KG sector is diversified and flexible with KGs located in a variety of premises, such as self-acquired or self-owned premises, privately leased premises or premises in public housing estates. Under the free quality KG education policy, a stable supply of quality KG premises in public/Government/private properties is crucial. According to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, the Government will earmark space in housing estates and large-scale private development projects for setting up KGs in the light of demand. As a long-term strategy, we shall identify other available KG space for re-location of existing KGs that require substantial improvement to their physical

accommodation and 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.

4. Besides, according to the current planning standards, the Government shall provide 730 HD and 250 WD places for every 1 000 children aged between three to six. The planning standards will be reviewed and revised as necessary to 500 HD and 500 WD places as a long-term goal to increase the supply of WD places to meet the increasing demand and support working parents. We will work out the review details with the government departments concerned in early 2017.