



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局

Education Bureau

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

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13 July 2017

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

Dear Ms Wong,

Panel on Education
Follow-up to the meeting on 10 July 2017

I refer to your letter dated 12 July 2017. For Members' reference, our response to the four motions passed at the meeting is set out at Annex 1. The information on locally-accredited self-financing non-local degree programmes offered in Hong Kong is at Annex 2.

Yours sincerely,

(Ms Fiona Au)

for Secretary for Education

Encl.

Panel on Education
Follow-up to the meeting on 10 July 2017

Response to the four motions passed at the meeting

Wording of the Motion (Translation)

As the home-use computers of grass-roots students are usually old and outdated at present, some students are deprived of the basic conditions for online learning and are therefore unable to cope with the prevailing educational needs. Moreover, the current information technology support provided by the Government cannot cater for the needs of grass-roots students. This Panel urges the Government to provide, on a reimbursement basis, subsidies to grass-roots children for purchase of computers and payment of Internet access charges, so as to bring direct benefits to about 330 000 grass-roots students, which is also a priority measure for the provision of quality education.

(Moved by Hon SHIU Ka-chun)

Response

The "Internet Learning Support Programme" (ILSP in short, also known as "i Learn at Home" programme) has been implemented by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) since the 2011/12 school year. ILSP aims to assist (i) families receiving the flat-rate grant for School-related Expenses under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance scheme, or (ii) families passing the means test of the Student Finance Office, to acquire affordable internet access service and computer equipment, and to provide target families with training, technical and social support.

OGCIO has commissioned non-profit-making social welfare organisations to implement ILSP. Regarding the acquisition of computer equipment, the non-profit-making social welfare organisations provide affordable computer equipment, including desktop, notebook and tablet computers,

monitors and printers, for purchase by eligible families. These offers, which include maintenance service for a period ranging from one to three years, are generally more economical as compared to the market prices. The implementers also make available computer purchase through payment by instalment for families with financial difficulties. Usage and technical support services, including free technical advice and free checking of computer equipment are also provided under ILSP. All participating families, including those who have not acquired computer equipment through ILSP, can enjoy these free support services.

With endorsement from the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting of the Legislative Council, OGCIO has extended ILSP for two years until the 2017/18 school year. OGCIO will continue to refine the programme services where appropriate in light of service demand and the latest development of IT in Education.

To assist students from low-income families to access the Internet for learning, the Social Welfare Department and the Student Finance Office have implemented the "Subsidy Scheme for Internet Access Charges" (SIA) to provide cash subsidy on a household basis to eligible families to relieve their financial burden of providing internet access for their children to undertake web-based learning at home. According to the mechanism approved by the Legislative Council Finance Committee, the rate of SIA is reviewed annually with reference to the prevailing market prices of Internet access services, including those offered by the two non-profit-making organisations under ILSP, so as to reflect the latest market situation and to allow the families to flexibly use the subsidies to acquire Internet access services that can best meet their needs. In the 2016/17 school year, the full subsidy rate for each eligible family has increased from \$1,300 to \$1,400 while the half subsidy rate has increased from \$650 to \$700, which can well cover the Internet access services (ranging from \$900 to \$1,176 annually) under ILSP.

The Government will continue to consider the best way to assist students from low income families to ensure that they enjoy opportunities to quality education irrespective of their background.

Wording of the Motion (Translation)

This Panel urges the Government to conduct more extensive public consultation to listen to the views of students and parents when planning the use of the remaining recurrent expenditure on education so as to formulate education plans which can be of direct help to students.

(Moved by Hon Nathan LAW Kwun-chung)

Response

The proposal to increase recurrent expenditure in education to implement a package of priority initiatives on education in the 2017/18 academic/school year represents only the first step of the Government in improving education for our next generation. In order to nurture the younger generation to meet changing needs and enable them to pursue their respective talents, the Chief Executive has identified further areas for review and actions (deploying additional resources as needed), as set out in Panel paper CB(4)1366/16-17(01). The Government will consult stakeholders of the education sector in taking forward these further reviews.

Wording of the Motion (Translation)

This Panel urges that the Government should endeavor to explore different articulation and career pathways, including enhancing the recognition of Applied Learning subjects, improving the vocational training and education system, increasing the number of subsidized university places, reviewing the positioning of UGC-funded institutions and self-financing institutions in education, etc., so that the education system may help students develop according to their different talents and interests, thereby achieving the provision of multiple pathways.

(Moved by Hon Nathan LAW Kwun-chung)

Response

The Government is committed to providing our young people with quality and diversified study pathways with multiple entry and exit points, thus enabling them to unleash their full potential in accordance with their interests, aptitudes and abilities.

At present, there are 20 local degree-awarding institutions in Hong Kong, of which 9 are publicly-funded and the others are self-financing. In the 2017/18 academic year, about 300 undergraduate programmes and 400 sub-degree programmes will be offered by the institutions. Besides, students may choose from a variety of other programmes, such as Diploma Yi Jin programme as well as non-local courses offered in Hong Kong that best suit their aspirations and abilities. Some may choose to study in the Mainland or elsewhere.

For the 2017/18 academic year, a total of 53 870 full-time locally-accredited post-secondary intake places, including 23 670 undergraduate places and 30 200 sub-degree places are offered by various institutions.

Through the development of both publicly-funded and self-financing sectors, about 45% of our young people in the relevant cohort have access to degree-level education in the 2016/17 academic year. Including sub-degree education, over 70% of them have access to post-secondary education.

Looking ahead, we expect a continuous drop in the population of the relevant age cohort proceeding to post-secondary education until 2022. Meanwhile, in recent years, the Government has implemented a series of measures to further increase subsidised higher education opportunities, in a bid to provide school leavers with broader and more diversified articulation pathways, e.g. progressively increasing the number of University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded senior year undergraduate intake places, so that 5 000 meritorious sub-degree graduates will be able to articulate to subsidised degree programmes each year by the 2018/19 academic year. In light of the above, the Government does not see a genuine need to change the number of UGC-funded first-year first-degree places to be offered at this juncture. To facilitate the healthy development of the higher education sector, the Education Bureau will review the role and positioning of self-financing post-secondary institutions.

Apart from various local post-secondary education programmes, students may also pursue further studies in Mainland China or elsewhere. In 2017, 90 higher education institutions in the Mainland will admit Hong Kong students based on their HKDSE examination results, thus exempting them from taking the Mainland's Joint Entrance Examination.

To promote the rebranded vocational and professional education and training (VPET) as a valued option for articulation, the Government has spared no effort in raising the awareness and recognition of VPET in the community. So far we have made good progress, for instance, we have carried out a series of publicity campaign for promotion of the professional image of VPET; we have extended the Pilot Training and Support Scheme to cover 4 cohorts of 4 000 students in total; we will regularise the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors starting from the 2018/19 academic year and increasing the number of subsidised places to about 3 000 per cohort. We will work closely with stakeholders in the community to further promote VPET as an integral part of the multiple pathways.

To enhance recognition of Applied Learning (ApL), effective from the 2018 HKDSE Examination, the reporting of students' performance will be refined. More ApL courses will be recognised under the Qualifications Framework. We will continue to enhance the recognition of ApL.

Wording of the Motion (Translation)

This Panel proposes that consideration should be given to extending the scope of the “Non-means-Tested Subsidy Scheme for Self-financing Undergraduate Studies” to cover Higher Diploma and Associate Degree programmes.

(Moved by Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye)

Response

The proposed non-means-tested subsidy scheme for undergraduate studies aims to alleviate the financial burden of Hong Kong students who are eligible for admission to undergraduate programmes.

At present, there are nearly 11 000 subvented sub-degree places provided by the UGC-funded universities and the Vocational Training Council. Although sub-degree programmes are outside the scope of the proposed subsidy scheme, sub-degree graduates aspiring for articulation to self-financing top-up degree programmes would also be eligible for subsidy under the scheme if they opt for eligible self-financing top-up degree programmes. Meanwhile, we are also progressively increasing the number of UGC-funded senior year undergraduate places so that 5 000 meritorious sub-degree graduates will be able to articulate to subsidised degree programmes each year by the 2018/19 academic year.

The Education Bureau will review the role and positioning of self-financing post-secondary institutions. The role of sub-degrees in the post-secondary education system will be looked into as part of the review.

Panel on Education
Follow-up to the meeting on 10 July 2017

Information on Locally-accredited Self-financing
Non-local Degree Programmes offered in Hong Kong

According to the information provided by eligible institutions under the proposed subsidy scheme, Savannah College of Art and Design (Hong Kong) provides 13 full-time locally-accredited self-financing non-local first-year-first degree (FYFD) programmes, whereas 3 other eligible institutions, namely Hong Kong Art School, Hong Kong Institute of Technology and The Open University of Hong Kong, will provide 7 such programmes in total. The number of places provided by the 20 non-local programmes represents about 6% of that of all local and non-local self-financing FYFD programmes now.

The School for Higher and Professional Education under Vocational Training Council will be the main provider of non-local top-up degree programmes under the proposed subsidy scheme, as it operates 38 such programmes providing about 20% of places of all non-local self-financing top-up degree programmes now.