

For information

Legislative Council Panel on Education

Injection into the Language Fund – Implementation of Initiatives

Purpose

This paper reports the progress of the implementation of initiatives in relation to the injection of \$5 billion into the Language Fund in early 2014.

Background

2. The Language Fund was set up in March 1994 with a view to enhancing the Chinese and English language proficiency of our population. In January 2014, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved the injection of \$5 billion into the Language Fund to provide a stable stream of funding to facilitate the longer term strategic planning and development of language education.

3. Established in 1996 to advise the Government of language education issues in general, the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) has, through the use of the Language Fund, complemented and supplemented the efforts of the government, other advisory bodies and stakeholders by implementing research and development projects on language learning and language education issues, enhancing professional development of Chinese language and English language teachers, providing school-based support on language education, and creating a facilitating language environment for our students as well as in the community.

Progress Update

4. Upon approval of the injection of \$5 billion in the form of seed capital into the Language Fund, with a vision for further enhancing the Chinese (including Putonghua) and English language proficiency of our students and the workforce for better learning and better life, SCOLAR and its respective working groups have further deliberated the planning and implementation of various initiatives under the following **strategic areas** –

- (a) facilitating effective language education policy formulation and implementation through initiating research studies, including longitudinal research and comparative studies in local and international settings;
- (b) strengthening support of language learning in Chinese and English language in very early years;
- (c) enhancing professional preparation and continuing development of language teachers;
- (d) catering for learner diversity, including the needs of Non-native Chinese Speaking (NCS) students;
- (e) creating and nurturing a facilitating language learning environment for students in and beyond school setting through partnership with relevant stakeholders, in particular, the community; and
- (f) raising language proficiency of Hong Kong's workforce in response to the changing language landscape.

5. A summary of the latest progress of the initiatives under the six strategic areas are appended in the ensuing paragraphs whilst further details are set out at Enclosure 1.

- (a) ***Facilitating effective language education policy formulation and implementation through initiating research studies, including longitudinal research and comparative studies in local and international setting***

6. Since December 2015, over twenty bottom-up research and development projects on priority themes initiated by different scholars

and researchers of local tertiary institutions and professional bodies have been launched to further facilitate effective language education policy formulation and implementation. The projects will be completed around mid-2018. A second round of invitation of proposals on wider scope of priority themes for bottom-up research and development projects started in March 2017.

7. To track changes of the language landscape of Hong Kong, the Thematic Household Survey 2018 will be conducted in the first half of 2018. Meanwhile, taking into account the continuing importance of English in the workplace of Hong Kong, a study with a focus on examining the English language competency of employees is being conducted. In the coming years, in view of the changing social, demographic and education contexts, a number of research studies on (i) early language and literacy development in Chinese and English language; (ii) study of Chinese language learning of NCS students; and (iii) further studies on language proficiency of working adults will be conducted.

- (b) *Strengthening support of language learning in Chinese and English language in very early years*
- (c) *Enhancing professional preparation and continuing development of language teachers*

8. Since the commencement of the 2015/16 school year, the “Scheme on Early Language and Literacy Development in Chinese and English Language of Young Children” has been implemented to strengthen the support of language learning in Chinese and English languages in very early years. The Scheme is planned to be continued till the 2021/22 school year for more kindergartens and teachers.

9. On-site or networked professional support services customised to the contexts of individual schools for effective Chinese and English language learning/teaching and whole-school language curriculum planning have been and will continue to be provided to primary and secondary schools throughout the year.

10. The “Grant Scheme on Promoting Effective English Language Learning in Primary Schools” has been scheduled for launching in the

2017/18 school year with a view to further promoting effective English language learning and teaching in primary schools.

(d) Catering for learner diversity, including the needs of Non-native Chinese Speaking (NCS) students

11. We have collaborated with non-government organisations (NGOs) in organising district-based programmes for NCS children (aged 3 to 9) to motivate them to learn Chinese through fun activities. Hands-on and quality Chinese language learning and teaching resources, such as apps and corpus for non-Chinese speakers have been launched since the first half of 2017. Efforts will continue to be made to encourage, motivate and support NCS students to learn Chinese language especially in their early years as well as subsequent schooling through partnership with NGOs and other stakeholders.

(e) Creating and nurturing a facilitating language learning environment for students in and beyond school settings through partnership with relevant stakeholders, in particular, the community

12. Various creative and interesting Chinese (including Putonghua) and English language activities and programmes have been and will continue to be organised in schools/communities throughout the year. The annual territory-wide World Book Day Fest on promotion of reading was held in April 2017 with participation of over 2 700 students, teachers, principals and members of the public.

(f) Raising language proficiency of Hong Kong's workforce in response to the changing language landscape.

13. Vocational Chinese language courses recognised under the Qualifications Framework for NCS school leavers have been launched since April 2016 through tertiary institutions. More courses will be developed by tertiary institutions/training centres in the coming school years to meet the needs of NCS school leavers. Furthermore, under the Workplace English Campaign, publicity and public education programmes (such as producing TV programmes and mobile apps) have

been and will continue to be organised throughout the year to heighten public awareness on the importance of English in the workplace.

14. Members of SCOLAR, comprising renowned language/language education academics, experienced principals and teachers, private sector personalities and parents, will from time to time, look into the changing needs of our students and the workforce, accord appropriate priorities and provide constructive feedback on details of the initiatives under planning. SCOLAR members will also closely monitor the implementation of the initiatives upon approval. The overall impact of the initiatives will be continuously reviewed to provide feedback for fine-tuning the implementation and facilitate planning of other initiative. SCOLAR would also regularly consider new circumstances and findings that warrant further consideration of strategic directions and new projects.

15. As at end May 2017, the available balance of the Language Fund (setting aside the \$5 billion seed capital) was \$0.561 billion.

Advice Sought

16. Members are invited to note the progress of the initiatives funded by the Language Fund.

Education Bureau
July 2017

Enclosure 1

Strategic Area (a): Facilitating effective language education policy formulation and implementation through initiating research studies, including longitudinal research and comparative studies in local and international settings				
Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(1) Bottom-up research and development projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To encourage and fund more research and development projects, including literature review and comparative studies, from tertiary institutions and professional bodies on Chinese and English language learning/development, diversified pedagogy and assessment that cater for learner diversity of achieving particular language goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students and adults 	The first round of projects on three priority themes have been launched and will be completed by 2018. The second call for funding applications of projects on five priority themes is in progress. New approved projects will commence from mid-2018.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over twenty bottom-up research and development projects being carried out since December 2015 - Generating new knowledge or filling gaps for pedagogical applications in local context to support the implementation of various initiatives on language education
(2) Language Landscape Studies – Thematic Household Survey 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To continue to study the use of Chinese (including Putonghua) and English language, and the needs and practice of bilingualism of people of Hong Kong in different contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students and adults 	The Survey was completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The report on the findings was released to the public by the Census & Statistics Department in February 2016 - Tracked changes of

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Language Landscape Studies – Thematic Household Survey 2018	- To continue to study the use of Chinese language (including Putonghua) and English language, and the needs and practice of bilingualism of people of Hong Kong in different contexts	- General public, especially students and adults	The Study is planned to be conducted by Census & Statistics Department in the first half of 2018	the language landscape of Hong Kong and identify the trends, patterns or gaps in language competencies of different age groups to better inform SCOLAR in formulating measures for raising language proficiency

Strategic Area (a): Facilitating effective language education policy formulation and implementation through initiating research studies, including longitudinal research and comparative studies in local and international settings				
Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(3) Studies on early language and literacy development in Chinese and English language	- To research on the Chinese and English language and literacy development of young children, including tracking through longitudinal studies, children's language learning/development at different stages	- Pre-primary to junior primary students(aged 3 – 9)	Preparation in progress	---
(4) Study of Chinese language learning of NCS students	- To continue to research on how NCS students learn Chinese language in the classrooms and what they learn	- Pre-primary to junior primary students (aged 3 – 9)	Preparation in progress	---
(5) Studies on language proficiency of working adults	- To examine the language proficiency (including spoken and written Chinese and English language) of the work force of Hong Kong	- Working adults of different age and profession	A study on English language competency of employees aged 20-29 is underway	Gaps, if any, between expected and perceived English language competency of employees aged 20-29 and language training needs will be identified.

Strategic Area (b): Strengthening support of language learning in Chinese and English language in very early years; and (c): Enhancing professional preparation and continuing development of language teachers				
Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(1) Support scheme on early language and literacy development in Chinese and English language of young children	- To provide professional support services to kindergartens and focused training and tailor-made learning/teaching resources (e.g. storybooks) to kindergarten teachers on Chinese and English language education in early years	- Pre-primary students (aged 3–6)	- Launched since 2015/16 school year - To be continued till 2021/22 school year	- Building a professional teaching force and knowledge community in the KG sector for smooth implementation of the Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide 2017 - Developing more effective language learning/teaching strategies to meet children's diverse needs, abilities and interest - Developing quality resources on Chinese/English language learning/teaching

Strategic Area (b): Strengthening support of language learning in Chinese and English language in very early years; and (c): Enhancing professional preparation and continuing development of language teachers				
Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(2) Task Force on school-based language support service	- To continue to provide primary and secondary schools with on-site or networked professional support services customised to the contexts of individual schools for effective Chinese and English language learning/teaching and whole-school language curriculum planning, interface between different stages of schooling especially Kindergarten/Primary One, learning of Chinese for NCS students	- Kindergarten, primary and secondary schools	Provided throughout the years	An average of about 290 schools benefit from intensive on-site support and another 55 from networked/ consultancy services each year. Evaluation results consistently affirm that the participating schools were satisfied with the support services and considered them effective in enhancing holistic curriculum planning, learning and teaching effectiveness and assessment literacy.

Strategic Area (b): Strengthening support of language learning in Chinese and English language in very early years; and (c): Enhancing professional preparation and continuing development of language teachers				
Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(3) Tailor-made training for English teachers	- To offer quality professional development programme(s) (e.g. language across curriculum) for English language teachers in primary and secondary schools	- Primary and secondary school teachers	Preparation in progress	---
(4) Enhancing the teaching of Chinese Language Subject	- To continue to consolidate experience, disseminate good practices and formulate initiatives conducive to the teaching of Chinese (including Putonghua)	- Primary and secondary students	Ongoing	To further enhance the Chinese (including Putonghua) proficiency of students

Strategic Area (b): Strengthening support of language learning in Chinese and English language in very early years; and (c): Enhancing professional preparation and continuing development of language teachers				
Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(5) Customised Support to schools for effective language learning and teaching	- To provide funding for schools to enrol students on a locally accredited vocational English course to develop their English proficiency, enhance their confidence and interest in learning English and prepare them for vocational education and work	- Secondary schools	Schools will be invited to apply for the funding to provide subsidies for at least 20 of their S4/S5 students to enrol on a locally accredited vocational English course offered by post-secondary institutions	To provide additional pathways for about 1 000 students who are weak in English and prepare to pursue vocational education or to work right after leaving secondary school

Strategic Area (b): Strengthening support of language learning in Chinese and English language in very early years; and (c): Enhancing professional preparation and continuing development of language teachers				
Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(6) Chinese and English Language Enhancement Programme for Kindergarten Teachers	- To enhance kindergarten teachers' language competencies and subject/pedagogical knowledge and skills for implementing the Kindergarten Curriculum Guide 2017	- Kindergarten teachers	Post-secondary or tertiary institutions which currently offer early childhood education programme are being invited to offer short courses to kindergarten teachers from 2017/18 to 2019/20	Building up kindergarten teachers' teaching capacity and enhancing their language proficiency

Strategic Area (b): Strengthening support of language learning in Chinese and English language in very early years; and (c): Enhancing professional preparation and continuing development of language teachers				
Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(7) Grant Scheme on Promoting Effective English Language Learning in Primary Schools	- To provide a grant for primary schools to develop their school-based curriculum initiatives for further strengthening the learning and teaching of English Language and to achieve sustainable effects after completion of the Scheme	- Primary schools	Approved schools of the first round will commence their plan from 2017/18 school year (second term)	Up to 500 primary schools are expected to enhance their capacity to further strengthen English language learning and teaching, with sustainable effects through the scheme

Strategic Area (d): Catering for learner diversity, including the needs of NCS students				
Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(1) Development of supporting learning and teaching materials for NCS students learning Chinese language	- To develop tailor-made learning aids (e.g. multi-media/web-based materials, e-packages) and Chinese readers	- Students	Projects commenced in the latter half of 2016	Resources, such as apps and corpus for non-Chinese speakers have been launched since the first half of 2017
(2) Development of community projects for NCS children in early years	- To continue to organise fun and educational programmes in the community to motivate and support NCS children to learn Chinese language in their early years	- Pre-primary students (aged 3–9)	Projects have been launched since mid-September 2015	In 2016/17 school year, two district-based programmes are organised for NCS children to enhance their exposure to Chinese

Strategic Area (e): Creating and nurturing a facilitating language learning environment for students in and beyond school settings through partnership with relevant stakeholders, in particular, the community				
Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
Promotion of Chinese (including Putonghua) and English language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To continue to implement Chinese (including Putonghua) and English language school-based or community projects/programmes - To encourage/sponsor bottom-up initiatives that promote the importance of reading, language learning and language use in Chinese and English language, thereby rendering a facilitating language environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students and general public 	Activities/ programmes have been organised in schools/communities throughout the years	In 2016/17 school year, 24 Chinese (including Putonghua) and English language projects/ programmes are organised

Strategic Area (f): Raising language proficiency of Hong Kong's workforce in response to the changing language landscape				
Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(1) Development of vocational Chinese language programmes for NCS school leavers	- To provide vocational Chinese language courses (pegged to Qualification Framework Level 1 or 2) to NCS school leavers for improving their Chinese language proficiency	- NCS school leavers	Programmes will be extended to July 2019	19 classes have been run and 282 NCS school leavers have attended the courses to improve their Chinese proficiency and employability
(2) Workplace Language Campaign: Workplace English Campaign	- To continue to promote vocational English to the workforce to raise their awareness on the importance of English language at workplace	- Working adults	Publicity and public education programmes have been organised throughout the year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TV programme "English Made Easy 2017" is being broadcast - Mobile app on workplace English with over 19 500 downloads on Android and iOS platforms since its launch