

Speaking Notes of
Mr. Kevin Yeung Yun-hung, JP,
Secretary for Education
at the Special Meeting of the Legislative Council's Finance Committee
to examine the Estimates of Expenditure 2018-19
on 20 April 2018

Mr. Chairman,

Education is the key to nurturing talent. The Government attaches importance to investment in education and is willing to increase resources in education as a long term investment.

2. The total expenditure on education in 2018-19 will significantly increase by 28.4% to \$113.7 billion, accounting for 20.4 % of the total government expenditure. Of this, the recurrent education expenditure will increase by 5.6% to \$84.6 billion, accounting for 20.8 % of the total government recurrent expenditure. Both the recurrent and total education expenditures will respectively take up the largest share in the government expenditure among all policy areas. The recurrent expenditure on education has, over the ten years from 2009-10 to 2018-19, increased by 67% with an average growth rate of 5.8% per annum. This demonstrates the Government's long term commitment to invest in education.

3. In 2018-19, we will take forward the new measures announced in last year's Policy Address and this year's Budget, which include:

Kindergarten Education

- starting from the 2018/19 school year, adjusting the salary-related subsidies for teaching staff under the new kindergarten scheme according to the

annual civil service pay adjustment, and extending the tide-over grant for three more years up to the 2021/22 school year so that kindergartens may retain their long serving teachers;

Primary, Secondary and Special Education

- setting up a \$2.5 billion Student Activities Support Fund to support students with financial needs to participate in life-wide learning activities;
- reserving \$2 billion to expedite installation of lifts for public sector schools without such facilities;
- providing recurrent air-conditioning grant for public sector schools to cover the daily expenses of air-conditioning systems installed and reserving resources for installation of air-conditioning systems in schools based on their needs;
- regularising the Pilot Scheme on Promoting Interflows between Sister Schools in Hong Kong and the Mainland from the 2018/19 school year with a grant of \$150,000 per annum for each school;
- implementing the policy of “one school social worker for each school” in public sector primary schools and enhancing the provision of school social workers for special schools with a view to strengthening the social work and counselling services;
- enhancing the nursing support in special schools;

Post-secondary and Vocational and Professional Education

- setting up a \$12 billion Hostel Development Fund for easing the shortfall in hostels of UGC-funded universities;
- injecting \$3 billion into the Research Endowment Fund and deploying

\$70 million to provide studentship for local students admitted to UGC-funded research post-graduate programmes as early as practicable in the 2018/19 academic year;

- besides continuing to implement the seventh round of Matching Grant Scheme, planning to launch the eighth round of Matching Grant Scheme of \$2.5 billion for eligible publicly-funded post-secondary institutions to apply;
- regularising the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors from the 2018/19 academic year and increasing the number of subsidised places from about 1 000 per cohort to 3 000 per cohort;
- making injection of \$800 million into the HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund;
- regularising the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme from the 2019/20 academic year;
- reserving resources to regularise the Pilot Training and Support Scheme;

Others

- inviting the Quality Education Fund Steering Committee to consider allocating \$3 billion for application by kindergartens and schools through simplified procedures in order to implement measures relating to school-based curriculum development and student support measures, as well as the relevant school improvement works and procurement of supplies, with a view to enhancing learning from different perspectives;
- making injection of \$800 million into the Gifted Education Fund for deploying diversified strategies to enhance support to gifted education;
- providing a one-off support grant of \$2,000 to each of the students who are eligible for receiving means-tested student financial assistance in the 2018/19 school year; and

- paying the examination fees for school candidates sitting for the 2019 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) as a one-off measure.

4. Besides, the Financial Secretary has reserved \$2 billion for recurrent education expenditure. Together with the \$1.4 billion earmarked by the current-term Government upon taking office, there will be a total of \$3.4 billion recurrent funding reserved for continued implementation of quality education. We will discuss with the education sector, and take into account the suggestions of the task forces set up to review various policy aspects of education, in considering the way forward for improvement of education policies and the best use of the additional resources, including enhancing the professional development of teachers, strengthening support for kindergartens, reviewing and improving integrated education, and supporting schools in enhancing promotion of life-wide learning.

5. Regarding the non-recurrent funding of \$18.7 billion reserved by the Financial Secretary, \$3 billion is used for injection into the Research Endowment Fund. □ We will also utilise \$500 million to implement the work plan of the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals. We will continue to explore the optimal use of the remaining \$15.2 billion reserved funding to further support the academic and research development in the higher education sector.

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

Education Bureau

20 April 2018