

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 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 on 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 for 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 been planning and implementing 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.

- (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 a wider scope of priority themes for bottom-up research and development projects started in March 2017.

7. In 2012 and 2015, SCOLAR has investigated, through the Thematic Household Survey 2012 and 2015 of Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) the language use of the people of Hong Kong. To further track the changes of the language landscape of Hong Kong, SCOLAR has commissioned C&SD to investigate the language use of the people of Hong Kong again in the Thematic Household Survey 2018 which is now underway. Meanwhile, taking into account the continuing importance of English in the workplace of Hong Kong, SCOLAR has commissioned a study with a focus on examining the English language competency of employees. In the coming years, in view of the changing social, demographic and education contexts, research studies on areas such as (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, SCOLAR has implemented the “Scheme on Early Language and Literacy Development in Chinese and English Language of Young Children” to strengthen the support of language learning in Chinese and English languages in very early years. The Scheme will continue till the 2021/22 school year for more kindergartens and teachers. Moreover, to enhance kindergarten teachers’ language competencies and pedagogical content knowledge for smoothly and effectively implementing the Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide (2017), SCOLAR launched the “Chinese and English Language Enhancement Programme for Kindergarten Teachers” in the 2017/18 school year. Post-secondary

and/or tertiary institution offering pre-/in-service early childhood education (teacher training) programmes are invited to organise short courses for kindergarten teachers.

9. SCOLAR has engaged Language Learning Support Section to provide 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 to primary and secondary schools throughout the year. Such support will continue in the coming two school years.

10. SCOLAR has put in place the “Grant Scheme on Promoting Effective English Language Learning in Primary Schools” since 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. SCOLAR has 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. SCOLAR has organised various creative and interesting Chinese (including Putonghua) and English language activities and programmes in schools/communities throughout the year and will continue to do so in the coming year. The annual territory-wide World Book Day Fest,

co-organised by SCOLAR and the Education Bureau, was held in April 2018 with participation of over 3 000 students, teachers, principals and members of the public, marking the launch of the city-wide reading promotion campaign “Discover and Share the Joy of Reading”.

(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 by SCOLAR since April 2016 through tertiary institutions. More courses sponsored by SCOLAR 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 launched by SCOLAR, publicity and public education programmes have been and will continue to be organised 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 initiatives. SCOLAR would also regularly consider new circumstances and findings that warrant further consideration of strategic directions and new projects.

15. As at end April 2018, the available balance of the Language Fund (setting aside the \$5 billion seed capital) was \$0.576 billion.

Advice Sought

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

Education Bureau
August 2018

Enclosure

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	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	Students and adults	The first round of projects on three priority themes will be completed in late 2018. The second round of projects are expected to be completed around 2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over thirty bottom-up research and development projects 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 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 being conducted by the Census & Statistics Department.	To track changes of 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

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
				formulating measures for raising language proficiency
(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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three bottom-up research and development projects under the priority theme of “Chinese language learning or English language exposure of learners in early years” were approved in 2018. - Further study/studies to be explored. 	---
(4) Study of Chinese language learning of	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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Five bottom-up research and development projects under the 	---

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
NCS students			<p>priority theme of “Learning of Chinese language of non-Chinese speaking learners” were approved in 2018.</p> <p>- Further study/studies to be explored.</p>	
(5) Studies on language proficiency of working adults	To examine the language proficiency (including spoken and written Chinese and English language) of the workforce of Hong Kong	Working adults of different age and profession	A study on English language competency of employees aged 20-29 will be completed around late 2018.	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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Launched since 2015/16 school year - To be continued till 2021/22 school year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 kindergartens, 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	Kindergartens, primary and secondary schools	Provided throughout the years	In 2017/18, 254 schools benefitted from intensive on-site support and another 101 from networked/ consultancy services. 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.
(3) Tailor-made training for English teachers	To offer quality professional development programme(s) for English language teachers in primary and secondary schools	Primary and secondary school teachers	Professional Development Incentive Grant Scheme for Language Teachers” is available for application by	Continuing to encourage teachers to pursue programmes for enhancing their subject knowledge and pedagogy

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
			eligible teachers (subsidy revised upward to a maximum of \$62,500 from September 2017) to pursue recognised programmes	
(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
(5) 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 have organised about twenty short courses for about	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
			<p>450 kindergarten teachers in the 2017/18 school year.</p> <p>- Short courses will be offered to kindergarten teachers in 2018/19 and 2019/20</p>	
(6) 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 commenced their plans in the 2017/18 school year (second term). The approved schools of the second round will take forward the school-based curriculum initiatives from the 2018/19 school year.	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	To develop tailor-made learning aids (e.g. multi-media/web-based materials, e-packages) and Chinese readers	Students	Two projects have been completed and one is in progress.	Two sets of teaching and learning materials were developed and launched in 2017/18.
(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 August 2017.	In the 2017/18 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 	Students and general public	Activities/ programmes have been organised in schools/communities throughout the years.	In the 2017/18 school year, 29 Chinese (including Putonghua) and English language projects/programmes are organized.

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 and employability	NCS school leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualifications Framework (QF) Level 2 Programme was launched in September 2017. - Level 1 Programme will be launched upon accreditation by the QF. 	In the 2017/18 school year, about 130 NCS school leavers have enrolled for the programme.
(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 organized.	Mobile app on workplace English with over 24 300 downloads on Android and iOS platforms since its launch.

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
(3) 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	40 schools have been selected to join the programme and will receive 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.	About 800 students who are prepared to pursue vocational education or to work right after leaving secondary school will benefit from the programme.