

**Progress report on the motion on  
“Implementing diversified education to alleviate  
the pressure on students and parents”  
at the Legislative Council meeting of 30 January 2019**

The Legislative Council passed at its meeting of 30 January 2019 a motion moved by Hon Starry LEE and amended by Hon Claudia MO, Hon Charles Peter MOK, Hon HO Kai-ming, Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG, Hon SHIU Ka-chun and Hon Tanya CHAN on “Implementing diversified education to alleviate the pressure on students and parents” (full text of the motion at Annex). This report informs Members on the Government’s stance and the progress of relevant tasks.

2. It has always been the Government’s goal to provide students with diversified and quality education. On curricula at the primary and secondary levels, we have, over the years, participated in international curriculum studies to enable the local curricula to meet global and local development needs. To keep abreast of the ever-changing developments in our society, the region and the world, Hong Kong’s school curriculum development has entered a new era of “Learning to Learn 2+”<sup>1</sup> since 2017. Through ongoing renewal of curriculum guides for various key stages and key learning areas (KLAs), as well as introduction of curriculum key emphases, the school curriculum could equip young people with the necessary knowledge and competencies.

3. Members raised in the motion their concern about the pressure on students and parents. Students may experience pressure originating from expectations of their own and of parents, academic performance, to name but a few. We should avoid putting the blame squarely on the education system, homework load, opportunities for further education, etc. Over-simplifying the issue may hinder the provision of support that is most appropriate for students. In addition, we will adopt various measures to further strengthen parent education and provide more support for parents.

4. The Education Bureau (EDB) has thoroughly considered the recommendations made in the motion. Relevant information and the progress

---

<sup>1</sup> **Learning to Learn 2+**: The Curriculum Development Council updated the Basic Education Curriculum Guide (Primary 1-6) in 2014 and used the term “Learning to Learn 2.0” to denote that curriculum development had advanced with the times since the introduction of “Learning to Learn” curriculum reform in 2001. Upon the release of the updated Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide and Secondary Education Curriculum Guide in 2017, the 15-year central school curriculum framework has also been renewed to reflect that “Learning to Learn 2.0” has entered a new era of ongoing curriculum renewal, i.e. “Learning to Learn 2+”.

of various measures are set forth below for reference.

### **Curricula at the Primary and Secondary Levels**

5. School curricula in different countries/regions are developed in light of their local contexts. Hong Kong is no exception. We attach great importance to the biliterate and trilingual abilities of students, and encourage them to, from a young age, appreciate Chinese culture and learn about the history and development of our country so as to acquire a sense of national identity and a global outlook. Characterised by these features, the local curricula could meet the needs of the Hong Kong society. As a matter of fact, the quality of education in Hong Kong has been recognised worldwide, and a wealth of talent has been nurtured here as shown by our students' remarkable achievements in different international contests. At present, the results of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination are accepted as entry qualification by over 280 higher education institutions, including world-renowned ones. In the 2019/20 academic year, 112 higher education institutions in the Mainland will admit Hong Kong students on the basis of their results of the HKDSE Examination, exempting them from taking the Joint Entrance Examination for Universities in the People's Republic of China. Moreover, as reflected by the new UCAS Tariff announced by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service of the United Kingdom in September 2017, level 3 to level 5\*\* in the HKDSE Examination remain comparable to grade E to grade A\* in the General Certificate of Education A Level Examination. The above indicate that the local curricula are quality-assured and comparable to other non-local curricula in terms of quality.

6. To timely respond to local and global changes at different levels and in different realms, curriculum guides for various key stages and KLAs have been successively updated since 2014, and new development emphases<sup>2</sup> (such as STEM education and coding education) have been identified for the primary and secondary school curricula, with the aim of preparing our students for a knowledge-based, technologically advanced and increasingly globalised world. In November 2017, the EDB set up the Task Force on Review of School Curriculum to conduct a holistic review of the primary and secondary school curricula. Four pivotal areas, namely whole-person development, catering for

---

<sup>2</sup> **Major Renewed Emphases of the secondary school curriculum:** strengthening values education; reinforcing the learning of Chinese history and Chinese culture; extending “Reading to Learn” to “Language across the Curriculum”; promoting STEM education and information technology education; fostering an entrepreneurial spirit; diversifying life-wide learning experiences; stepping up gifted education; and enhancing the learning and teaching of Chinese as a second language.

learner diversity, multiple pathways and STEM education, have been identified for in-depth deliberation. The Task Force will continue meeting with major stakeholders to solicit their views and suggestions on how to refine the implementation of the school curricula. The Task Force plans to submit its report by the end of 2019 to make directional recommendations to the Government.

7. Public sector schools should adopt the local curriculum that caters for the learning needs of local students, and the EDB has put in place different measures to support schools in implementing the local curriculum for the provision of quality education. The EDB has no plan to introduce any international curriculum to public sector schools. As Hong Kong is an international metropolis, our education policies seek to address the needs of different people and make available a wide range of appropriate choices. Apart from public sector schools, parents may opt for Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools or private schools having regard to the learning needs of their children. At present, some DSS schools, in addition to the local curriculum, offer the non-local curriculum to a small proportion of their senior secondary students, and some private schools also deliver the non-local curriculum.

### **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Education, Coding Education and Online Learning**

8. In line with the global trend in education development, and to enable students to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to respond to the rapid development of economy, science and technology as well as various changes and challenges in society, the Government has made great effort to promote STEM education in recent years. At the primary and secondary levels, STEM education is implemented through the curricula of the Science Education, Technology Education and Mathematics Education KLAs. In late 2016, the EDB released the *Report on Promotion of STEM Education - Unleashing Potential in Innovation*, which recommended a number of measures, such as renewing the curricula in the Science Education, Technology Education and Mathematics Education KLAs, enriching learning activities for students, providing resources for schools, enhancing professional development of teachers, strengthening partnership with community key stakeholders, conducting reviews and disseminating good practices. These measures have been implemented in a progressive manner. The promotion of STEM education is student-oriented. Learning and teaching strategies are refined to help students grasp how to integrate and apply what they have learnt in solving problems, through which students' creativity, collaborative and problem-solving

skills can be enhanced and their innovativeness can be developed. Besides, schools may implement STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) education that incorporates the elements of Arts Education on top of the three KLAs of Science Education, Technology Education and Mathematics Education. Other KLAs such as language education may be brought into play as appropriate.

9. Conducting a review of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) curriculum at the senior secondary level, the EDB is deliberating over an increase in lesson time for programming and the incorporation of artificial intelligence into the curriculum. In 2018, the EDB consulted stakeholders, including the public sector and DSS secondary schools that offered the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) curriculum, related professional bodies and academics from universities, on the proposed revisions. The stakeholders generally agreed with the proposed revisions. As for the junior secondary level, learning contents of programming under the ICT knowledge context of the Technology Education KLA curriculum have been revised in a timely manner. According to the curriculum updated in 2017, schools are recommended to allocate at least 30% of lesson time of the ICT knowledge context to teach programming. In respect of promoting coding education at the primary level, the EDB compiled the *Computational Thinking - Coding Education: Supplement to the Primary Curriculum* (Supplement) in 2017 for schools' adoption. The Supplement seeks to further enhance the delivery of coding education in primary schools and develop students' computational thinking. The EDB is reviewing the Supplement for further refinements so as to prepare students for local and global changes and support schools' development through ongoing curriculum renewal.

10. To dovetail with the latest technological development, the EDB organises professional development programmes (PDPs) in a timely manner to facilitate teachers' understanding on technology advancement. From the 2017/18 to 2019/20 school years, the EDB offers five batches of Intensive Training Programme (ITP) on STEM education to school leaders and middle managers in public sector and DSS primary and secondary schools. With a focus on strengthening the holistic curriculum planning and cross-KLAs / cross-curricular collaboration in schools, the ITP aims to further enhance teachers' professional capabilities for planning and implementing school-based activities on STEM education. The EDB also runs PDPs on an ongoing basis to strengthen teachers' abilities to deliver coding education, and develop learning and teaching resources for teachers' adoption. As at end-February 2019, the first three batches of ITP and the training courses on coding education have been

completed. The fourth batch of ITP has commenced in the second term of the 2018/19 school year.

11. On the provision of support measures, the EDB respectively disbursed a one-off grant of \$100,000 and \$200,000 to each public sector or DSS primary and secondary school in the 2016/17 and 2017/18 school years for strengthening or initiating school-based STEM education. To further promote STEM education, the Quality Education Fund (QEF) has adopted STEM education as a priority theme to encourage the school sector to apply for funding to develop related projects. The QEF has earlier earmarked \$3 billion to set up the Dedicated Funding Programme for Publicly-funded Schools, under which schools may apply for funding to introduce school-based curriculum design and/or support measures for students, including programmes that support school-based STEM education. As proposed in the *2018 Policy Address*, a new recurrent Life-wide Learning Grant with an annual provision of about \$900 million will be provided to public sector and DSS primary and secondary schools starting from the 2019/20 school year. The Grant will support schools in taking forward life-wide learning with enhanced efforts, including STEM-related learning activities. In the *2019-20 Budget*, the Financial Secretary proposed to allocate \$500 million to implement the IT Innovation Lab in Secondary Schools Programme in the coming three school years. Schools may consider applying for funding from the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer to procure the necessary information technology equipment and professional services, as well as to organise related learning activities for students.

12. In respect of promoting Information Technology in Education (IT in Education), the EDB has implemented the Fourth Strategy on IT in Education since the 2015/16 school year, under which a Wi-Fi campus is established for all public sector primary and secondary schools to facilitate students' e-learning in class through the use of mobile computer devices. In some schools, the "Bring Your Own Device" (BYOD) policy has been implemented to further leverage the use of mobile computer devices in learning. Given that the development of BYOD may impose financial burden on students from low-income families, the Community Care Fund (CCF) launched an assistance programme in the 2018/19 school year, under which financially needy students are subsidised to purchase mobile computer devices for e-learning. Such an initiative dovetails with the promotion of e-learning in public sector schools. In facilitating e-learning among students, schools employ different strategies in light of their contexts. Some schools procure, by means of grants provided by the EDB, mobile computer devices for students so that they could engage in e-learning in class

without the need to bring their own devices, while some schools put in place the BYOD policy to facilitate more personalised learning among students. As for the needy students studying in schools that implement the BYOD policy, the CCF renders support through the assistance programme to ensure that students' learning will not be undermined because of financial difficulties.

### **Small Class Teaching**

13. Conceptually speaking, small class teaching (SCT) is more of a teaching strategy involving instructional setting or grouping driven by pedagogical considerations. The size of grouping should be adjusted according to the learning objectives and students' needs. International studies have suggested that SCT is more effective when students are of a younger age and its effectiveness tends to wane as students age. Since the 2009/10 school year, the EDB has been progressively implementing SCT in public sector primary schools in a pragmatic and flexible manner where circumstances permit. At present, 343 (around 80%) public sector primary schools have implemented SCT. According to the current projections of Primary 1 school-age population, the overall demand for Primary 1 places is expected to peak in the 2018/19 school year, and then gradually reach a stable level. Both the EDB and the school sector consider that this will create favourable conditions for more schools to implement SCT. The EDB has therefore issued letters to invite all schools which have not yet implemented SCT to plan and make early preparation so that they can implement SCT as soon as practicable where the supply and demand of school places allow. In considering whether to implement SCT at the secondary level, we should take into account the current conditions, the learning and teaching environment of secondary schools as well as the availability of support for them, overseas experience, international studies and findings on SCT and resource implications, etc., and assess whether it is effective, feasible and sustainable for secondary schools, as in primary schools, to reduce their class size across the board. Having regard to the aforementioned considerations, and given that the number of Secondary 1 students is expected to rebound steadily from the 2017/18 school year onwards, we have no plan to implement SCT in secondary schools.

### **Mainland and Overseas Exchange and Internship Programmes**

14. The EDB has been actively promoting the Mainland exchange programmes for primary and secondary school students. Starting from the 2017/18 school year, over 100 000 exchange places are offered every year, which are sufficient for every student to join at least one Mainland exchange

programme in their primary and secondary stages of education respectively. Such programmes enable students to consolidate classroom learning, broaden their horizons and deepen their understanding of our country. With students' participation on a voluntary basis, the Mainland exchange programmes are well-received by schools and parents, with positive feedback from participating teachers and students. The number of student participants has continued to rise in recent years. The number of primary and secondary school students participating in the Mainland exchange programmes has increased from about 37 000 in the 2013/14 school year to about 67 000 in the 2017/18 school year.

15. As proposed in the *2018 Policy Address*, public sector and DSS schools will be provided with the Life-wide Learning Grant starting from the 2019/20 school year. The Grant supports schools in taking forward life-wide learning with enhanced efforts by organising more experiential learning activities outside the classroom, such as after-school activities on arts and sports, visits to museums, service learning, exchanges outside Hong Kong and workplace experience programmes. These activities enable students to learn in authentic contexts, broaden their horizons and foster their whole-person development. The Grant may also be used as top-up funding as necessary to support the Mainland exchange programmes for students.

16. As to exchange activities for post-secondary students, the EDB has implemented since January 2015 the Scheme for Subsidy on Exchange for Post-secondary Students, under which means-tested subsidies are provided through the participating local post-secondary institutions to encourage local students with financial need to participate in exchange programmes outside Hong Kong. To grasp the new opportunities arising from the Belt and Road (B&R) Initiative and to enhance and foster educational exchanges between Hong Kong and the B&R regions, the EDB launched the Scheme for Subsidy on Exchange to Belt and Road Regions for Post-secondary Students in July 2016 to encourage and subsidise local students with financial need to participate in exchange activities in the B&R regions. The amount of subsidy to be provided under the two schemes is subject to the destination and duration of the exchange activity. Since introduction, over 6 400 local post-secondary students have benefited from the two schemes. The EDB will continue to facilitate the implementation of the schemes, enabling local students to broaden their global outlook through participation in exchange activities outside Hong Kong.

17. The University Grants Committee (UGC) have all along been encouraging its funded universities to pursue internationalisation in forms appropriate to their contexts, and enhance collaboration with universities outside

Hong Kong in such areas as curriculum development, research and student exchange. The UGC-funded universities have actively pursued internationalisation and strengthened connection with the Mainland, with a view to equipping their students with an international vision and the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes. Through the four-year undergraduate programmes, the universities could provide students with more opportunities to engage in overseas exchange, work experience and internship programmes, which aim to broaden students' global outlook and experience. In the 2017/18 academic year, the eight UGC-funded universities entered into nearly 2 400 exchange agreements (including those at faculty and unit levels) with institutions around the world, under which some 6 500 participants engaged in exchange activities outside Hong Kong.

18. In the 2019-22 triennium, the UGC set up a subsidy scheme of \$50 million to further support its funded universities in pursuing internationalisation and enriching students' learning experiences through, among others, Mainland and overseas exchange and internship programmes. The Government of the HKSAR will continue its effort to reinforce Hong Kong's status as a regional education hub with a view to nurturing talents for different industries and enhancing Hong Kong's competitiveness. In this connection, the EDB has been actively promoting internationalisation and diversification of higher education.

### **Homework, Parent Education and Home-school Co-operation**

19. Homework is an important component in learning and teaching at school. Taking different forms outside lesson time, homework enables students to consolidate their learning in class, stimulate their thinking, enhance their understanding of lesson topics and construct knowledge. Homework helps students review what has been learnt and acquire new knowledge. The education sector generally agrees that homework has positive educational functions in the learning and teaching process, and it should not simply be equated with study pressure. The sector considers that a suitable school-based homework policy could cater for the diverse learning abilities and characteristics of students, and thus has a positive impact on student learning. The EDB has all along emphasised that it is the quality rather than quantity of homework that matters. In Chapter 4 "Effective Learning and Teaching" and Chapter 8 "Meaningful Homework" of the "*Basic Education Curriculum Guide - To Sustain, Deepen and Focus on Learning to Learn (Primary 1-6)*" updated in 2014, and the EDB Circular No. 18/2015 "Guidelines on Homework and Tests in Schools - No Drilling, Effective Learning", a number of guiding principles and proposed measures are set out to

help schools formulate and implement a school-based homework policy. It is reiterated that schools should formulate an appropriate school-based homework policy that caters for the needs of students with varying abilities and levels. We encourage schools to design homework that stimulates students' thinking and enables them to consolidate and apply what they have learnt. Homework in the form of mechanical drilling should be avoided. We will continue to work in this area and maintain communication with primary and secondary schools councils, regional school heads associations, major school sponsoring bodies, etc., reminding them to give due attention to the quality and quantity of homework and further promote interesting and meaningful homework. Moreover, we will strengthen school-based professional support and continue to organise related professional development programmes for newly-appointed principals, deputy principals, curriculum leaders, middle managers, panel chairs and teachers. To enhance teachers' professional capacity, we will reiterate and elaborate on the principles and policy of setting meaningful homework in these professional development programmes. Good practices will also be disseminated for schools' reference. We gain an understanding of schools' implementation of their school-based homework policy through inspections, school visits, daily contacts, etc. and make recommendations on improving the quality of homework depending on the circumstances. On parents' level, we will enhance parent education. For example, the updated information on the parent education website "Smart Parent Net" enables parents with children from kindergarten to primary and secondary school levels to easily access useful information (including articles and video clips) for supporting the physical and mental development of students, as well as helping their children with their studies. Parents are also encouraged to adopt positive education approaches, help their children learn effectively and establish a good parent-child relationship, so that their children will grow up healthily and happily.

20. Learning needs and abilities of students are diversified. The factors behind whether a student would find homework stressful are multifaceted and complicated. Even with the same homework arrangements, the time spent on homework varies significantly among students of the same grade in the same school. This indicates that the amount of homework is neither the main nor the unique factor affecting the time spent by students on homework. There are diversified modes of homework. Apart from paper-and-pencil exercises, homework could be in the mode of reading, information search, pre-lesson preparation, model design or project learning, etc. Homework is by no means equivalent to drilling exercises and rote learning tasks. We are of the view that we should neither simply quantify the number of hours spent daily by students on homework, nor set rigid indicators/guidelines for schools on the quantity

of/time spent on homework (including homework for long holidays) on an across-the-board basis. Schools and teachers should be allowed to assign homework and formulate school-based assessment policies professionally based on their school contexts and students' learning needs. As for individual students with learning difficulties, their schools and teachers should communicate with the parents, and adapt homework arrangements.

21. Whether to conduct a particular larger-scale activity that involves a great number of students such as School Retreat Day is a school-based decision subject to actual circumstances, including learner diversity, participation of stakeholders, expected learning targets and the need to adjust the number of active school days. Instead of requiring all schools to designate a School Retreat Day with an across-the-board approach, we encourage schools to make professional decisions in light of the school contexts and the learning abilities, interests and developmental needs of students. Schools are advised to facilitate students' learning by arranging appropriate learning activities and create more space for students to have sufficient time to rest, cultivate their interests and participate in various physical and aesthetic activities, and learn to communicate, collaborate and establish good interpersonal relationships.

22. Regarding parent education and promotion of home-school co-operation, the EDB has been supporting the Committee on Home-School Co-operation (CHSC) in organising different activities on home-school co-operation and parent education to help parents understand the developmental needs of their children. Around 70 activities were organised by the CHSC in the 2017/18 school year. Besides, the CHSC actively encourages schools to form Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) as a communication channel for strengthening ties and collaboration with parents. Currently, there are about 1 400 schools in Hong Kong with PTAs, including all government and aided primary and secondary schools as well as nearly one-third of kindergartens.

23. To further enhance support for parent education, the EDB launched in February 2018 a website called "Smart Parent Net", which enables parents of students from kindergartens, primary and secondary schools to have easier access to information provided by various stakeholders and government departments on supporting children's physical and psychological development, including parent-child relationship, character development, learning, mental health, emotional management, etc. The contents on the website are updated regularly. Schools are encouraged to upload the link of the "Smart Parent Net" onto the school websites and promote the "Smart Parent Net" through parent activities, so as to help parents master the knowledge and skills of nurturing their

children and encourage them to establish a good parent-child relationship through positive parenting, so that children grow up healthily and happily.

24. In addition, the EDB provides subsidies for school PTAs and Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations (FPTAs) of the 18 districts to organise different forms of programmes and activities on promoting the Happy Kids Charter, fostering parent-child relationship and developing children's communication skills, etc. with a view to promoting home-school co-operation. In the 2017/18 school year, PTAs and FPTAs organised, with the subsidies from the EDB, about 3 500 activities on home-school co-operation and parent education.

25. In December 2017, the Education Commission set up the Task Force on Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education to review the existing approach in promoting home-school co-operation and parent education and, based on the outcome of the review, to formulate the directions, strategies and measures for fostering home-school co-operation and parent education with a view to supporting parents in facilitating their children's effective learning as well as healthy and happy development, and avoiding excessive competition. The Task Force submitted its report to the Government in April 2019. Accepting all the recommendations, the Government has been progressively implementing relevant measures, including the provision of additional resources starting from the 2019/20 school year for FPTAs and school PTAs to organise more community-based and school-based programmes or activities on parent education. Besides, the Government plans to commission tertiary institutions or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to develop a coherent curriculum framework on parent education. It is expected that the developed curriculum framework will be adopted as a basis for designing all parent education courses, including territory-wide, community-based, school-based, e-learning and workplace parent education courses. A territory-wide "Positive Parent Campaign" is also in the pipeline to enable the public to understand the importance of happy and healthy development of children and enhance parents' awareness of positive parenting.

### **Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination**

26. The EDB has been taking different measures to alleviate the study pressure on students. Upon implementation of the New Academic Structure (NAS), all students can proceed to the three-year senior secondary education, removing the competition for receiving senior secondary education. The introduction of the HKDSE Examination as a replacement for two previous public examinations has also considerably reduced the frequency of

examinations and lessened the pressure on students. In tandem, we have been promoting life-wide learning through “Other Learning Experiences” and “Student Learning Profile” at the senior secondary level to avoid making students focused solely on subject learning. We also endeavour to enhance teachers’ assessment literacy and encourage “Assessment for Learning” with a view to averting undue emphasis on tests, examinations and mechanical drilling. After the implementation of the senior secondary curriculum under the NAS in 2009, the EDB conducted, in collaboration with the Curriculum Development Council and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA), the NAS Review from 2012 to 2015. A number of recommendations were put forward to reduce the workload of students and teachers, which included trimming, fine-tuning or updating curriculum contents and assessment arrangements for most of the senior secondary subjects; not implementing School-based Assessment (SBA) in 10 senior secondary subjects; and streamlining the SBA arrangements for 13 senior secondary subjects. Work related to the review and refinement of the senior secondary curriculum and assessment is being taken forward on an ongoing basis. Nonetheless, students react differently to pressure. To equip students for challenges ahead, we should help them develop positive values and attitudes, and boost their perseverance and resilience. As announced by the Chief Executive in the *2017 Policy Address*, various task forces have been set up by the EDB to handle education issues of greater significance. The Task Force on Review of School Curriculum is currently exploring issues about creating space for students and fostering their whole-person development. It is expected to make directional recommendations to the Government by the end of 2019, and those pertinent to the senior secondary curriculum may induce changes to the assessment mode of the HKDSE Examination.

27. At present, measures are put in place to alleviate the financial burden of the HKDSE Examination fees on needy students. For example, the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency administers the Examination Fee Remission Scheme which offers examination fee remission to eligible needy school candidates sitting public examinations conducted by the HKEAA. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) also provides financial assistance to students from families receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) to cover public examination fees. Therefore, eligible needy school candidates will not be denied participation in public examinations because of financial difficulties. In the *2018-19 Budget* and *2019-20 Budget*, the Financial Secretary proposed paying examination fees for candidates sitting for the 2019 and 2020 HKDSE Examinations to share the fruits of economic prosperity with citizens and as a one-off relief measure.

28. The HKEAA is an independent statutory body set up in accordance with the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Ordinance (HKEAAO) (Cap 261). The HKDSE Examination fees charged according to the HKEAAO is a major source of income of the HKEAA. In 2017/18, the income related to the HKDSE Examination accounted for about 52% of the HKEAA's income, while that related to international and professional examinations as well as other local examinations (including Territory-wide System Assessment and Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers) contributed to the remaining share of the income. The current mode of operation and cost structure of the HKEAA could not support the long-term operation of the HKDSE Examination, resulting in financial difficulties faced by the HKEAA. It will be difficult for the HKEAA to maintain effective operation of and continue to conduct the HKDSE Examination, and the problem is expected to aggravate in future. The Government is working out with the HKEAA a feasible proposal to ensure its long-term financial sustainability. A concrete plan is yet to be formulated. Views of members of relevant Legislative Council committees and stakeholders will be sought and carefully considered in the process to ensure that the recommended way forward can ensure HKEAA's long-term financial sustainability and provide continuous support for needy students at the same time in the long-term interests of society.

### **Primary 3 Territory-wide System Assessment**

29. Students' attainment of Basic Competencies gauged in the Primary 3 Territory-wide System Assessment (Primary 3 TSA) forms part of the and is the core requirements of the curriculum. Students are also expected to acquire Basic Competencies upon completion of each key learning stage. In 2018, the EDB accepted the recommendations made by the Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy, and implemented, in the same year and onwards, the Primary 3 TSA in the mode of a low-stake assessment and on the basis of "no student names, no school names, no collection of reports and selection of participants by sampling". Around 10% of students from each public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme school are sampled to participate in the assessment, and, the territory-wide level data provides the EDB with useful information to review education policies and curriculum planning.

30. If schools consider that the school report can help them understand the overall strengths and weaknesses of their students and formulate targeted measures to facilitate student learning, they may opt to arrange for all their Primary 3 students to participate in the assessment through the HKEAA and they

will be provided with school reports. Whether to arrange for all their Primary 3 students to participate in the assessment is a school-based professional decision made under the established decision-making mechanism by the school management committee/incorporated management committee in the best interest of students. Meanwhile, schools should maintain good communication with parents through establishing channels with a view to acknowledging and enabling them to understand the rationale for arranging all the Primary 3 students of the school to participate in the assessment. If individual parents or teachers have any concerns, they may approach schools.

31. On the other hand, as a follow-up to the reviews conducted from 2016 to 2018, the EDB has actively adopted various measures to eradicate the incentives for drilling induced by the TSA. These measures include removing TSA from the Key Performance Measures for primary schools, updating the EDB's internal guidelines on the use of TSA data, and strengthening professional training for schools (including school managers).

32. 2019 is the second year of implementing Primary 3 TSA under the new arrangements. It was smoothly conducted as in the previous year. The EDB will continue monitoring the implementation of TSA in schools through different means, such as inspections, school visits and related daily contacts, and questionnaires, etc., with a view to understanding the implementation of the Basic Competency Assessment at schools. According to the feedback collected via various channels, drilling is no longer observed. If relevant complaints are received, officers of the EDB's Regional Education Offices will ascertain and follow up.

### **Life Planning Education**

33. The EDB attaches great importance to nurturing of young people. Since the 2014/15 school year, we have provided additional resources and support for schools to implement life planning education, which facilitates secondary school students' self understanding and early identification of their personal interests, abilities and orientations. Meanwhile, the EDB encourages the business sector and community organisations to conduct a wide range of career exploration activities for students through the Business-School Partnership Programme (BSPP) so that they could have an initial understanding of different industries and develop correct work attitudes. Relevant support measures include providing the recurrent Career and Life Planning Grant (\$610,000 in the 2018/19 school year) for each public sector school operating classes at the senior secondary levels, and allowing schools to convert the Grant

into regular teaching posts starting from the 2016/17 school year. Having regard to the implementation of the relevant measures, and given that stakeholders generally consider the relevant measures conducive to providing more stable teaching manpower for schools to enhance the development of life planning education and the related guidance services, the EDB has announced that public sector secondary schools are required to convert the Grant into regular teaching posts by the 2022/23 school year. Through structured training and support, the EDB enhances teachers' professional capabilities for delivering life planning education, and conducts school visits to gain more thorough understanding of the implementation of life planning related lessons and activities, and provide professional advice. In the 2018/19 school year, the EDB set up a career information website to provide students, teachers and parents with latest information on careers, job market and further studies. As for BSPP, over 300 BSPP partners have conducted more than 4 000 career exploration activities which benefited more than 980 000 students since the 2014/15 school year. Meanwhile, the Work Experience Movement launched by the EDB in the 2016/17 school year has provided more than 4 000 work experience places for students. Apart from student activities, workshops, workplace visits and talks, etc. have been organised for parents under BSPP. Since the 2014/15 school year, these activities have attracted more than 2 100 parents. Furthermore, the EDB has set up the District Development Networks in various districts by phases in order to organise career exploration activities for students and enhance teachers' professional development at the community level. It is expected that the Networks will cover all districts by the end of the 2018/19 school year.

### **Vocational and Professional Education and Training**

34. Under the flexible and open curriculum framework, subjects at the primary and secondary levels are organised around eight KLAs<sup>3</sup>. This is to offer a broad and balanced curriculum for students. The senior secondary curriculum provides a wide range of subjects for students' selection. On top of the four core subjects, students may take subjects from the other 20 subjects, over 30 Applied Learning (ApL) subjects and six Other Language subjects. On Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET), students at the junior secondary level are progressively provided with career-related knowledge and exposures through life-wide learning activities, such as seminars, workshops and workplace visits. At the senior secondary level, students can enhance their

---

<sup>3</sup> The eight key learning areas are Chinese Language Education; English Language Education; Mathematics Education; Science Education; Technology Education; Personal, Social and Humanities Education; Arts Education; and Physical Education.

understanding of VPET through ApL courses, Other Learning Experiences (OLE) activities and career-related experiences embedded in other subjects. As an elective in the senior secondary curriculum, there are six areas of studies under ApL, namely Creative Studies; Media and Communication; Business, Management and Law; Services; Applied Science; and Engineering and Production. These courses aim to cater for the learning needs of students with different aptitudes, abilities and backgrounds, thus enabling them to develop beginners' skill sets, career-related competencies and generic skills, explore their career aspirations, and interface with multiple learning and career pathways. ApL courses are closely linked to broad professional and vocational contexts. A flexible combination of ApL courses with core subjects, elective subjects and OLE provides students with holistic learning experiences that offer both theoretical and practical learning opportunities.

35. The Government is committed to promoting VPET. Vocational education and training in Hong Kong has been rebranded as VPET, covering diploma to undergraduate degree programmes. The Government will continue to promote VPET. Through the Vocational Training Council, the regularised training places of the Pilot Training and Support Scheme will be increased to 1 200 per year from the 2019/20 academic year. Trainees can join industries which require specialised skills under the "Earn and Learn" model with a monthly subsidy of \$2,500 for each trainee.

36. The Task Force on Promotion of Vocational and Professional Education and Training was established in April last year to further enhance the promotion of VPET. The Task Force is expected to advise the Government on how VPET can be better promoted through life planning education in secondary schools to cater for students' abilities and interests, and how best to foster closer business-school collaboration. A report will be submitted to the Government this year.

37. We will continue to improve VPET in light of Hong Kong's social developments and students' learning needs. Additional resources will also be allocated to enhance the publicity and education work on vocational education, thereby giving students diversified choices in pursuing further studies.

### **English Language Education**

38. The EDB has allocated various resources on different areas to raise students' English proficiency further. On the curriculum front, for example, the *English Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide* (P1 – S6) (ELE KLA CG), which was updated in 2017 to reinforce the application of

English for academic and daily use and promote various learning and teaching strategies, such as e-learning and Reading across the Curriculum, has been adopted in schools to prepare students for challenges of the 21st century. To enhance teaching effectiveness, ensure the smooth implementation of the major updates of the ELE KLA CG and facilitate the professional development of local English teachers, the EDB will continue to collaborate with post-secondary institutions to organise a variety of PDPs focusing on the updated curriculum emphases. Regarding support for schools, the EDB has stepped up school-based language support services to facilitate the professional development of local English teachers and to assist schools in implementing the updated curriculum emphases.

39. The EDB also provides schools with different resources to enhance learning and teaching effectiveness. For example, the English learning and teaching materials on the “One-stop Portal for Learning and Teaching Resources” have been further enriched for teachers’ use. In recent years, the EDB has introduced a number of grants to support the education initiatives, such as the provision of the recurrent “Promotion of Reading Grant” to support schools in stepping up reading and enhancing students’ reading and language abilities. Through the use of the Language Fund, resources have been provided to schools to improve English learning and teaching at different stages of learning, including the “Chinese and English Language Enhancement Programme for Kindergarten Teachers”, the “Grant Scheme on Promoting Effective English Language Learning in Primary Schools” and the “Vocational English Programme Grant”. The Language Fund also funds the English Alliance, a territory-wide project that aims to provide primary and secondary school students with pleasurable English language learning experiences. Besides, the QEF has also designated “Effective Learning and Teaching of Languages” as a priority theme in the 2018/19 school year with a view to encouraging schools to implement plans to improve language learning and teaching. Further, the EDB will continue to organise different activities to enhance students’ interest in learning English. Apart from collaborating with the Radio Television Hong Kong to produce two radio programmes for students (namely Teen Time and Sunday Smile), the EDB also collaborates with other government departments and non-government organisations to conduct a range of language and reading-related activities and competitions, including large-scale activities such as the Joyful Reading Carnival held in March 2019 and World Book Day Fest in April 2019 to foster a reading atmosphere and an environment conducive to biliterate and trilingual language acquisition. Considering Hong Kong’s status as an Asia’s world city and the competition from neighbouring countries/regions, we will continue to do our utmost to raise

students' English standards and proficiency, in order to sustain the competitive edge in English that Hong Kong has always possessed and to enhance our global competitiveness.

### **Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework**

40. Starting from the 2014/15 school year, the EDB has stepped up the support for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students in learning the Chinese language through, among others, the implementation of the “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework” (Learning Framework) in primary and secondary schools. The flexibility of the Learning Framework allows teachers to set specific learning targets, learning progress and expected learning outcomes, as well as adapt and develop teaching materials to help NCS students with diversified learning needs (including those with varied starting points in learning Chinese and abilities) learn the language progressively. To facilitate the implementation of the Learning Framework and creation of an inclusive learning environment in schools, the EDB has substantially increased the additional funding to schools to currently over \$200 million per year. The EDB has provided schools with diversified reference materials on learning and teaching of a second language, including Chinese as a Second Language Learning Packages covering the curricula at the primary and secondary levels, the Chinese Language Assessment Tool for NCS Students and teaching reference materials. These resources have been uploaded onto the EDB website and will be constantly updated. Besides organising systematic and diversified PDPs for teachers, the EDB will continue strengthening teacher training and school-based support services and conducting more experience sharing sessions on topics such as curriculum planning, learning and teaching strategies and assessment, and arrange more sharing of successful experience in the development of school-based teaching materials and teaching exemplars. With these endeavours, teachers could gain a deeper understanding of the Learning Framework and master effective methods of learning and teaching to enhance their professional capabilities in teaching NCS students.

41. The EDB has been reviewing the implementation of the Learning Framework and refined the pertinent teaching strategies, assessment tools and supporting resources for schools as appropriate in a timely manner. Views of teachers collected by the EDB since the implementation of the Learning Framework generally indicated that the Learning Framework was helpful to teachers in their teaching (in aspects including the design of the learning content of the units, adaptation of teaching materials, conducting tier-based teaching, formulation of assessment objectives and provision of feedback, etc.), and there

was no need for any major revisions. Teachers also made suggestions on how the Learning Framework could be refined. For example, the descriptions of the expected learning outcomes could be expressed in more concrete terms or further broken down into smaller steps. In accordance with teachers' feedback, the EDB has modified the descriptions of 25 learning outcomes in the Learning Framework to make them clearer and more concrete. The modified Learning Framework was uploaded to the EDB's Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework Dedicated Homepage in January 2019 for teachers' reference and use. In parallel, the relevant assessment tools and teaching resources have been updated in tandem. In addition, relevant briefing sessions and PDPs were conducted from January to March 2019 to enhance teachers' understanding of the Learning Framework.

### **Integrated Education**

42. The Government attaches great importance to integrated education (IE) and has been continuously reviewing the implementation of measures to support students with special educational needs (SEN). As proposed in the *2018 Policy Address*, the EDB will, starting from the 2019/20 school year, roll out a series of enhancement measures on IE to provide schools with a stable teaching force, resources for flexible deployment and enhanced professional support, with the aim of catering for students with SEN. The EDB will restructure various funding schemes on IE and extend the Learning Support Grant, increase the grant rate for Tier-3 support, and provide regular teaching posts and upgrade the post of Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) to a promotion rank in schools with a comparatively large number of students with SEN. The EDB will also continue extending the Enhanced School-based Educational Psychology Service and rendering the Enhanced School-based Speech Therapy Service.

43. On formulation of education plans tailored to the developmental needs of individual students, the EDB always encourages schools to adopt a people-oriented approach and consider students' diverse needs in arranging appropriate support services. Hence, when determining support tiers and drawing up plans for students with SEN, schools will systematically collect and analyse students' information and needs, solicit views from students and parents, and seek advice from professionals, so as to plan and arrange appropriate support for each student. As for students with more severe and persistent learning difficulties, schools will plan and arrange individualised support services for them through Individual Education Plans. Schools are required to keep records on the support and adaptation arrangements provided for each of the students as well as their

progress for regular review, in a bid to adjust the tier of support as appropriate.

44. The EDB always encourages schools to maintain communication and co-operation with parents through different channels. Starting from the 2018/19 school year, schools are required to issue a support summary to the parents of students with SEN. The summary should set out major support and adaptation items and so forth, in order that parents could have a clear picture of the support measures rendered by schools to their children and thus make appropriate arrangements to enhance the effectiveness of support.

### **Student Guidance Services**

45. The Government has made continuous efforts to enhance the student guidance service to help students cope with difficulties and pressure. To cater for the needs of students, the SWD has implemented the policy of “one school social worker for each school” in secondary schools for many years, under which NGOs receive subsidies from the Government to offer school social work services to secondary schools. Since September 2011, the SWD has allocated additional resources to increase the manpower of school social workers in secondary schools by 20%. To enhance adolescents’ mental health and stress resilience, the Budget announced that starting from the 2019/20 school year, the policy of “two school social workers for each school” would be implemented in secondary schools and supervisory support would also be enhanced accordingly. The EDB will actively support the launch of such cross-sectoral initiatives.

46. Starting from the 2018/19 school year, the Government has provided public sector primary schools with additional resources through a new funding mode to enable them to implement the policy of “one school social worker for each school” according to school-based circumstances. The measure is to further enhance the overall quality of guidance service by ensuring that each public sector primary school is served by at least one school-based registered graduate social worker with professional qualifications. Moreover, additional resources have been provided to strengthen support for and supervision of school social workers and to modify the current arrangements for the Top-up Grant. On the whole, all primary schools have more resources, which may be deployed to hire more social workers or procure additional guidance services. At present, about 50% of the public sector primary schools have switched to the new funding mode. With the implementation of the new policy, the EDB will keep under review the manpower for student guidance services and the mode of collaboration between student guidance and social work services, and identify

the best way to provide school social work and guidance services by exploring all feasible proposals with the education sector.

### **Kindergarten Education**

47. On kindergarten (KG) education, the new KG education policy has been implemented starting from the 2017/18 school year, which aims to provide good quality and highly affordable KG education, enhance the accessibility of pupils to different modes of services that suit their specific needs, and enable the KG sector to continue to operate with a high level of flexibility, diversity and vibrancy. The subsidies under the new policy are sufficient for KGs joining the KG education scheme (Scheme) to provide quality half-day (HD) services. Individual KGs may have to charge school fees mainly to defray rental expenses that are not fully covered by the rental subsidy.

48. As for whole-day (WD) KG services, existing evidence from researches and studies precludes drawing conclusions that WD programmes are more favourable to young children than HD programmes. Although many countries offer WD services for parents as an option, it is not a common practice internationally to provide free WD KG services for all children from 3 to 6 years of age. Based on the principle of joint contribution by the parents and the Government, pupils receiving WD services need to bear part of the costs. Notwithstanding that, to unleash the potential of the local labour force under the population policy, the EDB offers additional subsidies to KGs providing WD and long whole-day (LWD) services and parents only need to pay part of the additional costs. Families with financial difficulties may also be granted fee remission for HD or WD services.

49. In the 2018/19 school year, among 753 KGs joining the Scheme, around 520 KGs offer HD programmes, of which about 90% are free, and around 630 KGs offer WD/LWD programmes and the median school fee per instalment is about \$790. The overall school fees are at a low level. In respect of WD KG places, the EDB has, under the new policy, reviewed the relevant part of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines and revised the standard on provision of KG places from 730 HD and 250 WD places for every 1 000 children in the age group of 3 to under 6 to 500 HD and 500 WD places.

### **Post-secondary Education**

50. All along, the Government has strived to provide secondary school leavers with flexible and diversified articulation pathways with multiple entry

and exit points through promoting the quality and sustainable development of the publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary education sectors. With the development of both sectors, currently over 50% of young people in the relevant age cohort have access to degree education. Taking sub-degree places into account, more than 70% of young people have access to post-secondary education. In the 2018/19 academic year, there are sufficient publicly-funded and self-financing first-year first-degree (FYFD) places to cater for the needs of all Secondary 6 students meeting the minimum entrance requirements for bachelor's degree programmes.

51. In recent years, the Government has implemented a series of measures to increase the opportunities and subsidies for local students to pursue undergraduate programmes, in a bid to provide secondary school leavers with broader and more diversified articulation pathways. These measures include:

- (i) increasing the UGC-funded senior year undergraduate intake places to 5 000 each year starting from the 2018/19 academic year;
- (ii) implementing the Non-means-tested Subsidy Scheme for Self-financing Undergraduate Studies in Hong Kong and the Mainland, covering students enrolled in local self-financing undergraduate programmes and designated Mainland undergraduate programmes, since the 2017/18 academic year;
- (iii) introducing the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors (SSSDP) to provide around 1 000 students per cohort with subsidy for pursuing self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines to meet Hong Kong's manpower needs. The SSSDP has been regularised in the 2018/19 academic year, with the subsidised quota increased to about 3 000 per cohort;
- (iv) implementing the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme since the 2015/16 academic year to support up to 100 outstanding students per cohort to study in world-renowned universities outside Hong Kong with a view to nurturing a diversified pool of top-notch talents for promoting Hong Kong's development; and
- (v) introducing the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme to

provide subsidy for students pursuing undergraduate studies in designated Mainland institutions.

52. Upon the full implementation of the above measures, all secondary school graduates meeting the general entrance requirements for university admission should be able to receive different forms of government subsidisation for admission into local (including UGC-funded universities and self-financing post-secondary sector) and Mainland FYFD programmes. In addition, the Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education submitted a report to the Government in December 2018 and recommended that the Government should conduct a more focused study in the next phase to further review the structure and curriculum of sub-degree (in particular Higher Diploma) programmes to reflect their refined position in Hong Kong's higher education sector, i.e. Associate Degree qualification should be positioned as primarily preparing students for articulation to general degree programmes, and Higher Diploma qualification should be positioned as preparing students for either immediate employment at para-professional level in relevant industries and professions, or articulation to specialised professional degree programmes. The implementation of this recommendation may affect the demand of future sub-degree graduates for articulation to the senior year undergraduate programmes. It is therefore not suitable at this stage to change the number of intake places of UGC-funded senior year undergraduate programmes (5 000 places per year). We will follow up on the recommendations of the Task Force and closely examine the development. Overall, we do not see the need to increase the number of UGC-funded FYFD and senior year undergraduate places at this stage. The Government will continue to exercise prudence in its planning for provision of subsidised higher education opportunities, with due emphasis on both quality and quantity.

53. As regards student financial assistance, there are means-tested grants and loans. The non-repayable grant is for needy students to cover their tuition fees (not including the continuation fee for postgraduate courses), academic expenses and compulsory student union fees (if applicable), while the loan is for them to meet their living expenses. The loan is interest-free during the study period but interest at the rate of 1% per annum will be charged as from the commencement of the loan repayment period. Moreover, in recent years the Government has stepped up support for needy post-secondary students through the CCF [first appearance in para 12]. Between the 2014/15 and 2015/16 academic years, three programmes were launched under the CCF to provide hostel subsidy for needy students; increase the academic expenses grant under the Financial Assistance Scheme for Post-secondary Students; and provide

additional academic expenses grant for post-secondary students with SEN and financial needs respectively. For students who fail or do not wish to go through the means test, the Government has rolled out non-means-tested loan schemes to help them settle their tuition fees by the provision of low-interest loans. To cover the Government's risk in disbursing unsecured loans, the interest rate under the schemes comprises a no-gain-no-loss rate and a risk-adjusted-factor rate. Interest is accrued upon loan drawdown and throughout the study and repayment periods until the loan is repaid in full.

54. To ease the repayment burden of student borrowers, the Government has in recent years implemented various measures to improve the student loan schemes by adjusting interest rates and repayment periods:

- (i) The interest rate under means-tested loan schemes has been reduced from 2.5% to 1% per annum and the standard repayment period has been extended from 5 years to 15 years.
- (ii) As for non-means-tested loans, the risk-adjusted-factor rate has been reduced from 1.5% to 0% per annum and the prevailing interest rate (effective from 1 November 2018) is 1.257% per annum. In addition, the standard repayment period has also been extended from 10 years to 15 years.
- (iii) To ease the financial burden of fresh graduates and to allow them more time to find a stable job, borrowers are given the option to start repaying their student loans one year after completing their studies.
- (iv) Borrowers who have difficulty in repaying their loans on the grounds of financial hardship, serious illnesses or further full-time studies may apply for a deferment of loan repayment. If their deferment applications are approved, a maximum of two years' interest-free extension of the loan repayment period can be allowed, which means that the entire repayment period can be extended up to 17 years.

55. These measures can appropriately alleviate the repayment burden of student borrowers. In view of the nature of loans and the implementation of various improvement measures, the Government has no plan to waive the interest of student loans.

## **Concluding Remarks**

56. A melting pot where East meets West, Hong Kong embraces not only the rich heritage of Chinese culture and civilisation, but also the progressive ideas and vibrancy of the West. Such uniqueness is reflected in our school curriculum that biliterate and trilingual proficiency, appreciation of Chinese history and culture and STEM education are all much valued. The Government spare no effort in the provision of diversified education. We believe that education should be student-oriented, with the goal of nurturing students as citizens with a sense of national identity, an affection for Hong Kong and a commitment to society. When it comes to pressure, merely changing the current education system is not a panacea because there are various complicated factors behind stress and its impact varies among students. We hope that students could turn stress or competition into positive motivation to strive to achieve their learning and life goals. For students to take on challenges ahead, we should equip them with positive values and attitudes, perseverance and resilience. The EDB will continue to review the implementation and effectiveness of pertinent measures, and do our utmost to provide students with diversified and quality education through a broad and balanced curriculum that can keep pace with the times, so as to prepare students for lifelong and self-directed learning and foster their whole-person development.

Education Bureau

July 2019

**Motion on  
“Implementing diversified education to alleviate the pressure on  
students and parents”  
moved by Hon Starry LEE  
at the Council meeting of 30 January 2019**

**Motion as amended by Hon Claudia MO, Hon Charles Peter MOK, Hon  
HO Kai-ming, Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG, Hon SHIU Ka-chun and Hon  
Tanya CHAN**

That the kind of education environment in which the next generation grows is crucially important to the future of Hong Kong; for purposes of catering for the development of an innovative and knowledge-based society, this Council urges the Government to put into practice a diversified education approach to inspire students’ creativity and cultivate diverse interests and skills in them, strengthen their communication ability in the local and international communities, and eliminate the ‘examination-oriented culture’ and the malady of excessive drills on examination questions of students, in order to alleviate the pressure on students and parents; specific measures include:

- (1) incentivizing more subsidized schools to introduce a suitable proportion of international curriculum, so as to give parents and students more choices, but it is necessary to prevent schools from becoming aristocratic because of the relevant measure, which will otherwise lead to the exclusion of grass-roots families due to their lack of means, thus making it impossible to achieve the objective of promoting the upward mobility of students through education and resulting in the formation of class divide in education;
- (2) expanding the scope of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education with the inclusion of elements such as arts and artificial intelligence, and allocating additional resources to schools for training teachers and supporting schools in promoting the relevant education;
- (3) reviewing the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination system to reduce unnecessary examination pressure on students;
- (4) increasing the numbers of subsidized university places and subsidized top-up places for the second year in universities, so as to give students more choices in pursuing further studies;

(5) increasing the opportunities for students to participate in Mainland and overseas exchange and internship programmes, so as to broaden the global outlook of the younger generation;

(6) enhancing parental education to equip parents with greater capabilities in handling issues concerning their children's growth, studies, and so on; and

(7) improving English language education to raise students' daily English standard and proficiency in an effort to enhance their international competitiveness, and allocating additional resources to schools for training local teachers and supporting schools in promoting the relevant education;

(8) expediting the renewal of the curriculum of all subjects and incorporating coding education into the basic education curriculum;

(9) studying ways in which technology can be applied to assist schools, teachers and students (including students with special educational needs) in the improvement of teaching and learning, including the establishment of an 'educational technology laboratory' to promote local research in and application of innovative educational technology, and supporting local start-ups in developing and experimenting with new services and products related to education, such as the use of artificial intelligence to assist learning; and

(10) extending the targets of current subsidies for the procurement of computer equipment to cover all grass-roots students across the board, so as to support students of grass-roots families in online learning in a bid to narrow the digital divide, and providing them with the necessary equipment for online learning, such that the burden on grass-roots families can be alleviated;

(11) increasing long whole-day and whole-day kindergarten places to enable dual-income parents to choose the suitable mode of education for their children in the light of their needs in living, so as to alleviate the pressure on parents;

(12) addressing squarely the learning needs of non-Chinese speaking students by formulating specific curriculum contents for the 'Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework', including teaching indicators, learning targets by stages, teaching materials, assessment methods, thereby enabling non-Chinese speaking students to learn Chinese more effectively and relieving their psychological burden caused by language barrier;

(13) reviewing the effectiveness of integrated education and drawing up for each student with developmental disorder an education plan that suits his/her developmental needs, so as to enhance the support provided by schools for such students and their parents;

(14) considering the cancellation of the fees for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination to ease the pressure on parents;

(15) by drawing reference from the existing education system of Germany, formulating a dual-track academic system with equal emphasis on academic and vocational skills training, so as to provide students with stable and rewarding professional skills training, and allocating additional resources to enhance the publicity and education work on vocational education, thereby giving students diversified choices in pursuing further studies;

(16) assisting students in commencing life planning education to enable them to set career development goals as early as possible, thereby alleviating the helplessness and anxieties felt by students about their future pathways;

(17) enhancing home-school cooperation; and

(18) enhancing and improving the counselling services provided by schools and non-profit-making organizations for students and increasing manpower accordingly to assist students in dealing with difficulties and pressure in various aspects;

(19) setting ‘maximum homework hours’ and drawing up guidelines on the hours spent on homework by students, so as to alleviate the pressure of homework on students; and

(20) allowing students and parents to choose freely whether to participate in the Primary 3 Territory-wide System Assessment in order to avoid excessive drilling of students for it;

(21) introducing homework-free days for long holidays to alleviate the pressure of homework on students; and

(22) requiring the designation of a School Retreat Day in every school year to release learning space;

(23) progressively providing full subsidies of school fees for students of whole-

day and long whole-day kindergartens to achieve full implementation of free kindergarten education and hence implement genuine 15-year free education, so as to alleviate the pressure on parents;

(24) progressively implementing small-class teaching in primary and secondary schools across the board to effectively cater for the education needs of individual students and cultivate diverse interests and skills in them; and

(25) assisting students currently bearing student loan debt in repaying the interests for their student loan debt, so as to alleviate the debt pressure on students.