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Legislative Council

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Establishment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee

**Minutes of the 19th meeting
held in Conference Room 1 of Legislative Council Complex
on Tuesday, 11 June 2019, at 2:30 pm**

Members present:

Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Hon IP Kin-yuen
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, SBS, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan
Hon Alvin YEUNG
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Hon HO Kai-ming
Hon SHIU Ka-fai
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
Hon CHAN Chun-ying, JP

Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho
Hon AU Nok-hin
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS

Members absent:

Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon SHIU Ka-chun

Public Officers attending:

Ms. Kinnie WONG Kit-yee	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) 1 (Acting)
Mr Brian LO Sai-hung, JP	Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 1
Dr CHOI Yuk-lin	Under Secretary for Education
Mrs Michelle WONG YAU Wai-ching	Deputy Secretary for Education (3)
Mr Benjamin YUNG Po-shu	Principal Assistant Secretary (Professional Development and Training), Education Bureau
Mr Francis CHAU Siu-hei	Deputy Secretary for Development (Works)3
Mr Alfred SIT Wing-hang	Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services
Mr Raymond POON Kwok-ying	Assistant Director (Gas and General Legislation), Electrical and Mechanical Services Department
Mr Patrick CHEUNG Yuen-fong	Assistant Director (2), Electrical and Mechanical Services Department
Mrs Ingrid YEUNG HO Poi-yan	Permanent Secretary for Education
Mrs CHAN SIU Suk-fan	Deputy Secretary for Education (4)
Mrs HONG CHAN Tsui-wah	Deputy Secretary for Education (5)

Clerk in attendance:

Ms Connie SZETO	Chief Council Secretary (1)4
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Staff in attendance:

Mr Hugo CHIU	Senior Council Secretary (1)4
Ms Alice CHEUNG	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)1
Miss Yannes HO	Legislative Assistant (1)7
Ms Haley CHEUNG	Legislative Assistant (1)10

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The Chairman drew members' attention to the information paper ECI(2019-20)4, which set out the latest changes in the directorate establishment approved since 2002 and the changes to the directorate establishment in relation to the three items on the agenda. She then reminded members that in accordance with Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure ("RoP"), they should disclose the nature of any direct or indirect pecuniary interest relating to the item under discussion at the meeting before they spoke on the item. She also drew members' attention to RoP 84 on voting in case of direct pecuniary interest.

EC(2019-20)6 Proposed rationalization of the salaries of school heads and deputy heads and improvement of the manpower at the middle management level in public sector primary schools in the Education Bureau with effect from 1 September 2019; and an increase in the ceiling placed on the total notional annual mid-point salary value of all non-directorate posts in the establishment in 2019-2020 from \$4,016,284,000 by \$56,664,240 to \$4,072,948,240 with immediate effect upon approval of the Finance Committee to implement the above proposal

2. The Chairman remarked that the staffing proposal was to rationalize the salaries of school heads and deputy heads and improvement of the manpower at the middle management level in public sector primary schools in the Education Bureau ("EDB") with effect from 1 September 2019; and an increase in the ceiling placed on the total notional annual mid-point salary value of all non-directorate posts in the establishment in 2019-2020 from \$4,016,284,000 by \$56,664,240 to \$4,072,948,240 with immediate effect upon approval of the Finance Committee ("FC") to implement the above proposal.

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3. Mr IP Kin-yuen, Chairman of the Panel on Education, reported the salient points of the discussion on this proposal at the panel meeting held on 29 March 2019. He pointed out that members welcomed the proposal put forward by the Administration for rationalizing the salaries of school heads and deputy heads and improve the manpower at the middle management level in primary schools in tandem with the implementation of whole-day primary schooling and the all-graduate teaching force policy in primary schools. Members supported the Administration's submission of the proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee ("ESC") for consideration. Members suggested that the Administration should review the salaries of heads of schools with 11 or fewer classes, encourage schools to streamline arrangements for taking forward the all-graduate teaching force policy, enhance the training for school heads and teachers as well as the quality of school management, increase the number of teaching staff, and mitigate the pressure of teachers.

Manpower resources for small-sized primary schools

4. Mr IP Kin-yuen expressed support for this staffing proposal. He noted the marked increases in the starting salaries for heads of middle-sized primary schools (12 to 23 classes) and large-sized primary schools (24 classes or more) (being Headmaster/Headmistress II ("HM II") and Headmaster/Headmistress I ("HM I") respectively) under the proposal. However, the starting salary for heads of small-sized primary schools (11 or fewer classes) (being Senior Primary School Master/Mistress) would remain unchanged, although the increment points would increase from two to six points. He sought the rationale for such arrangements. Mr Tony TSE, having declared that he was a member of the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service ("SCCS"), made a similar enquiry. Mr IP further pointed out that the Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers ("the Task Force") suggested having one head and three deputy heads for a large-sized primary school. However, under the proposal, the rank of a head of a small-sized primary school was only equivalent to the rank of a deputy head of a large-sized primary school, which, in his opinion, was not giving sufficient recognition to the work of heads of small-sized primary schools. Furthermore, enhancement to the establishment of the deputy head of small-sized primary schools had not been made under the proposal. Mr IP was concerned whether the Task Force had overlooked the needs of small-sized primary schools. He considered that the work of heads of small-sized primary schools was by no means less complex than those of HM II, and called on the Administration to consider upgrading the rank of heads of small-sized primary schools to HM II.

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5. Under Secretary for Education ("US(ED)") and Deputy Secretary for Education (3) ("DS(ED)(3)") responded that the Administration noted the views of the education sector regarding the remuneration packages for heads of small-sized primary schools. They pointed out that the Task Force was of the view that the volume and the complexity of the work involving heads of small-sized primary schools were different from those of heads of middle-sized and large-sized primary schools, and resources should be allocated to schools according to their sizes as appropriate. Furthermore, under the current staffing proposal, improvement would be made to the remunerations for heads of small-sized primary schools (at the rank of Senior Primary School Master/Mistress). The Task Force made a total of 18 recommendations, some of which had been implemented by EDB, whereas the remaining recommendations were being considered. US(ED) stressed that the Task Force comprised representatives from various sectors of the education profession such as headmasters and teachers at the frontline, and the needs of small-sized primary schools had been taken into account during the discussion process.

6. Mr IP Kin-yuen pointed out that, in small-sized primary schools, the post of School Curriculum Leader was usually filled by an Assistant Primary School Master/Mistress ("APSM"). As the rank of Certificated Master/Mistress ("CM") would be abolished under the all-graduate teaching force policy, the rank of APSM would become the only basic rank. He was concerned that such an arrangement could not reflect the workload of the school curriculum leaders of small-sized primary schools, and called on the Administration to conduct a review on the matter, including a study on upgrading the school curriculum leaders of small-sized primary schools to senior teacher posts to facilitate coordination of teachers of different ranks in taking forward efforts in relation to coordination of school curriculum.

7. DS(ED)(3) advised that the Administration recognized that the posts of school curriculum leader of small-sized primary schools were generally filled by APSMs. She pointed out that subsequent to the implementation of the staffing proposal, the number of senior teacher posts in each public sector primary school would increase by approximately 50%, which would accord flexibility for small-sized primary schools in deploying their manpower in response to their specific needs for coordination of school curriculum.

Background and process in formulating the proposal

8. The Chairman remarked that the significant adjustments to the pay scales of HM II and HM I being proposed was tantamount to a civil service grade structure review. In her understanding, applications for the conduct

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of a grade structure review was subject to the stringent review of the Civil Service Bureau ("CSB"), and only a handful of such requests had received the support of CSB in the past (including a grade structure review for the Marine Officer and Surveyor of Ships grades and a grade structure review for the Government Counsel grade of the Department of Justice). She asked whether CSB supported this staffing proposal and the time taken for the Task Force to complete its work and submit its report.

9. Mr Tony TSE agreed that this staffing proposal was similar to a civil service grade structure review. He pointed out that while a grade structure review usually took a relatively long period of time to complete, the Task Force only took a year and a half to conclude its work and submit its report. He asked if EDB had conducted the review in line with existing mechanism, and whether there were other similar precedents. The Chairman shared Mr TSE's concern. Mr TSE requested the Administration to provide relevant precedents before he could consider whether he would support this staffing proposal.

10. US(ED) and DS(ED)(3) responded that this staffing proposal was one of the recommendations of the overall review on the professional development of teachers conducted by the Task Force aiming at enhancing the professional standards and teaching quality of teachers over the longer run, the background and circumstances of which were different from a grade structure review on civil service grades arising from substantive recruitment difficulties or difficulties in retention of talents. US(ED) further explained that the roles and duties of heads of schools, which had become more demanding given the substantial changes in the operation and development of schools arising from the phased implementation of whole-day primary schooling and the increasingly complicated school environment. As such, the Task Force, having taken into account a number of factors, had made a recommendation on enhancing the pay scales of HM II and HM I grades with a view to enhancing the teaching quality at primary school in the long run. US(ED) also said that EDB had consulted CSB and SCCS on this staffing proposal and made adjustments to the proposal in light of the views received. Given the absence of similar adjustments to the pay scales of teachers and heads of primary schools, EDB was unable to provide examples of precedent cases. DS(ED)(3) added that it took the Task Force, which was set up in the end of 2017, about a year and a half to conclude the review exercise.

11. In response to the Chairman's enquiry regarding the timetable for implementation of whole-day primary schooling, DS(ED)(3) remarked that the phased implementation of whole-day primary schooling began in early 1990s, and by early 2000s, most of the primary schools had been converted to whole-day schooling. Over the years, the profession had been calling

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for improvements on the remuneration packages for heads of primary schools.

Cost-effectiveness of the proposal

12. Mr CHAN Chun-ying pointed out that compared with teachers of the member states of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ("OECD"), the starting salaries for teachers and heads of primary schools in Hong Kong on average were far higher, and the starting salaries for primary and secondary school teachers were similar to those of assistant professors in local universities. He asked about the criteria for determining the starting salaries for primary and secondary school teachers. Mr CHAN also asked if the staffing proposal would push up the salaries of teachers of Direct Subsidy Scheme ("DSS") schools and private schools, resulting in pressure for upward adjustments of tuition fees.

13. The Chairman asked about the starting salary for primary school teachers and the time needed in general for such teachers to be promoted to the post of Senior Primary School Master/Mistress.

14. US(ED) advised that the starting salary for a primary school graduate teacher (at the rank of APSM) was \$30,165, and it would take five years of relevant working experience for those teachers to be considered for promotion to the next higher rank (i.e., the Primary School Master/Mistress rank). She stressed that promotion was subject to a number of factors, among them work performance would be the most important. As regards concerns about the level of starting salaries for teachers, US(ED) pointed out that the education system of Hong Kong was different from that of the member states of OECD, and therefore a direct comparison of the salaries of the primary and secondary school teachers between the two would not be appropriate. In reviewing the remuneration packages for heads of primary schools, the Task Force focused on the nature of the work of those posts, and reference had not been made to the remuneration packages of the teaching staff at local universities. Regarding the impact of the proposal on the salaries of teachers of DSS schools and private schools, US(ED) pointed out that should those schools decide to increase their tuition fees, the rate of increase would have to be reasonable. The Administration did not expect that the staffing proposal would have any major impact on the tuition fees of those schools.

15. Mr YIU Si-wing noted that this staffing proposal would only improve the pay scales of three ranks, namely HM II, HMI and Senior Primary School Master/Mistress, and was concerned if that would be unfair to teachers of other ranks. He also asked about the justifications for increasing the number of senior teacher posts in public sector primary

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schools, whether the number of teaching staff in primary schools would decrease as a result, and whether the key performance indicators for senior teachers would be adjusted. Mr CHAN Chun-ying made similar enquiries.

16. US(ED) responded that having reviewed the the manpower at the middle management level in primary schools, the Task Force was of the view that it was necessary to increase the number of senior teacher posts. It was recommended that the number of senior teacher posts in primary schools be determined on the basis of the number of teacher posts instead of the number of classes. She stressed that the number of teaching staff in primary schools would not decrease as senior teachers were also responsible for teaching duties. As regards key performance indicators, the Administration had laid down a specific set of job descriptions for each teacher rank, and individual primary school would also lay down a specific set of job requirements for their senior teacher posts. EDB had also formulated a set of professional standards regarding the professional roles of the teachers and heads of schools for benchmarking purposes. US(ED) added that, in addition to this staffing proposal, the all-graduate teaching force policy would be implemented in public sector primary and secondary schools from 2019-2020 academic year onwards, which would increase the overall remunerations and promotion prospect of teachers.

17. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok expressed support for this staffing proposal. He was of the view that teachers and heads of schools should be reasonably remunerated, and expected that the proposal could enhance the teaching quality in Hong Kong.

18. US(ED) responded that the education sector had been calling for improvements to the remuneration packages for heads of primary schools, and the Administration had come up with this staffing proposal after taking into account the views of different parties.

19. The Chairman pointed out that the staffing proposal would entail a huge amount of public monies, and asked if additional resources had to be allocated to other items as a result of the proposal. She reminded the Administration of the need for prudent use of public resources, and was of the view that it should not increase the remunerations of teachers and heads of schools in a casual manner simply for the sake of implementing the all-graduate teaching force policy in primary schools, because an enhanced remuneration package alone was not enough for recruitment of talents in the education sector. She also asked how the Administration could ensure that the proposal could help enhance the quality of education and students, including whether a set of key performance indicators for primary school teachers were in place (such as teachers' performance in the Language

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Proficiency Assessment for Teachers ("LPAT")). Furthermore, she agreed that the oversight on teacher performance should be enhanced and key performance indicators should be formulated. The Chairman remarked that the Administration had to address her concerns, otherwise Members belonging to the New People's Party would not support this staffing proposal.

20. US(ED) remarked that at this stage there were no other demands for resources arising from this staffing proposal. She explained that the all-graduate teaching force policy in primary schools was being implemented taking into account the professional requirements and professional qualifications of teachers. On enhancing education quality, US(ED) and DS(ED)(3) reiterated that the Task Force had put forth 18 recommendations and only some of the recommendations entailed additional resources. The Task Force was entrusted to, among other things, study feasible options for establishing a professional ladder for teachers, and it had put forward a number of recommendations for enhancing the professional development of teachers, including enhanced professional training for teachers benchmarked against a set of teacher professional standards. DS(ED)(3) added that the Administration would make reference to overseas practice including surveys conducted in certain OECD member states to analyze the teaching strategy adopted by teachers and their effectiveness. Furthermore, the Administration would evaluate the quality of education in Hong Kong through different means, including school-based monitoring and evaluation mechanism, the rankings of Hong Kong students in relevant evaluation in the international arena, as well as students' performance in public examinations.

21. US(ED) and Principal Assistant Secretary (Professional Development and Training), EDB clarified that only newly recruited teachers for teaching English and Putonghua had to take part in pre-appointment LPAT and reach the required standards. Furthermore, exemption from taking LPAT would be given to prospective teachers with appropriate qualifications (e.g., prospective English-teaching teachers with a degree in education majored in English).

Implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy

22. Mr IP Kin-yuen welcomed the implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy in public sector primary and secondary schools from the 2019/2020 academic year onwards. He pointed out that most CMs were already degree-holders, and the measure could address the problem of unequal pay for equal work. Mr IP stressed that the Administration should urge schools to streamline the procedures for conversion of CMs to graduate teachers, including the abolition of the requirement for attending

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interviews.

23. Mr HO Kai-ming pointed out that while the Administration allowed schools to take forward the all-graduate teaching force policy in two years' time in a flexible manner in light of unique circumstances of individual schools, he called on the Administration to urge the schools to implement the policy expeditiously. Furthermore, Mr HO was of the view that measures should be taken to increase the promotion prospect of teachers, which would motivate teachers to take up other non-teaching duties. Mr HO also called on the Administration to remind the schools to duly respect the preference of teachers wishing to focus on teaching duties.

24. US(ED) thanked Mr IP Kin-yuen and Mr HO Kai-ming for supporting the implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy. She stressed that while schools were allowed to implement the policy in two years' time in light of unique circumstances of individual schools, there should be no "screening" of teachers. She pointed out that under the proposal, the number of senior teacher posts in each public sector primary school would increase by approximately 50%, thus offering a good promotion prospect to primary school teachers. US(ED) also pointed out that with all the development in the education sector and the society, teaching had become more diversified. In addition to classroom teaching, teachers were expected to take up different roles and duties to support the whole-person development of students.

Performance of heads of public sector primary and secondary schools

25. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen expressed reservation on the proposal for improving the remuneration packages of heads of primary schools. He pointed out that the absence of any check and balance mechanism under the current system for the oversight of heads of primary and secondary schools had contributed to a number of incidents involving abuse of power by heads of schools. Meanwhile, the Administration had indicated that it would be difficult to peg the remuneration packages of heads of schools with their performance. He asked whether the Administration would undertake to put in place a mechanism for monitoring the performance of heads of public sector schools, including setting up an oversight commission independent of the incorporated management committee ("IMC") in relation to schools and school sponsoring bodies.

26. Mr IP Kin-yuen was of the view that issues in relation to abuse of power by heads of schools should be addressed through an enhanced oversight mechanism. He pointed out that a consensus had been reached in this regard among the stakeholders in the education sector, and called on the Administration to put in place such a mechanism expeditiously.

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27. US(ED) advised that the Administration had put in place a comprehensive system for monitoring the performance of heads of primary and secondary schools. Schools were required to complete a stakeholder survey (targeted on students, parents and teachers) on a regular basis covering areas such as professional leadership of heads of schools. Major stakeholders of the schools would be apprised of the findings of the survey. Furthermore, the regular self-evaluation exercise conducted by schools would also cover areas including the performance of leaders of the schools. Heads of schools were accountable to teachers, students, parents and IMCs. She stressed that under the current system, school operations were transparent and it would be hard for heads of schools to abuse powers. DSED(3) supplemented that, in general, heads of public sector primary and secondary schools were performing satisfactorily, and IMCs were also fulfilling their oversight function. Furthermore, EDB had also set up a Task Force on School-based Management ("SBM") Policy.

Voting on the item

28. The Chairman put item EC(2019-20)6 to vote. At the request of members, the Chairman ordered a division, and the division bell rang for five minutes. Twelve members voted for this item and four abstained from voting. The Chairman declared that the Subcommittee agreed to recommend the item to FC for approval. The votes of individual members were as follows:

For

Mr WONG Ting-kwong	Mr WU Chi-wai
Dr Fernando CHEUNG	Mr IP Kin-yuen
Mr POON Siu-ping	Dr CHIANG Lai-wan
Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok	Mr Alvin YEUNG
Mr HO Kai-ming	Mr SHIU Ka-fai
Mr CHAN Chun-ying	Mr Jeremy TAM
(12 members)	

Abstain

Mr CHAN Chi-chuen	Mr CHU Hoi-dick
Mr AU Nok-hin	Mr Tony TSE
(4 members)	

29. The Chairman requested that the item be voted on separately at the relevant FC meeting.

(At 4:02 pm, the Chairman declared that the meeting be suspended for five minutes. The meeting resumed at 4:07 pm.)

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EC(2019-20)7 Proposed creation of two permanent posts of Chief Electrical and Mechanical Engineer (D1), one each in the Gas and General Legislation Branch and the Engineering Services Branch 2 of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department with immediate effect upon approval of the Finance Committee to cope with the implementation of the new and on-going initiatives related to lift and escalator safety as well as the extra workload arising from the Hospital Development Plan projects

30. The Chairman remarked that the staffing proposal was to create two permanent posts of Chief Electrical and Mechanical Engineer (D1), one each in the Gas and General Legislation Branch and the Engineering Services Branch 2 ("ESB2") of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department ("EMSD") (to be designated as Chief Electrical and Mechanical Engineer/General Legislation 2 ("CEME/GL2") and Chief Engineer/Health Sector 2 ("CE/HS2") respectively) with immediate effect upon approval of FC to cope with the implementation of the new and on-going initiatives related to lift and escalator safety as well as the extra workload arising from the Hospital Development Plan ("HDP") projects.

31. The Chairman remarked that the Administration had consulted the Panel on Development on this staffing proposal on 26 March 2019. Members in general supported the proposal, and they called on the Administration to expeditiously take forward measures for enhancing the safety of aged lifts and escalators and implementing HDP projects subsequent to the provision of additional manpower.

Rationale for creation of the Chief Electrical Mechanical Engineer/General Legislation 2 post

32. Mr HO Kai-ming expressed support for the Administration's work in enhancing lift and escalator safety. He pointed out that, in general, EMSD was only required to examine reports submitted by registered lift and escalator contractors ("registered contractors"); and asked why creation of the permanent post of CEME/GL2 was necessary for taking forward the relevant work. Mr HO was concerned about the high maintenance and replacement cost due to the limited supply of local lifts and insufficient agents. He expected CEME/GL2 to look into ways to increase the sources for supply of lifts.

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33. Mr SHIU Ka-fai expressed support for this staffing proposal. He recognized the need for enhancing lift and escalator safety management, and urged EMSD to increase the relevant manpower. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok expressed similar views, and pointed out that the industry supported this staffing proposal. Mr SHIU further suggested that the Administration should step up publicity to strengthen public awareness on safety issues relating to aged lifts and escalators and provide relevant safety guidelines.

34. Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services ("DEMS") advised that the work of EMSD was not limited to examining registered contractors' reports. All models of lifts and escalators operating in Hong Kong required verification from EMSD. EMSD also conducted over 10 000 territory-wide inspections on lifts and escalators per annum. Given the problems relating to the ageing of lifts and escalators across the territory, the Administration had taken forward a number of measures, including the Lift Modernization Subsidy Scheme ("LIMSS"), and a corresponding increase in the number of inspections carried out by EMSD. CEME/GL2 would be responsible for a number of tasks, including the conduct of a feasibility study on introducing legislative requirements to mandate modernization of aged lifts. On the supply of lifts, DEMS advised that there were at present a total of 41 registered contractors in Hong Kong, and they could bring in new lift/escalator agents. He undertook that CEME/GL2 would look into ways to increase the sources for supply of lifts.

35. Mr Tony TSE expressed support for enhancement of lift and escalator safety and for this staffing proposal. He opined that, in addition to strengthening inspection on lifts and escalators, the Administration should also review the adequacy of manpower in the industry for the purpose of taking forward those measures.

36. DEMS recognized the need for having more manpower in the industry. He remarked that the Administration had launched a number of training programmes and subsidy schemes. Currently the number of registered lift and escalator technicians stood at around 5 000, and the new blood joining the sector per annum had increased from approximately 80 from four to five years ago to around 250 at present, at a rate which sufficiently made up for natural wastage. The Administration would continue to discuss with the industry on ways to attract more talents to join the trade.

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Lift Modernization Subsidy Scheme

37. The Chairman asked about the number of applications and deadline of LIMSS. She pointed out that it took time for some owners' corporations to discuss if they would take part in LIMSS, and EMSD should recognize their needs. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok asked if measures were in place to encourage flat owners to take part in LIMSS. Furthermore, the Chairman said that some flat owners relied on property management companies ("PMCs") to manage the lifts, but the performance of individual PMCs could be unsatisfactory. She asked how flat owners could tackle issues relating to lifts (including improvement of lift locations).

38. DEMS advised that the Phase I of LIMSS commenced on 29 March 2019 and would end on 31 July 2019. EMSD had organized 11 district-based seminars on LIMSS with an attendance of over 1 000 flat owners. Briefings for all District Councils had also been held by EMSD. The Administration recognized that flat owners might not possess relevant professional knowledge to take forward lift maintenance plans. Hence, free consultancy service would be provided under LIMSS. Subsidies would also be provided for flat owners to employ works consultants. A total of 128 applications (covering over 700 lifts) under LIMSS had been received to date. Depending on the number of application received, EMSD would decide when to launch Phase II of LIMSS. On tackling issues relating to lifts by flat owners, DEMS advised that the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance (Cap. 618) provided that one registered contractor was assigned to every lift/escalator for provision of maintenance services. Flat owners could make enquiries to relevant registered contractors on matters relating to lift safety. Professional assistance could be sought if an alternate location for the lift was preferred. He also reminded the public to report to PMCs or relevant registered contractors for timely inspection if they noticed abnormal vibrations or noises in lifts or escalators.

Creation of the Chief Engineer/Health Sector 2 post for taking forward the Hospital Development Plan

39. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok remarked that creation of the CE/HS2 post would facilitate the implementation of HDP, and considered that the post involved recurrent duties.

40. Mr Tony TSE said that HDP straddled across various bureaux/departments ("B/Ds"). He enquired about the details of the directorate and non-directorate posts created at various B/Ds in relation to the implementation of HDP, and why supernumerary posts instead of permanent posts were created in certain departments (including the Architectural Services Department ("ArchSD")) for taking forward the

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relevant work. He also asked about the detailed arrangements for maintenance of the additional electrical and mechanical equipment to be installed under HDP.

41. DEMS and Deputy Secretary for Development (Works)3 ("DS(W)3") pointed out that ArchSD created a Chief Quantity Surveyor post on a supernumerary basis in 2018 in relation to the implementation of HDP so as to take forward certain time-limited projects. The CE/HS2 post would be created on a permanent basis because it was responsible for a number of tasks. In addition to facilitating the implementation of HDP, the team led by CE/HS2 would provide project management service for minor works projects carried out at public hospitals and clinics under the Hospital Authority ("HA"), as well as maintenance service for the additional electrical and mechanical equipment to be installed under HDP.

42. Mr Tony TSE asked about the detailed division of work between HA and relevant B/Ds for taking forward HDP, and whether adequate resources had been earmarked for repair and maintenance of the additional facilities. He also called on the Administration to employ innovative technologies to enhance lift and escalator safety and implement HDP.

43. DS(W)3 advised that HA was responsible for taking forward HDP, and had created relevant directorate and non-directorate posts. Relevant government departments (including EMSD and ArchSD) would provide assistance as appropriate. He also said that funding had been earmarked in the public works funding application under HDP for repair and maintenance in the future.

44. Mr Tony TSE requested the Administration to provide information on (a) details of directorate and non-directorate posts created under various B/Ds in relation to the implementation of HDP; and (b) details of the division of work between HA and relevant B/Ds in the implementation of HDP.

(Post-meeting note: The information provided by the Administration was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. ESC138/18-19(01) on 12 July 2019.)

Voting on the item

45. As members raised no further questions on the item, the Chairman put the item to vote. She was of the view that the majority of the members voting were in favour of the item. She declared that the Subcommittee agreed to recommend the item to FC for approval.

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46. Mr Tony TSE remarked that subject to supplementary information provided by the Government, he might request that the item be voted on separately at the relevant FC meeting.

EC(2019-20)8 Proposed creation of five permanent posts of two Assistant Director of Education (D2) and three Principal Education Officer (D1); and one supernumerary post of Assistant Director of Education (D2) for about three years up to 31 March 2022 in the Education Bureau with immediate effect upon approval of the Finance Committee to strengthen the directorate establishment for steering and leading the formulation of strategies/measures, and for the planning, preparation, implementation and review of various policies for quality education

47. The Chairman remarked that the staffing proposal was to create five permanent posts of two Assistant Director of Education ("ADE") (D2) and three Principal Education Officer ("PEO") (D1); and one supernumerary post of ADE (D2) for about three years up to 31 March 2022 in EDB with immediate effect upon approval of FC to strengthen the directorate establishment for steering and leading the formulation of strategies/measures, and for the planning, preparation, implementation and review of various policies for quality education.

48. Mr IP Kin-yuen, Chairman of the Panel on Education, reported the salient points of the discussion on this proposal at the panel meeting held on 29 March 2019. He pointed out that a majority of members supported submission of the proposal to ESC for consideration. The Panel also passed three motions respectively urging EDB to: (a) explore the establishment of a "Long-term Education Planning in Hong Kong Branch"; (b) exclude prevention of student suicides from the scope of work of special education; and (c) perform well in its monitoring role in the SBM policy before creating additional directorate posts.

Justification for creation of the proposed posts

49. Mr IP Kin-yuen pointed out that, from overseas experience in implementing SBM policy, the establishment of government departments in charge of education could usually be downsized due to reduction in administrative work. He asked why EDB proposed to create as many as six directorate posts.

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50. The Chairman expressed support for the staffing proposal. She was of the view that the substantial increase in resources for education by the Government in recent years called for additional directorate manpower to strengthen the monitoring of schools.

51. Permanent Secretary for Education ("PS(Ed)) agreed that, theoretically, the implementation of SBM policy could reduce the administrative work of education departments. However, EDB had seen an increasing amount of administrative work in recent years due to Government's commitment in improving the quality of education, providing additional resources for schools and enhancing support for various types of students such as students with special educational needs ("SEN students"). Furthermore, given the need for schools to seek EDB's advice from time to time for handling issues which were increasingly complex in nature, it was necessary for EDB to deploy additional directorate manpower at the School Development ("SD") Division and Regional Education Offices ("REOs") for steering liaison work with schools. PS(Ed) also pointed out that while the directorate establishment of EDB had remained more or less the same since the merger of the Education and Manpower Bureau and the Education Department in 2003, the workload of EDB had increased substantially in recent years, and it was necessary to strengthen its directorate manpower.

52. Expressing support for the staffing proposal, Mr Vincent CHENG looked forward to optimal use of resources on the part of the Administration. He pointed out that support for certain students (in particular SEN students and ethnic minority students) had remained inadequate despite provision of additional resources to schools in recent years. He called for enhanced support for students by the Government, including understanding their needs, formulation of relevant indicators and increasing the number of front-line psychiatric specialists.

53. PS(Ed) responded that the Special Education ("SE") Division currently comprised 11 sections and was led by one PEO only. Under the current staffing proposal, an additional PEO post (to be designated as PEO (Special Education)²) would be created in the SE Division to share out the workload, and additional resources would be made available to the Division to look into ways for enhanced support for SEN students.

Addressing student suicide problem

54. In response to Mr Vincent CHENG's enquiry on addressing student suicide problem, PS(Ed) advised that as suicides could be related to students' mental health, prevention of student suicides had been included in the ambit of special education. She stressed the availability of care in a

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holistic manner as other divisions of EDB were also engaged in efforts for prevention of student suicides. For instance, one of the major highlights in the work of the Curriculum and Quality Assurance Branch in curriculum planning was to enhance students' resilience and foster positive thinking. The School Administration ("SA") Division would also introduce measures to assist schools in preventing student suicides through guidance and discipline work.

Monitoring the implementation of the School-based Management policy

55. Mr IP Kin-yuen relayed the concerns of the education sector about inadequate monitoring of the implementation of SBM policy by the Government. He requested the Administration to respond to the motion passed by the Panel on Education on 29 March 2019 regarding SBM, and asked how the staffing proposal could enhance its efforts in monitoring SBM. Mr IP also pointed out that improvement on the relevant work might not be achieved effectively by EDB merely by provision of additional manpower.

56. PS(Ed) advised that SBM policy was currently working smoothly in most schools. EDB had set up a Task Force on School-based Management Policy to look into ways to enhance SBM policy. The work of the Task Force was by and large completed and a report would be submitted to EDB for consideration of the recommendations put forth therein. She added that the Task Force had conducted public consultation exercises, and many stakeholders shared the reasoning behind SBM policy (i.e. enabling, through devolution of proper responsibilities, schools to have appropriate autonomy and flexibility to develop their own characteristics, cater for students' different learning needs and enhance their learning outcomes for achieving the goal of quality education), and suggested that the Government should strengthen training for school managers and enhance succession planning. She believed that the recommendations put forth by the Task Force could improve SBM policy. PS(Ed) also pointed out that the problems encountered by individual schools in implementing SBM policy could be attributed to failure in making good use of the devolved powers on the part of the schools. EDB had handled the relevant cases in a timely manner, and assistance would continue to be given to schools for making good use of those powers.

57. Regarding the effectiveness of the staffing proposal, PS(Ed) remarked that the post of Principal Assistant Secretary (School Administration) would be created in the SA Division to enhance policy formulation, and two PEO posts would be created in the SD Division to realize deployment of one PEO in each REO for enhancing liaison between REOs and schools as well as assisting schools in resolving problems in

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implementing SBM policy.

Voting on the item

58. The Chairman put the item EC(2019-20)8 to vote. At the request of members, the Chairman ordered a division, and the division bell rang for five minutes. Thirteen members voted for this item, seven against it and two abstained from voting. The Chairman declared that the Subcommittee agreed to recommend the item to FC for approval. The votes of individual members were as follows:

For

Mr WONG Ting-kwong	Mr YIU Si-wing
Mr KWOK Wai-keung	Mr Christopher CHEUNG
Dr Elizabeth QUAT	Mr POON Siu-ping
Dr CHIANG Lai-wan	Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok
Mr HO Kai-ming	Mr Holden CHOW
Mr SHIU Ka-fai	Ms YUNG Hoi-yan
Mr Vincent CHENG	
(13 members)	

Against

Mr WU Chi-wai	Mr CHAN Chi-chuen
Dr Fernando CHEUNG	Mr Alvin YEUNG
Mr CHU Hoi-dick	Mr Jeremy TAM
Mr AU Nok-hin	
(7 members)	

Abstain

Mr IP Kin-yuen	Dr Pierre CHAN
(2 members)	

59. Mr Jeremy TAM requested that the item be voted on separately at the relevant FC meeting.

60. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5:11 pm.