

立法會

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Panel on Education

Meeting on 1 February 2019

Background brief on the provision of primary and secondary school places in the light of student population

Purpose

This paper summarizes the views and concerns raised by the Panel on Education ("the Panel") about the provision of primary and secondary school places.

Background

Primary One places

2. The Primary One ("P1") Admission ("POA") System consists of two stages, viz., the Discretionary Places ("DP") Admission stage and the Central Allocation ("CA") stage. At present, the provision of public sector primary school places is planned on a district basis. Under POA System, the 18 districts in the territory are demarcated into 36 school nets.

3. To meet the transient increase in demand for P1 places over the past years, the Administration implemented flexible measures to increase the provision of P1 places in individual school nets during CA stage, which included borrowing school places from neighbouring school nets, using vacant classrooms to operate additional classes, operating time-limited schools in vacant school premises and temporarily allocating more students per P1 class.

4. According to the Administration, the overall demand for P1 places is expected to reach the peak in the 2018-2019 school year, and drop in the 2019-2020 school year and then progress to a stable level. Projections of primary school-age population aged 6 to 11 residing in Hong Kong for the 2018-2019 to 2023-2024 school years is in **Appendix I**.

Secondary One places

5. The Secondary School Places Allocation ("SSPA") System consists of two stages, viz., DP stage and CA stage. At present, the provision of public sector school places is planned on a territory-wide basis. Under SSPA System, the whole territory is divided into 18 school nets which are based on the administrative districts.

6. To address the decline in Secondary One ("S1") student population, the Administration implemented a basket of targeted relief measures aiming at preserving the stability and strengths of the schools as well as the teaching force since the 2013-2014 school year. In gist, the targeted relief measures included a progressive reduction of the number of students allocated per S1 class by "2-1-1"/"1-1-1" under a district-/school-based approach in three school years; relaxing the "not less than three S1 classes" requirement in which only schools operating one S1 class are required to apply for development options in order to continue their operation; allowing schools with S1 classes reduced to one or two to participate in the next SSPA exercise with a cap of three S1 classes; and extending the retention period for surplus teachers arising from packing of S1 classes to the 2018-2019 school year.

7. According to the Administration, the number of S1 students has started to rebound from the 2017-2018 school year. Projections of school-age population aged 12 residing in Hong Kong for the 2016-2017 to 2021-2022 school years is in **Appendix II**.

Major views and concerns

8. In the Fifth Legislative Council, the Panel discussed issues related to the declining S1 student population on 18 March 2014, and the temporary arrangement for allocating more students to each P1 class under POA 2014 on 12 May and 16 July 2014. Members' major views and concerns are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Increase in Primary One student population

9. Members expressed concern that more students would be allocated to each P1 class of schools implementing small class teaching in Kwun Tong (school nets 46 and 48), Yuen Long West (school net 73), Yuen Long East (school net 74) and Tai Po (school Net 84) to meet the anticipated demand from applicant children residing in these school nets in POA 2014. They considered that the increase in the number of students allocated to each P1 class from 25 to 30 had already deviated from the prevailing policy on small class teaching. The relatively small coverage of individual school nets would aggravate the

mismatch of demand for and supply of P1 places in individual school nets. The Administration should explore the feasibility of increasing school places by making use of vacant classrooms and borrowing places from neighbouring districts. Temporarily increasing the number of students allocated to each class should be the last resort.

10. The Administration stressed that allocating more students to each P1 class in certain school nets was a contingency measure out of absolute necessity. It would further explore, based on prioritization of public resources utilization and relevant existing arrangements, to provide the schools concerned with supplementary support to help them continue small class teaching in a professionally pedagogical learning and teaching manner.

11. Some members urged the Administration to provide additional resources to schools to cope with the increase in P1 student intake under POA 2014 in order to safeguard learning and teaching effectiveness. The Administration responded that additional resources in terms of teaching posts would be provided to primary schools allocated with 30 students per P1 class to enhance learning and teaching effectiveness. Some other members expressed concern that the additional teachers provided to schools to meet the increased demand for school places might become surplus teachers when the student population declined in a few years' time.

12. Some members drew the Administration's attention that schools were generally unwilling to operate additional classes (so called "partly-enlarged class structure 大肚班") to meet the increasing demand for P1 places because the long-term development of the school would be adversely affected if the number of operating classes at certain levels largely exceeded that in other levels in the same school.

Decline in Secondary One student population

13. Some members were of the view that the Administration should not only focus on various temporary relief measures to preserve schools and avoid redundancy of teachers in the face of the drop in S1 student population. The Administration should also implement small class teaching to enhance the quality of education, strengthen the professional development of serving teachers in anticipation of the rebound in student population a few years later, and assist schools which did not excel in academic performance to develop their unique strength and areas of excellence so that they could maintain their characteristics and sustain operation.

14. As students with special educational needs ("SEN students") usually studied in "Band 3" secondary schools due to their relatively weaker academic performances, members considered it necessary to provide adequate resources to

these schools to cater for SEN students. Some members suggested that a higher weighting should be given to SEN students in determining the number of students for approving S1 classes. This would provide greater incentive for schools to admit SEN students and individual schools would have sufficient teaching manpower to cater for their needs.

Latest position

15. The Administration will brief the Panel on the planning for the provision of public sector primary and secondary school places in the light of fluctuations in student population at the meeting on 1 February 2019.

Relevant papers

16. A list of the relevant papers on LegCo website is in **Appendix III**.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
29 January 2019

**Projections of school-age population aged 6 to 11 residing in Hong Kong
for the 2018-2019 to 2023-2024 school years**

<i>2018-2019</i>	<i>2019-2020</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>	<i>2022-2023</i>	<i>2023-2024</i>
364 800	375 300	376 700	379 100	377 100	368 000

Notes:

- (1) Figures in the above table are compiled with reference to the 2016-based Population Projections released by the Census and Statistics Department ("C&SD") in September 2017.
- (2) School-age population aged 6 to 11 is considered appropriate for primary education (i.e. P1 to P6).
- (3) Figures refer to the projected number of local children (i.e. Hong Kong usual residents) aged 6 to 11 residing in Hong Kong. The projected figures should not be taken as the projected number of students attending schools in Hong Kong. The latter would be affected by the prevailing distribution of school places, demand for school places and parental choices. Students under the age of 6 or over the age of 11 may also receive primary education. The above figures do not include cross-boundary students.
- (4) The projections of school-age population residing in Hong Kong are compiled based on the 2016-based Population Projections released by C&SD in September 2017. The projections have taken into account a number of factors and assumptions. Any deviations in the assumptions from the eventual situation may render the projected figures different from the actual turnout figures.
- (5) Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source : Annex 4 of the reply to Question 22 at the Legislative Council meeting of 24 October 2018

**Projections of school-age population aged 12 residing in Hong Kong
for the 2016-2017 to 2021-2022 school years**

<i>2016-2017</i>	<i>2017-2018</i>	<i>2018-2019</i>	<i>2019-2020</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>
48 100	49 800	55 400	55 800	64 100	66 300

Notes:

- (1) Figures in the above table are compiled with reference to the 2014-based Population Projections released by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) in September 2015 and the “Projections of Population Distribution 2015 – 2024” released by the Planning Department in December 2015.
- (2) School-age population aged 12 is considered appropriate for secondary education (admission to S1).
- (3) Figures refer to the projected number of local children (i.e. Hong Kong usual residents) aged 12 residing in the districts concerned. The projected figures should not be taken as the projected number of students attending schools in the districts concerned. The latter would be affected by the prevailing distribution of school places, demand for school places and parental choices. Students under or over the age of 12 may also enrol at secondary education (i.e. Secondary 1). The above figures do not include cross-boundary students.
- (4) The projections of school-age population residing in Hong Kong are compiled based on the 2014-based Population Projections released by C&SD in September 2015. The projections have taken into account a number of factors and assumptions. Any deviations in the assumptions from the eventual situation may render the projected figures different from the actual turnout figures. Amongst those assumptions, of particular relevance is that related to babies born in Hong Kong to Mainland women. It should be noted that it is difficult to accurately predict the actual numbers of such babies who would settle in Hong Kong and if so, when.
- (5) Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred and may not add up to the respective totals due to rounding.

List of relevant papers

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Education	18.3.2014 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Education	14.4.2014 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Education	12.5.2014 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Education	16.7.2014 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	2.11.2016	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 53-61 (Question 11)
Legislative Council	24.10.2018	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 187-197 (Question 22)