

For discussion on  
29 March 2019

**Legislative Council Panel on Education**

**Improving the Manpower at the Middle Management Level and  
Rationalizing Salaries for School Heads and Deputy Heads  
in Public Sector Primary Schools**

**Purpose**

This paper seeks Members' views on the proposals to improve the manpower at the middle management level and to rationalize salaries for school heads and deputy heads in public sector primary schools in tandem with the implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy and whole-day primary schooling.

**Background**

2. The Chief Executive announced in her Policy Address in 2017 that in-depth reviews would be undertaken on, inter alia, the professional development of teachers to achieve professional-led quality education. The Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers (the Task Force) was subsequently set up in November 2017 to review issues relating to the professional development of teachers and make recommendations on enhancement measures. Adhering to the principles of "Led by Professionals" and "Listening to Views Directly", the Task Force studies within its Terms of Reference subjects of concern to the education

sector and consider how best these could be practicably addressed. The Terms of Reference and membership of the Task Force are at *Appendix I*.

3. The Task Force completed a 2-month consultation to solicit views from stakeholders on its preliminary recommendations in early September 2018. As the implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy soonest possible gained wide support during the consultation, the Task Force recommended that the Government should first implement the policy. The Government adopted the Task Force's suggestion and the Chief Executive announced in her Policy Address in 2018 that the all-graduate teaching force policy would be implemented in one go in public sector primary and secondary schools as from the 2019/20 school year and schools will be allowed flexibility to fully implement the policy within two years taking into account their respective school-based circumstances.

4. The Policy Address also acknowledged that, in tandem with the implementation of whole-day primary schooling and the all-graduate teaching force policy in primary schools, the Government will rationalize the salaries of school heads and deputy heads and improve the manpower at the middle management level in primary schools, and announced that a recurrent allocation of \$0.5 billion was reserved for the purpose. The Task Force has thus accorded priority to the deliberation of these two aspects and submitted relevant recommendations in an Interim Report to the Government in November 2018 so that early consideration and follow-up could be made.

5. The Task Force has also formulated detailed proposals on the other areas of studies under its Terms of Reference. Among others, the Task Force put forward recommendations from different perspectives to further promote the

culture of continuing professional development among the teaching profession; accord due recognition to, and raise the professional status of teachers; retain and attract talents into the profession; and ultimately enhance the professional standards of teachers and the quality of learning and teaching. It considers that the three specific areas of its work under its Terms of Reference are strongly inter-related, the cornerstone of which will be the establishment of a professional ladder for our teaching profession. (*Appendix II* outlines the considerations and recommendations for establishing the professional ladder for teachers in Hong Kong, details of which are set out in the final report.) The other two areas including the review of the ranking arrangements of school management and the implementation of an all-graduate teaching force, on the other hand, will be effective measures to support and promote such a professional ladder. Thus, these three areas should be considered holistically and pursued in an integrated manner.

6. The Task Force submitted its final report with specific recommendations to the Government on 26 March 2019. The Government will study the report carefully and put the feasible recommendations into practice for the enhancement of the professional development of teachers in Hong Kong.

### **The Proposals to Improve Manpower and Rationalize Salaries**

7. Having regard to the recommendations in the Interim Report submitted by the Task Force, the Education Bureau (EDB) proposes to strengthen the middle management level and rationalize salaries of school heads and deputy heads in public sector primary schools as set out in paragraph 8 below.

8. It is recommended to –
- (a) adjust the calculation basis of senior teacher posts (i.e. the Primary School Master/Mistress (PSM) rank) from the number of approved classes to the number of teaching posts derived from the application of teacher-to-class ratio, and to improve the provision of senior teacher posts in public sector primary schools from 1 senior teacher post for every 3 classes<sup>1</sup> to 1 senior teacher post for every 3.2 teachers<sup>2</sup> for ordinary whole-day primary schools starting from the 2019/20 school year. For the primary section of special schools and primary special schools, it is proposed to improve the provision of senior teacher posts from 1 senior teacher post for every 4 teachers<sup>3</sup> to 1 senior teacher post for every 3 teachers ; and
  - (b) rationalize the salaries for school heads and deputy heads in public sector primary schools starting from the 2019/20 school year as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> The existing provision of senior teacher posts in ordinary primary schools is basically computed on the basis of the number of approved classes. The ratio of 1 senior teacher post for every 3 classes is adopted for whole-day schools. Schools are also provided with additional senior teacher posts for the implementation of various initiatives.

<sup>2</sup> It is proposed that corresponding improvement be applied to primary schools operating bi-sessional classes and the provision of senior teachers be improved from 1 senior teacher post for every 4 classes to 1 senior teacher post for every 4 teachers for bi-sessional classes in ordinary primary schools.

<sup>3</sup> For the primary section of special schools and primary special schools, the existing provision of senior teacher posts is determined based on the number of teaching posts. Simply speaking, teacher posts derived from the application of teacher-to-class ratio and some additional teachers provided under various initiatives within staff establishment are included in the calculation of promotion posts. The existing ratio is 1 senior teacher post for every 4 teachers.

Rank	Existing Salary Scale (MPS)	Proposed Salary Scale (MPS)
Senior Primary School Master/Mistress (SPSM) [head of a school with 11 or fewer classes / deputy head of a school with 12 classes or more]	34 – 35	34 – 39
Headmaster/Headmistress II (HM II) [head of a school with 12 – 23 classes]	35 – 39	40 – 43
Headmaster/Headmistress I (HM I) [head of a school with 24 classes or more]	38 – 41	43 – 46

## Justifications

### Increasing the Manpower at the Middle Management Level in Primary Schools

9. The Task Force has reviewed the current provision of manpower at the middle management level in primary schools and recommended that the provision of senior teachers should be enhanced for the following reasons:

- (a) The numerous education initiatives implemented over the past decades for the improvement of primary education such as integrated education, whole school approach to guidance, inclusion of ethnic minority students, the many more facets of values education that needs to be taken care of given our increasingly complex society, catering for widening student diversity etc., have brought on far-reaching

impacts on school operations and rendered school planning and student support work particularly more complex and demanding. Schools need more middle leaders now than a few decades ago to take charge of key subject panels as well as leading various functional areas or education initiatives driven by the developmental needs of individual schools.

- (b) Other than the improved provision for senior teachers upon implementation of whole-day primary schooling and the additional senior teacher posts for specific purposes, there has not been any major review or enhancement of the senior teacher provision to help primary schools cope with the constant developments on the education landscape over the years to meet the changing learning needs of students.
- (c) As the computation of promotion posts in primary schools is linked to the number of approved classes, more promotion posts would not be created upon improvements of the teacher-to-class ratio. This is not conducive to good management when the staff establishment grows bigger and in turn not in the interest of school development.
- (d) The number of leadership and functional roles has outgrown the number of promotion posts. The current arrangement of schools' deploying, across the board, the basic graduate rank of Assistant Primary School Master/Mistress (APSM) to leadership and functional

roles<sup>4</sup>, is unsatisfactory as it could cause quality concerns and undesirable staff management issues with morale and staff relations problems, which would not be conducive to the long-term school and manpower development. The situation, if allowed to continue, would become even more difficult to manage with the full implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy that replaces most, if not all, CM posts with APSM posts on a one-to-one basis as from the 2019/20 school year. While the all-graduate teaching force policy embraces both qualifications upgrade and professional capacity enhancement, and APSMs are expected to take up more diversified professional roles and duties, schools would face greater challenge in the allocation of complex and demanding duties amongst a team of teachers of the same rank and grade.

10. Having regard to the above developments, EDB agrees with the Task Force's recommendation that the provision of senior teachers should be enhanced in primary schools in tandem with the implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy. It is recommended that the provision of senior teacher posts should be improved to 1 senior teacher for every 2 classes from the current rate of 1 senior teacher for every 3 classes for whole-day primary schools. The recommended provision of senior teachers, together with those additional senior teacher posts previously provided under various initiatives which should be kept intact, would give primary schools a reasonable number of senior teachers to cover their key

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<sup>4</sup> Due to the limited manpower at the middle management level, it is a common practice for primary schools to arrange for APSMs, graduate teachers at the basic rank (vis-à-vis Certificated Masters / Mistresses (CMs) who are teachers occupying the basic-rank posts of the non-graduate teacher grade who may, nonetheless, also possess a degree), to take up also leading roles for various school functions.

subject panels and major functional groups as well as coordination of initiatives to drive school-based development. Besides, to meet the long-term developmental needs of schools, it is recommended that the provision of senior teacher posts in primary schools should be changed from basing on the number of classes to number of teaching posts derived from the application of teacher-to-class ratio, so that the senior teacher posts in primary sector could, like the secondary education sector, be adjusted correspondingly if there are any changes in the teacher-to-class ratio in the future. In this connection, the Task Force proposes that the teaching posts generated from the increase in teacher-to-class ratio by 0.1 since the 2017/18 school year should be counted towards the calculation of promotion posts. EDB accepts this recommendation. Taking all the changes together, the improved provision of senior teacher posts would be 1 senior teacher post for every 3.2 teachers. As a related improvement, it is also proposed that the additional teacher post of teacher librarian should be counted towards the calculation of promotion posts.

11. With the above enhancement in the provision of senior teacher posts, it is estimated that 155 civil service posts of APSM will be upgraded to PSM in government primary schools in the 2019/20 school year.

### Rationalizing the Salaries of School Heads and Deputy Heads in Primary Schools

#### *The SPSM rank*

12. The SPSM rank was created in 2008 having regard to the increasingly important functional role of deputy heads of primary schools after the introduction



of various education reform initiatives, the more complicated school environment, and the increasing demand and expectations of stakeholders. Upon the creation of the rank, SPSM also serves as the headship rank of schools with 11 or fewer classes<sup>5</sup>.

13. The Task Force has noted that the extensive development on the education landscape with numerous initiatives to meet students' changing learning needs have increased both the loading and complexity of work of school leaders in primary schools, including those of deputy heads (i.e. SPSM officers). The Task Force also considers the two-pay point salary scale (MPS 34 - 35) of the SPSM rank not adequate in reflecting the level and complexity of their responsibilities in the present day circumstances and giving due incremental credit in recognition of experience. Given the above, the Task Force recommends that the pay scale of the SPSM rank be improved to provide career advancement prospect and incentives to attract quality teachers to the primary school sector and, more specifically, to encourage more PSMs to progress upwards to take up school leadership ranks. The Task Force further recommends that the overlapping of the pay scales of SPSM and HM II (i.e. a deputy head in SPSM rank having the same pay as a school head in the HM II rank) should be removed as this could cause undesirable staff management and morale problems.

#### *The HM II and HM I ranks*

14. For the two ranks at the school head level, the Task Force has

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<sup>5</sup> Schools with 12-23 classes are headed by HM II while those with 24 classes or more are headed by HM I.

highlighted the fact that their pay scales were set many years ago<sup>6</sup> based on the arrangements for half-day primary schooling. The gradual implementation of whole-day primary schooling has brought on substantial changes to school operations and development, and hence more onerous duties, higher responsibilities and heavier workload of the school heads. The longer school days have enabled planning of more flexible curriculum and diversified student learning activities. The school heads need to lead their professional teaching teams in designing and delivering curricula that are conducive to promoting all-round education for the development of students' potential. The operation of whole-day classes with an expanded teaching force has rendered school administration more complex, and school heads need to demonstrate much more sophisticated professional and managerial leadership to carry out their duties effectively.

15. The multi-faceted work of school heads in primary schools has also grown in complexity with the education development over the years. The increase in complexity of responsibilities and workload detailed in paragraph 9(a) is also poignantly felt by school heads. The Task Force is of the view that the pay scales for the HM II and HM I ranks should be adjusted to give due recognition to the important roles they play and the complex duties and responsibilities they shoulder.

16. On the magnitude of adjustment, the Task Force has drawn reference to the fact that the existing pay scales for HM II and HM I are overlapping and opines that it is undesirable, as the workload and responsibilities shouldered by HM II and HM I respectively are different in magnitude and complexity.

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<sup>6</sup> The salary scales of HM I (MPS 38-41) and HM II (MPS 34-39) were set when the PSM grade was created in the 1994/1995 school year. In 2008, the minimum pay point of the HM II rank was raised from MPS 34 to MPS 35 following the creation of the SPSM rank with salary scale at MPS 34-35.

Moreover, the Task Force has noted that while it might be inappropriate to make direct comparison of the salaries for the headships of primary and secondary schools<sup>7</sup>, the current significant differences between the salaries of the headships of primary and secondary schools should be narrowed to better attract talents to join the primary school sector for its long-term development.

17. EDB agrees with the Task Force's assessment regarding the SPSM, HM II and HM I ranks and considers the adjustments to their pay scales justified. Specifically, to tie in with the implementation of whole-day primary schooling, the teacher-to-class ratio and senior teacher posts ratio was increased accordingly for primary schools that changed into whole-day operation to meet the teaching staff manpower needs for the longer school days. However, no related enhancement measure was provided for the school heads. In this connection, school heads at the SPSM rank are also experiencing the increased responsibility and complexity of work for school heads as well as the substantial changes to school operations. The impact on deputy heads at the SPSM rank is also significant as they are responsible for assisting the school heads (at the HM II or HM I rank) in handling and discharging more and more complicated tasks. During the consultation conducted by the Task Force, many practitioners in the sector strongly expressed the opinion that the existing two-pay point scale of the SPSM, with a pay differential of around \$1,500 per month between the maximum pay point of the SPSM and Primary School Master/Mistress (PSM) ranks, could hardly attract and retain talent at the SPSM rank. Some primary school heads shared the view that they had difficulties in attracting teachers suitable for taking on challenges of a higher rank to accept

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<sup>7</sup> The rank and salary scale of a secondary school head is determined by the number of classes as follows: Principal I at MPS 45 - 49 (24 classes or more); Principal II at MPS 40 - 44 (15 to 23 classes) and Principal Graduate Master / Mistress at MPS 38 - 41 (14 classes or less).

advancement opportunities and this has given rise to succession planning problems. EDB considers the stakeholders' views above valid and the succession problem they experienced should be duly addressed.

18. EDB agrees that the salaries of school heads and deputy heads in primary schools should be adjusted to reflect the substantial changes in the scope of work and the increased complexity of responsibilities, and to give due recognition to the important roles they play and the complex duties and responsibilities they shoulder in the setting of whole-day primary schooling.

19. EDB considers that the proposed salary scales could provide reasonable incentives for teachers to take up the school leadership roles, better recognize the building up of experience and expertise in the future, and narrow the existing gaps in the salaries for the headship of primary and secondary schools to attract dedicated professionals to join the primary school sector. EDB also considers that the normal conversion arrangement should be applied to serving school heads and deputy heads in primary schools at SPSM, HM II and HM I ranks subject to the endorsement of the above recommendations to rationalize the salary scales of the three ranks.

### **Implementation Schedule**

20. The Chief Executive announced in her 2018 Policy Address that the all-graduate teaching force policy would be implemented in public sector primary and secondary schools in the 2019/20 school year. To tie in with this timetable, it is recommended that the recommendations of improving the manpower at the

middle management level and rationalizing the salaries of school heads and deputy heads in public sector primary schools should commence with effect from the 2019/20 school year.

## **Consultation**

21. The proposals to improve the manpower at the middle management level and rationalize the salaries for school heads and deputy heads in primary schools are based on the recommendations of the Task Force which have been deliberated in detail by members from different fields in the education sector. Views of major councils and associations have been taken into consideration in formulating the proposals. In coming up with the final proposal to rationalize the salaries of school heads and deputy heads as set out in Paragraph 8(b) above, EDB has sought the advice of the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service<sup>8</sup> (the Standing Commission) in accordance with the established mechanism.

## **Financial Implications**

22. The two proposals in paragraph 8 above would involve an additional recurrent expenditure of about \$862 million in a full year and \$503 million in 2019-20 with a breakdown as shown in the table below. As EDB is unable to cover this additional requirement through internal re-deployment, a supplementary

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<sup>8</sup> As the proposal to rationalize the salaries for school heads and deputy heads in primary schools touches on the salary and structure of the PSM grade in the civil service, advice of the Standing Commission on the proposal has been sought under the established mechanism and in accordance with the terms of reference of the Standing Commission.

provision of \$503 million for 2019-20 is required.

	2019-20 \$million	Full Year Effect \$million
Improving the Manpower at the Middle Management Level in Primary Schools	380	650
Rationalizing the Salaries for School Heads and Deputy Heads in Primary Schools	123	212
<b>Total recurrent expenditure</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>862</b>

23. The two proposals will also involve upgrading of 155 civil service posts of APSM to PSM and the normal conversion arrangement for SPSM, HM II and HM I posts in government primary schools in the 2019/20 school year. EDB proposes to increase the ceiling placed on the total notional annual salary cost at mid-point value of all non-directorate posts in the establishment of EDB in 2019-20 from \$4,016,284,000 by \$56,664,240 to \$4,072,948,240. The additional full annual average staff cost, including salaries and staff on-cost, for post upgrading is \$ 46,185,600. The financial implication for the normal conversion arrangement is about \$13.8 million per year in the form of additional cost on payroll and supply teachers.

24. Subject to approval by the Finance Committee, the funding and manpower requirements of the proposals beyond 2019-20 will be reflected in the draft Estimates of the relevant years.

## **Advice Sought**

25. Members are invited to note and comment on the proposals to improve manpower at the middle management level and rationalize salaries of school heads and deputy heads in public sector primary schools. Subject to Members' support, the endorsement of the Establishment Subcommittee and approval of the Finance Committee would be sought respectively.

**Education Bureau**

**March 2019**

**Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers**

**Terms of Reference**

To establish a platform to discuss and gauge professional views on enhancing and promoting professional development of teachers, and to make recommendations to the Secretary for Education on related issues; the following areas will also be covered:

- (1) feasible options of establishing a professional ladder for teachers, which includes recognition of teachers' expertise in various areas of teaching and learning (such as in specific subjects, guidance, teaching Chinese as a second language and supporting students with special educational needs, etc.);
- (2) ranking arrangement of school management of primary, secondary and special schools; and
- (3) timetable for an all-graduate teaching force.



**Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers**  
**Membership List**

**Chairperson**

Dr Carrie WILLIS

**Non-official members**

Mr CHAU Hau-fung  
Ms CHEUNG Wai-ye, Addy  
Mr CHEUNG Yui-fai  
Mr CHOI Siu-chow, Tony  
Ms KWAN Wai-fong  
Mr LAI Kam-tong  
Ms LAM Pik-chu  
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Professor LEE Chi-kin, John  
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Professor LEUNG Seung-ming, Alvin  
Ms NG Tan, Denise  
Mr PANG Cheong-kau, Morry  
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Sr WONG Yeuk-han, Cecilia  
Ms YAN Kin-foon, Alice  
Mr YU Chi-yin

**Official member**

Mrs WONG YAU Wai-ching, Michelle

### **Establishing the Professional Ladder for Teachers in Hong Kong**

1. The Task Force firmly trusts that our teachers share in common the vision of their professional goals and beliefs, and appreciates that our society holds high expectations of our teaching profession. A student-centred teaching profession should thus strive for continuous self-improvement to have themselves well equipped with subject knowledge, pedagogical skills, professional values and attitudes, so as to rise to the challenges that come with the rapid changes in society, education developments, as well as students' learning and developmental needs. The Task Force looks forward to supporting and promoting a vibrant professional teaching force in Hong Kong that will, through their values and attitudes, vigorously pursue continual advancement of their professional knowledge and competencies.

2. Taken into account the experiences in other regions, as well as the views of stakeholders, the Task Force proposes that a Professional Ladder for Teachers should be established in Hong Kong with the following two objectives:

- (a) enhance teachers' professional growth; and
- (b) raise teachers' professional status.

3. The Professional Ladder for Teachers could help members of the profession, including teaching staff and school leaders, to set clear direction and plan for their personal professional development, which could also be useful for career development planning. On the other hand, through the Professional Ladder for Teachers, our society could gain a

deeper understanding of the competencies and conduct of the teaching profession, which would in turn help reinforce societal recognition of the teaching profession.

4. Other than facilitating the planning of professional development at the individual's level, the Professional Ladder for Teachers could also be useful for review and formulation of policies and strategies at the system and school levels, including devising school-based policies and arrangements to suit schools' specific objectives and contexts, deciding on system-wide strategies, measures and resources allocations that cater for the professional development needs of teachers at their various stages of growth.

5. The Task Force considers that full implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy will raise the overall qualifications of teachers and offer the opportunities for teachers to take up a wider spectrum of professional duties, and through practical application and accumulation of experience, consolidate their professional competencies and develop their professional roles. The Task Force is also of the view that enhancing the ranking and deployment arrangements for the school management will encourage the teaching profession to continuously pursue professional development. This will build the professional capacity of the teaching force in schools and nurture their professional growth at the same time which in turn will be conducive to the benefits of schools' long-term development.

6. The Task Force's proposed Professional Ladder for Teachers comprises three components including:

- i. three core elements in teachers' professional growth;

- ii. two essential dimensions in teachers' professional development; and
- iii. the three respective professional roles for teachers and principals under the T-standards<sup>+</sup> as the goals.

7. The three core elements in teachers' professional growth are:
- professional competencies;
  - professional values and conduct; and
  - aspiration for self-advancement through self-reflection.

These three core elements form the foundation of the Professional Ladder for Teachers. Teachers' professional growth will hinge on the continuous advancement of professional competencies, upholding professional values and conduct in professional work and aspiration for self-advancement through self-reflection throughout the teaching career.

8. The two essential dimensions in teachers' professional development are:
- professional growth; and
  - career development.

Under the professional growth dimension, teachers should take initiatives to renew their professional knowledge and skills at various career development stages and when taking up different positions. Under the career development dimension, teachers being promoted to various posts should thoroughly understand their new duties and requirements, and possess leadership competences to steer the developments of their teaching teams and the schools. Through relevant professional development activities, teachers will be able to achieve self-advancement, professional growth and their aspired career development.

9. The ultimate goal of teachers' professional development should meet students' needs, and benefit student learning and growth. The core principles of "T-standard", which adopts a student-centred approach, are thus in alignment with the objectives of the Professional Ladder for Teachers. The three professional roles of teachers "T-standard" are:

- Caring Cultivators;
- Inspirational Co-constructors; and
- Committed Role Models.

The three professional roles of principals are:

- Ethical Enablers;
- Versatile Architects; and
- Visionary Edupreneurs.

10. The following diagram illustrates the conceptual framework of the proposed Professional Ladder for Teachers.

# Professional Ladder for Teachers

