

For discussion  
on 2 November 2018

**Legislative Council Panel on Education**  
**2018 Policy Address**  
**Education Bureau's Policy Initiatives**

The Chief Executive delivered the 2018 Policy Address on 10 October 2018. This paper sets out the major education-related initiatives set out in the Policy Address and the Policy Agenda.

2. Talent, in particular our young talent, is the most important element for Hong Kong's continued development, and education is the key to nurturing them. Government expenditure on education is therefore the most meaningful investment for our future. Our education policy objective is to develop the future generations into quality citizens with a sense of social responsibility, a sense of national identity, a love for Hong Kong and an international perspective. We seek to create a stable, caring, inspiring and satisfying teaching and learning environment for students, teachers, principals and parents. Through learning, young people will be able to explore their potential, cultivate their interests and enhance their strengths so that they are well-equipped for the future and set to contribute to the community.

3. In its first year after inception, the current-term Government has already introduced a package of measures, covering education manpower, funding and hardware, to improve the quality of education. For the current financial year, the total provision for education has been significantly increased by 28.4% and the Government has also reserved \$3.4 billion as recurrent provision for educational use, which fully reflects our long-term commitment to education. Among the eight in-depth reviews proposed in the 2017 Policy Address, two have been completed. The others are also being carried out in full swing. Following this proactive start, we, together with education experts, will continue to pursue necessary reforms and effective programmes, so as to further achieve quality education. During the process, we will continue to listen to the views of teachers, students and parents, and inject more resources into areas that need additional provision.

## **New Initiatives**

### **A. Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary Education**

#### **(i) Diversified Life-wide Learning**

4. The Education Bureau (EDB) has all along been advocating the adoption of diversified pedagogies to enhance students' motivation in learning and to promote self-directed learning. To support schools to take forward, on the present foundation, life-wide learning with enhanced efforts, we will provide, starting from the 2019/20 school year, a new recurrent Life-wide Learning Grant with an annual provision of \$900 million to public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools for organising more out-of-classroom experiential learning activities in various curriculum areas such as the humanities, STEM education, physical and aesthetic development, and moral and civic education. Activities such as community service, field studies, exchanges outside Hong Kong and workplace experience, will enable students to learn in authentic contexts, broaden their horizons and foster their whole-person development. The enlivened and enriched learning experiences and the opportunities to apply what students have learned will not only enhance their interest in learning, but also help them develop positive values and attitudes, enhance their spirit to serve and sense of responsibility, and foster positive thinking and good character.

#### **(ii) All-Graduate Teaching Force**

5. The Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers has completed its public consultation in early September 2018 and received unanimous support for the full implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy the soonest possible, and based on which the Task Force has recommended that the Government should implement the policy as soon as possible. The Government has accepted the recommendations of the Task Force and will implement in one go the all-graduate teaching force policy in public sector primary and secondary schools in the 2019/20 school year. Schools may, taking into account their school-based circumstances, achieve full implementation in two years. The amount of additional funding involved is about \$1.5 billion per year. Meanwhile, in tandem with the implementation of whole-day schooling and the all-graduate teaching force policy in primary schools, the Government will earmark a recurrent allocation of \$500 million to rationalise the salaries for principals and vice-principals and to improve the manpower at the middle management level in primary schools. The

Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers will submit its recommendations in this regard later.

### **(iii) Facilitating the Steady Development of Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary Education**

6. As regards kindergarten (KG) education, the Government has implemented the new KG education policy starting from the 2017/18 school year. Under the new policy, government expenditure is drastically increased, teachers' remuneration enhanced, parents' financial burden reduced, and quality of teaching improved. We will use the data of the three school years from 2017/18 to 2019/20 as the basis to explore the feasibility of introducing a salary scale for KG teachers. We have initially collected the data concerned and plan to start a review in mid-2019 on the implementation of the new policy, including the salary arrangements for KG teachers. We will consult stakeholders during the process.

7. The Education Commission set up the Task Force on School-based Management Policy last year to review how to strengthen school-based management and at the same time reduce the administrative work of teachers and principals so that they may focus on teaching and taking care of the development of students. The Task Force has consulted stakeholders on its initial recommendations and, amongst them, the proposed provision of additional resources for schools to handle administrative work received widespread support. Although the Task Force still needs to consider carefully the views collected on other proposals, it has suggested that the Government should consider implementing this unanimously-supported proposal as soon as possible. In light of the suggestion from the Task Force, starting from the 2019/20 school year, the Government will provide public sector and DSS schools with additional resources of \$570 million each year to strengthen the administrative support for schools and their management committees.

8. Parents play a vital role in the growth and learning of their children. To foster parent education and home-school co-operation, the Task Force on Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education has proposed, amongst others, providing more funding to Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations and Parent-Teacher Associations of schools for organising more community-based and school-based parent education programmes or activities. In view of the support received for this recommendation during the public consultation conducted by the Task Force, the Government has decided to accept this proposal and increase

the recurrent subsidy of about \$30 million each year to Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations and Parent-Teacher Associations of schools as additional resources starting from the 2019/20 school year.

#### **(iv) Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority**

9. The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) has been administering the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination since the latter's introduction in 2012. It strives to ensure professional administration of the HKDSE Examination as well as the fair and just assessment of all candidates. With a continuous decline in candidature in recent years and an increase in operating expenditure (an example of which is that arising from the provision of special examination arrangements for candidates with special educational needs (SEN)), coupled with the fact that around 70% of the total cost is fixed and does not go down in tandem with the reduction in candidature, the HKDSE Examination has recorded operational deficits in recent years. To allow time for the Government and the HKEAA to consider how to alleviate the pressure of having serious deficits resulting from the continuously declining number of candidates and to work out a long-term solution, we will provide the HKEAA in four years with a non-recurrent funding of \$360 million to support the effective operation of the HKEAA during the period.

#### **(v) Supporting Students with SEN**

10. We care about students with SEN and have taken positive actions to implement integrated education to support their learning. Soon after the inauguration of the current-term government, resources were dedicated to creating the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) posts by phases to further enhance the effectiveness of the implementation of integrated education in public sector ordinary schools. We have also provided more resources to special schools in catering for their students. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, we will implement the following support measures to address some of the resource issues in integrated education:

- (a) re-structuring the Learning Support Grant (LSG), Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme in Primary Schools and Integrated Education Programme. The LSG will be extended to all public sector ordinary schools and the grant rate for tier-3 support will be increased. Additional permanent teaching posts will also be provided for schools with comparatively large number of students

with SEN. Under the enhanced measure, schools will have a more stable teaching force and additional resources for flexible deployment to support students with SEN;

- (b) upgrading the SENCO post to a promotion rank in public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools with a comparatively large number of students with SEN to facilitate SENCOs to deliver their leadership duties more effectively;
- (c) extending further the Enhanced School-based Educational Psychology Service (Enhanced SBEPS), with the target of about 60% of public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools receiving the Enhanced SBEPS by the 2023/24 school year through enhancing the ratio of educational psychologist to school from between 1:6 and 1:10 to 1:4. The ratio will be enhanced to 1:6 for the remaining 40% of schools; and
- (d) creating school-based speech therapist (SBST) posts in public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools by phases in three years starting from the 2019/20 school year so that schools can form clusters for the employment of SBSTs to help students with speech and language impairment or other students with SEN to develop their communication and language abilities.

The above measures from (a) to (d) require an additional annual expenditure of about \$800 million. We will organise a series of briefings for various stakeholders, including school sponsoring bodies, schools, parents associations, etc. to elucidate the relevant arrangements and implementation details.

#### **(vi) Strengthening Support for Non-Chinese Speaking Students**

11. The Steering Committee on Ethnic Minorities, under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary for Administration, will co-ordinate, review and monitor the Government's work on supporting ethnic minorities. As far as education is concerned, the Government will implement the following enhancement measures:

- (a) In supporting the Chinese language learning of non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students, we will continue to provide support measures to primary and secondary schools admitting NCS students to facilitate the implementation of the "Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework"

(“Learning Framework”). We will also allocate more resources to commission tertiary institutions to provide professional support services for KGs, primary and secondary schools for three school years from 2019/20 to 2021/22. The estimated non-recurrent expenditure would be \$45 million in total and about 200 KGs, primary and secondary schools would be benefitted in the three years. In addition, we will provide additional funding to secondary schools admitting NCS students to support their learning of Chinese History using the Chinese language. We plan to disburse additional funding to local public sector and DSS secondary schools with NCS students admitted. Each school will receive a total amount of \$100,000 in the 2018/19 and 2019/20 school years. The initiative will involve non-recurrent funding of about \$30 million. The Ad Hoc Committee on Supporting Non-Chinese Speaking Students Learning Chinese History and Chinese Culture will offer recommendations to tie in with the implementation of the new junior secondary Chinese History curriculum;

- (b) starting from the 2019/20 school year, we will provide tiered subsidies to KGs joining the KG education scheme according to the number of NCS students admitted to further support these students; and
- (c) we will provide additional resources to public sector ordinary schools under a 3-tiered structure according to the number of NCS students with SEN admitted, with a view to assisting these schools in stepping up the support for the students concerned to help them adapt to different learning stages and integrate into school life.

#### **(vii) Building Barrier-free Campus**

12. The Government has earmarked a provision of \$2 billion to expedite the installation of lifts for public sector schools without such provision. The EDB will set up a dedicated team (including designated consultants) to centrally handle the lift installation works. We are taking forward the tendering exercise for engagement of the consultants expeditiously. The newly-appointed consultants are expected to assume duty in the first quarter of 2019. They will then arrange designated staff to conduct initial technical feasibility study and assessment for the lift installation works at the schools concerned, with a view to completing the work in a year’s time. The EDB will, based on the results and actual

circumstances of individual schools, formulate an installation timetable and commence the related works as soon as practicable. For government schools, the Architectural Services Department will assist in the installation under the existing arrangement; for DSS and caput schools, they will also benefit from this programme and be provided with subvention in accordance with the existing mechanism.

### **(viii) Strengthening the Development of Gifted Education in Hong Kong**

13. To cultivate more talent with exceptional calibre and enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness in the international arena, we have submitted to the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council the proposal to inject \$800 million into the Gifted Education Fund for generating more investment income to support the service enhancement of the Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education and the implementation of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Gifted Education, which include enabling various gifted education service providers (e.g. post-secondary institutions and non-governmental organisations) to offer quality advanced learning programmes for gifted students and to promote the development of gifted education in Hong Kong.

### **(ix) One School Social Worker for Each School**

14. Starting from the 2018/19 school year, the Government will provide more resources for public sector primary schools to implement, in light of their school-based circumstances, the policy of "one school social worker for each school" on the basis of the Comprehensive Student Guidance Service, with a view to strengthening their social work and guidance services. Under the new funding mode, public sector primary schools may create a graduate social worker post, or receive an equivalent amount of subsidy to employ a school-based registered graduate social worker on their own or hire the service of a school-based registered graduate social worker from a social work service provider. Schools will also be provided with a Consultation Service Grant for hiring consultation, supervision and other related support services for school social workers. In parallel, the existing Top-up Student Guidance Service Grant will be enhanced so that schools can receive more resources under the enhanced funding mode to strengthen their social work and guidance services. Schools now employing Student Guidance Teachers can retain the present arrangements. They can also receive additional resources on top of the existing ones to enhance student support services under the current mode of operation. We will continue

to discuss with stakeholders the guidance services in primary schools in the long run, including the feasibility of one school one Student Guidance Teacher and one graduate social worker.

### **(x) Setting up the Student Activities Support Fund**

15. In order to support students with financial needs to participate in out-of-classroom learning activities and to take the place of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Life-wide Learning Fund, which will end at the close of the 2018/19 school year, we have submitted to the Finance Committee the proposal to set up a \$2.5 billion Student Activities Support Fund (the Fund). With investment income generated from the Fund, we will provide public sector and DSS schools with a subsidy, starting from the 2019/20 school year, to support primary and secondary students with financial needs to participate in school-organised/recognised out-of-classroom learning activities so as to learn through authentic experiences.

## **B. Post-Secondary Education and Vocational and Professional Education and Training**

### **(i) Strengthening Research Capacity**

16. To strengthen support for researchers and cultivate a research culture, we have formed the Task Force on Review of Research Policy and Funding and reviewed the support strategies and the level and allocation mechanism of research funding of the higher education sector's research work. On scientific research, we need to raise standards, foster the development of industries and technological innovation, and enhance our competitiveness in the long run, so as to develop Hong Kong as an international innovation and technology hub. Upon detailed consideration, the Government has accepted in full the recommendations put forward by the Task Force on Review of Research Policy and Funding. Details of follow-up action plans for the recommendations are at **Annex I**.

17. The Government will inject \$20 billion into the Research Endowment Fund (REF) to substantially increase research grants and provide a more stable source of research funding, so as to attract and retain talent and foster the scientific research ecosystems in Hong Kong. We will also ask the University Grants Committee (UGC) to rationalise the use of different pots of REF for more effective deployment of funding.



18. To incentivise the private sector to strengthen financial support for research and development for the purpose of diversifying the funding sources, the Government proposes launching a new Research Matching Grant Scheme, under which a total of \$3 billion is provided in three years for applications by local degree-awarding institutions. Research and development expenditure and donations from the private sector and philanthropists secured by individual institutions will be matched by the Government for research-related purposes. The Scheme not only allows the higher education sector to tap more sources of research funding, but also encourages collaboration between the industries and the higher education sector in research and development, thereby strengthening the social impact of the research conducted by the higher education sector. Details of the injection into the REF and the new Research Matching Grant Scheme are at **Annexes II and III**.

19. The Government support the Research Grants Council (RGC) in introducing three new fellowship schemes, i.e. Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme, RGC Research Fellow and RGC Senior Research Fellow, which will benefit postdoctoral fellows and researchers at associate professor and professor levels. These schemes will encourage doctoral graduates to pursue careers in research, provide support for promising researchers, and enable universities to attract and retain talent.

20. As recommended in the report of the Task Force on Review of Research Policy and Funding, the quota for each round of the Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme is 50. According to its preliminary proposal, an outstanding postdoctoral fellow will be awarded a grant equivalent to the basic salary of a university full-time postdoctoral post and a transport subsidy relating to conferences and/or research activities for up to three years. It is also proposed that at the initial stage, the quota for each round of the RGC Research Fellow is 10 to 15, while that of the RGC Senior Research Fellow is up to 10, with a subsidy period of five years. In this way, sustained support can be provided for outstanding academics to undertake research. Under such schemes, universities of the awardees will be provided with subsidies to recruit substitute staff to release the awardees from teaching (except the supervision of postgraduate students) or administrative duties so that they can focus on their research. Upon consultation with the institutions and subject specialists on the three new schemes, the RGC will draw up details of the schemes and applications and launch the schemes as soon as possible in order to render appropriate support to promising and outstanding researchers.

## **(ii) Implementing Matching Grant Scheme**

21. The Government has launched several rounds of the Matching Grant Scheme (MGS) since 2003 to help the higher education sector diversify its funding sources, foster a philanthropic culture in the community, and offer quality higher education through enhanced resources for tertiary institutions. The 2018-19 Budget proposed launching the eighth round of MGS, providing a maximum of \$2.5 billion for applications by the public-funded post-secondary institutions. The Government will announce the application details shortly.

## **(iii) Expanding the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors**

22. The Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education has consulted the public on its recommendations. To further increase the opportunities and subsidies for local students to pursue post-secondary education, and having regard to the preliminary review findings of the Task Force, the Government has decided to step up support for self-financing sub-degree programmes that nurture talents to meet our social and economic development needs. Starting from the 2019/20 academic year, about 2 000 students per cohort will be subsidised to undertake designated self-financing sub-degree programmes through the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors (SSSDP). Current students of the designated programmes will also receive the subsidy. It is expected that about 4 000 students will benefit in each academic year. This initiative is expected to incur \$120 million additional recurrent expenditure per year.

## **(iv) Promoting Vocational and Professional Education and Training**

23. Through the Vocational Training Council (VTC), the Government will increase training places of the regularised Training and Support Scheme to 1 200 per year from the 2019/20 academic year to enable trainees to join industries which require specialised skills under the “Earn and Learn” model with an average monthly subsidy of \$2,500 per month for each trainee. The annual expenditure for implementing the regularised scheme will be around \$100 million. To implement workplace assessment with a view to enhancing the Training and Support Scheme, a non-recurrent funding of \$108 million for three years will be provided to VTC to facilitate employers’ participation in the assessment.

24. Furthermore, to encourage working adults in designated industries to pursue higher qualifications, the Government has launched a Pilot Subsidy Scheme for Students of Professional Part-time Programmes for three years since 2016/17 academic year. We will allocate an additional \$234 million to provide tuition fee subsidy from 2019/20 academic year for three more years which will benefit another 5 600 students admitted to designated professional part-time programmes offered by the VTC. The extended Pilot Subsidy Scheme will also be expanded to cover practioners in the creative industry with a maximum subsidy of \$36,000 per person. The above schemes will enhance the employability of young people and working adults, and attract and retain talents for the relevant industries.

25. We will seek funding approval from the Legislative Council for the above new initiatives at a later stage.

### **On-going Initiatives**

#### **A. KG, Primary and Secondary Education**

##### **(i) KG Education**

26. The new KG education policy has been smoothly implemented from the 2017/18 school year. The policy objectives are to provide good quality and highly affordable KG education, and enhance the accessibility of students to different modes of services that suit their specific needs. Under the new policy, about 90% of the KGs offering half-day programmes are free of charge in the 2017/18 and 2018/19 school years. As for KGs offering whole-day and long whole-day programmes, with the additional subsidies provided by the Government, the tuition fees are at a low level (the median tuition fees per installment in the 2017/18 and 2018/19 school years are around \$730 and \$790 respectively). Needy families are provided fee remission and a grant to defray the school-related expenses.

27. Under the new policy, we are enhancing the quality of KG education in various aspects. To enhance teachers' professional competency, we have refined the frameworks for teacher education programmes<sup>1</sup>. In particular, the elements of catering for students with

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<sup>1</sup> The programmes include Certificate in Early Childhood Education (ECE), Bachelor of Education (ECE) and Postgraduate Diploma in Education (ECE).

diverse needs are strengthened and the requirements in practicum have been raised. In respect of teachers' continuous professional development (CPD), a soft target has been set, i.e. starting from the 2018/19 school year, all principals and teachers of KGs joining the kindergarten education scheme (Scheme-KGs) are required to take part in 60 hours of CPD activities in a three-year cycle. We have also set training targets<sup>2</sup> for catering for students with developmental needs and supporting NCS students. Starting from the 2018/19 school year, a supply teacher grant is provided to facilitate Scheme-KGs in arranging teachers to attend specified recognised courses. In addition, the Performance Indicators (Kindergartens) have been refined. Starting from the 2017/18 school year, all Scheme-KGs have to use the refined performance indicators for self-evaluation and starting from the 2018/19 school year, the EDB conducts quality reviews on the basis of the refined performance indicators. In tandem, a pilot scheme was launched in the 2018/19 school year, under which serving KG principals will join some of the quality reviews as external observers so as to enhance transparency. Similar to the current practices, these principals will not assess the performance of KGs but will share their observations. Regarding parent education, we have rolled out a parent education framework<sup>3</sup> for KGs, encouraging KGs to draw reference from the framework in organising school-based parent education programmes. The EDB will continue to offer relevant programmes on a territory-wide basis.

28. As regards teachers' salaries, starting from the 2018/19 school year, we adjust the salary-related subsidies and salary ranges for teaching staff on a school year basis according to the annual civil service pay adjustment. We have also extended the two-year tide-over grant (2017/18 and 2018/19 school years) for three more years up to the 2021/22 school year so that Scheme-KGs may retain their long serving teachers with higher salaries within the reference salary range promulgated under the Scheme. The Government is now reviewing the salaries for teachers and the usage of relevant grants, and the arrangements for the extended period will be announced in early 2019.

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<sup>2</sup> For catering for students with developmental needs, each Scheme-KG should have at least one teacher who has completed the basic course recognised by the EDB by the end of the 2020/21 school year. For all Scheme-KGs that have admitted NCS students (regardless of the number), they should have at least one teacher who has completed the basic course as recognised by the EDB by the end of the 2020/21 school year.

<sup>3</sup> The framework covers three major domains and eight themes, such as "interface between kindergarten and primary education", "learning through play" and "do not compare children with each other".

29. The Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) is making use of the Language Fund to provide Chinese and English language enhancement programmes for KG teachers, including training on skills in teaching Chinese to NCS students, in order to dovetail with the implementation of the newly revised Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide.

### **(ii) Providing Recurrent Air-conditioning Grant**

30. To create a more comfortable teaching and learning environment for teachers and students in hot weather, starting from the 2018/19 school year, we provide a recurrent Air-conditioning Grant for all public sector schools to cover the daily expenses relating to the air-conditioning systems in standard teaching facilities. Starting from the summer break in 2018, the EDB has progressively taken forward the air-conditioning installation works at the eligible facilities without such provision. Relatively simple installation works (e.g. installation of standalone air-conditioning units in classrooms) are expected to be completed by end 2018, while installations that involve more complicated associated works (e.g. involving upgrading of school premises' power supply systems to support the relevant air-conditioning installation works) are expected to be completed in phases in 2019-20. DSS schools can also receive subvention for the installations under the existing mechanism.

### **(iii) Enhancing the Professional Development of Teachers and Principals**

31. The Government provides a non-recurrent funding of \$500 million to support suitable projects under the T-excel@hk strategic work plan of the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals and to implement various measures and the relevant work to enhance the professional development of teachers and principals in the coming ten years starting from the 2018/19 school year, with an annual disbursement of around \$50 million. Teachers and students of primary and secondary schools, KGs and special schools may all benefit from the initiative. The EDB has taken forward a range of professional development programmes progressively, such as strengthening teachers' mentorship schemes, creating space for teachers' professional development and promoting professional learning circles, to support the diverse professional development needs of teachers. It will also formulate appropriate professional development programmes in accordance with the recommendations and report to be submitted by the Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers in early 2019.

#### **(iv) Implementing the Paid Non-local Study Leave Scheme**

32. To create room for teachers' professional development, the Government has implemented a three-year paid non-local study leave scheme on a pilot basis for serving secondary school teachers to broaden their professional perspective and keep them abreast of the latest trend in global education development by taking part in professional development activities, such as specific courses or overseas experiential learning attachment programmes. The first batch of three programmes covering three different themes, namely Interdisciplinary Learning & Entrepreneurship Education, Catering for Students with SEN and STEM Education, were held in Finland, Australia and the United Kingdom respectively in the 2017/18 school year and a total of 50 teachers joined the scheme. The second batch of programmes is scheduled to roll out in the 2018/19 school year. The themes for the programmes and related details are still under preparation.

#### **(v) Stabilising Teaching Force**

33. In the past few years, the EDB continuously allocated considerable resources and implemented various relief measures to stabilise the teaching force. For example, the teacher-to-class ratio for public sector schools has been increased by 0.1 across-the-board since the 2017/18 school year to provide schools with additional regular teachers. Also, secondary schools with surplus teachers arising from the reduction of Secondary One classes from the 2013/14 to 2017/18 school years were allowed to apply to extend the retention period of the teachers concerned till the progressive rebound of the overall secondary one student population. On the premise of stabilising the teaching force and facilitating sustainable development of schools, we will continue to discuss with primary and secondary schools measures to cope with the fluctuation of school-age population.

#### **(vi) Strengthening Life Planning and Enhancing Business and School Partnership**

34. The EDB will continue to strengthen support for schools in implementing life planning education through various measures, including provision of the Career and Life Planning Grant for public sector schools, option of turning the Career and Life Planning Grant into regular teaching posts, enhancement of on-line resources, conducting advisory visits to schools, provision of diversified professional development activities for teachers and establishment of district-based

development networks.

35. The EDB will also continue to encourage more business entities to participate in the “Business-School Partnership Programme” (BSPP) and provide career exploration activities and work experience opportunities for students in order to help them gain an initial understanding of the workplace. Since the 2014/15 school year, over 300 partners have joined the BSPP, offering more than 3 600 work experience activities and benefiting 930 000 students. To further mobilise different sectors of the community to provide work experience programmes and nurture a culture of supporting young people for better life planning, the EDB has launched the Work Experience Movement (WEM) since the 2016/17 school year. Up to now, more than 200 commercial and community organisations have participated in the WEM and offered over 3 000 places of work experience quota for students, covering more than 30 trades and industries.

#### **(vii) Enhancing School Facilities**

36. The Government has all along put in place various measures, including the completed School Improvement Programme, the existing reprovisioning and redevelopment programmes, and the annual major repairs mechanism, to improve the teaching and learning environment as well as facilities of existing schools according to individual circumstances. We understand that the community is concerned about school facilities at old school premises. Based on the consensus reached with the sector earlier on, the EDB has commenced improvement works for primary schools operating in “matchbox-style school premises” with a focus on addressing the common problems arising from the unique architectural design features of those premises. The relevant improvement works commenced in the summer break in 2017, and are expected to be completed by the summer break in 2019. Under this programme, we have also explored technically feasible means for more flexible use of existing space, such as internal conversion and installation of moveable partition walls to turn existing facilities into temporary special rooms. We are following up the relevant works in accordance with the schools’ wishes and needs, with a view to improving their teaching and learning environment with the limited space and architectural design of the existing school premises. We hope to gain experience from this “matchbox-style school premises” improvement programme, thereby acquiring valuable reference for future enhancement plans for other types of school premises. In addition, we will continue to review the vacant school premises and reserved school sites under the

EDB, and expedite the allocation process for premises for reprovisioning purpose through the existing school allocation mechanism. We will also take forward redevelopment/extension projects for schools having regard to individual circumstances, technical feasibility, availability of resources etc. In parallel, we will continue to seek resources for carrying out major repairs and emergency repair works for schools. The estimated non-recurrent subvention for such works is about \$1,512.9 million in 2018-19, representing a significant increase of nearly 28% as compared with the 2017-18 allocation.

### **(viii) Curriculum Development and Relevant Resources**

#### **a. Chinese History and Culture**

37. The EDB announced the revised curriculum framework of Chinese History for the junior secondary level in May 2018. The curriculum framework will be implemented progressively starting from Secondary One in the 2020/21 school year the earliest. Moreover, to enable students to receive Chinese history education in a systematic manner, the EDB has included Chinese History as an independent compulsory subject for the junior secondary level in the 2018/19 school year.

38. To promote Chinese history and culture as well as to reinforce students' learning interest, the EDB will continue to adopt diversified strategies, including strengthening professional development for teachers, developing teaching and learning resources, enriching Mainland exchange programmes and learning activities for teachers and students, etc. The EDB also disbursed a one-off grant to public sector and DSS primary and secondary schools in August 2017. Schools can use the grant to organise school-based learning activities that reinforce the learning of Chinese history until the end of 2019/20 school year. However, starting from the 2019/20 school year, schools can use the newly-disbursed "Life-wide Learning Grant" to organise diversified experiential learning activities which are in line with the Chinese History curriculum to facilitate learning beyond the classroom. Examples of these activities include field trip and study tour outside Hong Kong. The integration of life-wide learning strategy into the learning and teaching of Chinese History and related subjects enables students to enjoy more lively and richer learning experience, and broaden their horizons, thereby enhancing their motivation and interest in learning Chinese history and Chinese culture.



## **b. Language Education**

39. To support the language education in primary and secondary schools, SCOLAR has introduced, through the use of Language Fund, two initiatives -

- (a) a time-limited grant of maximum of \$350,000 for every eligible primary school for enriching the language environment on campus and refining the school-based English language curriculum, so as to enhance, with sustainable impacts, English language learning in primary schools, in particular, for the transition from KG to junior primary, and to cater for more as well as less capable students; and
- (b) funding for senior secondary students, who are interested in pursuing vocational and professional education and training or prepared to join the workforce, to enrol in vocational English courses, so as to enhance their English proficiency and provide them with opportunities for attaining relevant recognition that is beneficial to further study and employment. The vocational English courses are offered by three post-secondary institutions and are recognised under the Qualifications Framework. Students will be awarded a certificate upon successful completion of the courses which help lay a good foundation for further study and work.

## **c. STEM Education**

40. To align with the promotion of scientific researches and the development of innovative technology, we have been continuously promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education and progressively implementing the recommended strategies as set out in the Report on “Promotion of STEM Education – Unleashing Potential in Innovation” issued in late 2016 for enhancing the ability of primary and secondary students in integration and application of knowledge and skills, enabling them to recognise the relationship between innovative technology and their daily lives and solve problems through reflection and engaging in relevant activities, as well as unleashing students’ potential in science and technology with a view to nurturing talents of innovative technology for the future. In addition to the updating of the curricula of Science, Technology and Mathematics Education Key Learning Areas last year, we issued the supplementary curriculum document on “Computational Thinking – Coding Education” for use of schools. On teacher professional development, from the

2017/18 to 2019/20 school years, we have been organising a series of intensive training programmes for school leaders and middle managers of all public sector and DSS schools by batches in order to strengthen teachers' professional capacity in planning and organising school-based STEM related activities. Besides, the STEM Education Centre at Lok Fu, Kowloon has commenced operation, and it provides teachers of primary and secondary school levels with training programmes as well as related supports on learning and teaching. We would continue to collaborate with tertiary institutions and other related organisations in conducting more student activities of large-scale and quality in nature, such as education fair related to science and technology, so as to provide students with more opportunities to apply what they have learnt and exchange with others. To facilitate schools to kickstart and enhance the school-based STEM education, the EDB had released the one-off STEM Grant to public sector and DSS primary and secondary schools. Primary and secondary schools could use the grant up to the end of the 2017/18 and 2018/19 school years respectively. From the 2019/20 school year, schools could use the new recurrent Life-wide Learning Grant to organise more out-of-classroom experiential learning activities for promotion of STEM education. Besides, schools may apply for the funding of the Quality Education Fund, including the "Dedicated Funding Programme for Publicly-funded Schools" to implement school-based initiatives on STEM education.

#### **d. Basic Law Education**

41. The Basic Law is the constitutional document of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and closely related to citizens' daily lives. It is also the cornerstone of "One Country, Two Systems". Hence, it is natural for teachers and students to correctly understand the Basic Law. It is also the intrinsic duty of schools to implement Basic Law education. The learning content of the Basic Law has been inherent in the curricula of related subjects at primary and secondary levels, such as General Studies at primary level as well as Life and Society, Chinese History and History at the junior secondary level. Some of the topics of these subjects enable students to understand the origin and content of the Basic Law. The EDB has all along adopted diversified strategies to promote Basic Law education with a view to coordinating the curricula and student activities as a whole. To provide support for schools, the EDB has been continuously developing learning and teaching resources related to the Basic Law, updating the related curricula, organising a wide variety of learning activities, teacher training courses and Mainland exchange programmes for teachers and students, so as to strengthen teachers' and

students' learning of the State's Constitution as well as the Basic Law and "One Country, Two Systems". For instance, the EDB has developed a 15-hour "Constitution and the Basic Law" independent module for use of schools and organised online courses on the Basic Law to enhance teachers' and students' understanding and knowledge of the Basic Law. The EDB will continue to adopt the multi-pronged and coordinated approach to promote Basic Law education.

#### **e. Understanding the Development of "Belt and Road"**

42. Hong Kong may capitalise on its advantage of being an international city to enhance co-operation and exchange in respect of education with countries along the Belt and Road to facilitate the understanding of students on the diverse cultures of different ethnic groups. Through the implementation of curricula and provision of learning activities of related subjects such as Chinese History, History, Liberal Studies, Geography, Economics, Art and Religious Education, we will enhance students' understanding and exploration on the development of countries/regions along the Belt and Road in geographical, historical, economic, religious, cultural, political and other aspects, so that they understand the significance of promoting the Belt and Road Initiative to the development of the country as well as the opportunities it may bring to Hong Kong, etc. We will continue to provide schools with the necessary support, including producing suitable learning and teaching resources, organising teacher training, widening opportunities for students to learn foreign languages, and encouraging students to participate in visits and exchange activities on the Mainland and in countries/regions along the Belt and Road, so as to broaden students' horizons.

#### **f. Quality Education Fund**

43. The Quality Education Fund, in response to the invitation of the Government, has set aside \$3 billion for application by primary and secondary schools, special schools and KGs for launching school-based curriculum and student support measures, as well as school improvement works and procurement of supplies, through simplified procedures. This initiative has provided schools with more possibilities in enhancing learning and teaching and is well received by the school sector. Schools have started submitting applications.

#### **g. Promotion of Reading Grant**

44. The EDB attaches great importance to the promotion of reading.

Starting from the 2018/19 school year, we disburse a new Promotion of Reading Grant involving a recurrent expenditure of about \$50 million to all public sector primary and secondary schools. This will encourage schools to create a better reading atmosphere, enhance students' interest in reading and help them develop a reading habit. As for KGs, the EDB will launch the 'Pilot Scheme on the Promotion of Reading Grant for Kindergartens' in the current school year to explore effective strategies in using the grant. The EDB will continue to support the promotion of reading in schools through the provision of various resources.

#### **(ix) Enhancing the Opportunities for Primary and Secondary Students to Join Mainland Exchange Programmes**

45. In alignment with the curriculum renewal, the EDB will continue to organise Mainland exchange programmes or subsidise those organised by schools so as to provide primary and secondary students with life-wide learning experiences aiming to broaden their horizons, deepen their understanding of the history and culture of our country, as well as to appreciate and inherit the distinctive Chinese culture and national spirit. Having regard to the development strategies of our country, the EDB will enhance the exchange programmes to enable students to gain first-hand experience of our country's latest development and reflect on the opportunities brought about through visiting the Belt and Road related provinces and cities, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and enterprises in the innovation and technology sector. About 66 000 students were subsidised to participate in Mainland exchange programmes in the 2017/18 school year. In the 2018/19 school year, we will continue to provide over 100 000 exchange quotas, which is sufficient for every student to join at least one Mainland exchange programme in the respective primary and secondary stages.

#### **(x) Promoting Interflows between Sister Schools in Hong Kong and the Mainland**

46. In view of the positive feedback from schools, the three-year Pilot Scheme on Promoting Interflows between Sister Schools in Hong Kong and the Mainland is regularised with effect from the 2018/19 school year. Recurrent grant and professional support are provided to public sector and DSS primary and secondary schools as well as special schools that have formed sister schools with their counterparts in the Mainland. The grant has been increased to \$150,000 per year for each participating school.

## **(xi) After-school Learning and Support**

47. As regards after-school activities (including learning support) for needy students in primary and secondary schools, we will continue to provide schools and non-governmental organisations with funding to increase these students' opportunity to participate in such activities, and to enhance the effectiveness of these activities through the synergy achieved, so as to facilitate the whole-person and all-round development of students.

## **B. Post-Secondary and Vocational and Professional Education and Training**

### **(i) Establishment of Hostel Development Fund**

48. To expedite development of student hostels for UGC-funded universities, we have established a \$10.3 billion Hostel Development Fund and will disburse grants to universities by end-2018. We expect to meet the outstanding hostel shortfall in full within ten years.

### **(ii) Regularisation of the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme**

49. We will regularise the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme from the 2019/20 academic year onwards to continue the effort to subsidise up to 100 outstanding local students per cohort in their pursuit of undergraduate and postgraduate studies in world-renowned universities outside Hong Kong, with a view to nurturing more top talent in various fields to support the development of Hong Kong.

### **(iii) Vocational and Professional Education and Training**

50. Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET) plays a pivotal role in broadening the learning opportunities for school leavers and in-service personnel, as well as nurturing the requisite human capital in support of Hong Kong's development. The Government has all along been committed to promoting VPET, and encourages young people to pursue education pathways and join industries that best suit their abilities and interests.

51. The Government has all along stressed the importance of VPET in sustaining social and economic development of Hong Kong. However, VPET is still not well understood by many students, parents and employers. In view of this, the Government has established the Task

Force on Promotion of VPET in April 2018 to further enhance the promotion of VPET. Members of the Task Force comprise representatives of schools, parents and employers, as well as community service and labour sectors. The Task Force is tasked to advise the Government on how VPET can be better promoted through career and life planning education in secondary schools to cater for students' diverse abilities and interests, and how best to foster closer business-school collaboration.

#### **(iv) Campus Development of Vocational Training Council**

52. Having regard to VTC's need for campus development, the Government has identified a site at Cha Kwo Ling in Kowloon East for VTC to develop a campus with adequate capacity and state-of-the-art facilities. The relevant planning work is underway. Besides, the Government supports VTC in principle to construct the Aviation and Marine Engineering Centre on the site of the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (Tsing Yi), so as to further upgrade the training facilities for VPET. With a view to enhancing the professional image and quality of VPET, we will continue to support VTC's strategic development plan for its campuses to gradually upgrade the teaching facilities for VPET and enhance the learning environment for students.

### **C. Strengthening the Support for Students with Diverse Needs**

#### **(i) Supporting NCS Students in Learning Chinese**

53. Paragraph 11 describes the enhancement measures the Government will implement to strengthen the support for NCS students. In fact, starting from the 2014/15 school year, the EDB has implemented a series of measures to step up the support for NCS students (notably ethnic minority students) in learning the Chinese language systematically to facilitate their integration into the community. Major support measures include implementation of the "Learning Framework" which was drawn up in consultation with teachers and language experts, in primary and secondary schools, to help NCS students overcome their difficulties in learning Chinese from the perspective of second language learners, and introducing Applied Learning Chinese (for NCS students) courses at the senior secondary levels as a subject for the HKDSE Examination to provide an additional channel for NCS students to obtain a recognised alternative qualification in Chinese Language with a view to preparing them for further studies and career pursuits.

54. 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. Starting from the 2014/15 school year, all schools admitting 10 or more NCS students are provided with an additional funding ranging from \$0.8 million to \$1.5 million per year. The number of the schools concerned has increased from 173 in the 2014/15 school year to 228 in the 2017/18 school year. Schools admitting less than 10 NCS students may also apply for an additional funding on a need basis for organising diversified modes of after-school support for learning Chinese to consolidate their NCS students’ learning of the language in an immersed Chinese language environment. The number of the schools concerned has increased from 58 in the 2014/15 school year to 213 in the 2017/18 school year. A dedicated team has also been set up to ensure that the schools concerned make optimal use of the enhanced funding to support their NCS students’ learning of the Chinese language. The EDB also provides teaching materials, professional development programmes and professional support services to help schools implement the “Learning Framework”. The “Professional Enhancement Grant Scheme for Chinese Teachers (Teaching Chinese as a Second Language)” has also been extended so that more Chinese Language teachers can pursue programmes to enhance their pedagogical knowledge and skills in teaching Chinese to NCS students.

55. To verify the learning progress and achievements of NCS students as assessed by the schools, the education system needs more time to collect comprehensive and objective data. The EDB will, based on the research framework drawn up in light of advice from research and language experts, continue to collect and analyse data to evaluate the effectiveness of the support measures for NCS students and refine them as appropriate.

## **(ii) Students with Special Educational Needs**

56. In addition to the new measures to be implemented in the 2019/20 school year set out in paragraph 10 above, the EDB will continue to provide public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools with additional resources, professional support and teacher training to help them implement the Whole School Approach to integrated education, so as to enhance the effectiveness of their support for students with SEN.

57. Starting from the 2017/18 school year and by phases in three years, the EDB provides each public sector ordinary primary and secondary school with an additional graduate post in the teaching staff establishment to facilitate the assignment of a designated teacher by schools as SENCO to support integrated education. In the 2018/19 school year, the initiative has been implemented in 544 public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools. The provision of SENCO will be extended to the remaining schools in the 2019/20 school year.

58. In the 2018/19 school year, we will continue to develop in public sector ordinary schools an evidence-based model with strategies and related teaching and learning resources for supporting the learning and development of senior secondary students having average to high intellectual functioning with autism. We will evaluate the efficacy of various strategies and compile a support manual cum resource package for the reference of schools in the territory, while promoting the application of such strategies and experiences among schools.

59. Starting from the 2017/18 school year, the Learning Support Grant for public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools covers students with mental illness in order to help schools cater for the students' learning, social, emotional and behavioural needs. Besides, we organise "Professional Development Programme for Mental Health" for teachers in order to enhance their capacity to identify and support students with mental health needs. The EDB will offer subsidy for supply teachers to schools. In the 2017/18 school year, some 190 teachers at large and 80 designated teachers completed elementary and in-depth training respectively under the Programme. We will continue to organise the Programme in the 2018/19 and 2019/20 school years, providing approximately 2 000 training places.

60. The Government has launched a "Student Mental Health Support Pilot Scheme" for two school years since the 2016/17 school year by setting up multidisciplinary teams in 17 schools. The core members of each multi-disciplinary team include a psychiatric nurse, a designated teacher and a school social worker, working closely with psychiatrists, educational psychologists, clinical psychologists, occupational therapists, etc. to enhance medical-educational-social collaboration among different professionals in order to provide support services for students with mental health needs at the school setting. The Scheme has been extended to cover 40 schools in the 2018/19 school year. The Government will continue to make reference to the outcome of the evaluation study to consider how to provide better support services for students with mental



health needs.

61. From the 2016/17 school year, SBEPS has covered all public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools. From the same school year, the ratio of educational psychologist to school has been gradually enhanced to 1:4 for schools with a large number of students with SEN, so that they can provide more comprehensive and regular follow-up and intervention services for students, and strengthen their preventive and developmental work. In the 2018/19 school year, about 120 primary and secondary schools receive the enhanced SBEPS. The Government is progressively extending the Enhanced SBEPS (please see paragraph 10(c) for details), and has liaised with local universities to increase the provision of training places for educational psychologists to address the manpower needs.

62. To improve the implementation of various measures, we will review the implementation of integrated education and listen to the views of different stakeholders on an on-going basis, and introduce improvement measures where necessary and practicable.

### **(iii) Students in Special Schools**

63. Starting from the 2017/18 school year, the EDB provides the following special schools with additional teaching staff, allied health staff and resources to improve their special education services:

- (a) provision of an Assistant Primary School Master/Mistress (Curriculum Development) to special schools that operate one to five approved primary classes;
- (b) provision of an occupational therapist and an occupational therapist assistant to schools for children with mild intellectual disability (ID), moderate ID, visual impairment (VI) and hearing impairment (HI);
- (c) provision of a speech therapist to the school for children with VI and schools for social development; and
- (d) extension of “Additional Support Grant for Enhancing the Support for Boarders with Medical Complexity in Aided Special Schools” to day students and day students cum boarders with medical complexity in special schools.

64. Besides, we provide additional grant to schools for children with severe ID, schools for children with physical disability (PD) and the school for children with VI cum ID for employing additional nurses and related staff to strengthen support for 24-hour ventilator-dependent students. The new initiative enables the existing nurses of special schools to pool resources to cater for other students in need. Starting from the 2018/19 school year, apart from enhancing the provision of school social workers for special schools, the EDB has also enhanced the provision of school nurses for schools for children with ID and schools for children with PD, and extend the provision to the school for children with VI and the school for children with HI.

### **Views sought**

65. Members are invited to note and comment on the contents of this paper.

**Education Bureau**  
**10 October 2018**

**Follow-up action Plans on the recommendations made by the Task Force on Review of Research Policy and Funding**

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Follow-up Actions</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
To double the competitive research funding	As announced in the Policy Address that an injection into the Research Endowment Fund (REF) will be made and that the Research Matching Grant Scheme will be introduced, the Education Bureau (EDB) will seek funding approval from the Legislative Council (LegCo) as soon as practicable.	<p>The Research Matching Grant Scheme will be launched as early as the 2019/20 academic year if funding approval is obtained from the LegCo within this legislative session.</p> <p>As it takes one year to generate investment income upon the injection into the REF, it is expected that there will be a substantial increase in the Research Grants Council (RGC) funding from the 2020/21 academic year onwards.</p>
To introduce three Fellowship Schemes under the RGC	The Government has expressed support for the implementation of such schemes under the RGC in the Policy Address, and the EDB will provide the necessary financial support to the RGC.	The RGC will draw up details of the schemes and introduce the three fellowship schemes as soon as practicable.
To enhance the efficiency and effectiveness in the use of competitive	The recommendation of the Task Force will be considered and followed up as	The RGC envisages that ways to follow up on the Phase II Review and the recommendations of

research funding	appropriate in the RGC Review (Phase II), which is now underway.	the Task Force will be decided in the first half of 2019 after consultation with the stakeholders.
To strengthen the effectiveness of the Research-portion (R-portion)	The University Grants Committee (UGC) will conduct a thorough review of the R-portion.	The UGC intends to start the review in the second half of 2019 for completion in mid-2021.
To incentivise cross-institutional/ cross-disciplinary collaborations	The UGC and the RGC will review the existing three cross-institutional/ cross-disciplinary collaborative research funding schemes.	The review is expected to be completed by 2019 and the enhanced funding scheme(s) will be introduced in the 2020/21 academic year the earliest.
To enhance the co-ordination among different funding bodies	A liaison group will be set up by the EDB to enhance the communication and co-ordination among different funding bodies.	The first meeting is expected to be held in mid-2019 the earliest.
To adopt a common researcher identity and to consider setting up a central database on research in the long run	The UGC and the RGC will consider and follow up on the recommendation.	The RGC has adopted a common research identity in its funding schemes and such identity will also be used in the Research Assessment Exercise 2020. As for the setting up of a central database on research, the UGC and the RGC will follow up on the recommendation after due consideration.

## **Injecting \$20 billion into the Research Endowment Fund**

To provide a more stable source of research funding, the Government has accepted the recommendation of the Review Report on Research Policy and Funding to make a substantial injection of \$20 billion into the Research Endowment Fund (REF) –

- (a) to sustain the level of current funding for research;
- (b) to provide funding for the Research Impact Fund introduced by the Research Grants Council (RGC), in order to provide continued support for impactful research ; and
- (c) to provide additional funding for collaborative research funding schemes under the RGC, in order to encourage cross-institutional/cross-disciplinary collaborations on research.

2. The REF was established in 2009 with an endowment of \$18 billion to provide a stable source of funding for academic research. Another \$5 billion and \$3 billion were injected into the REF in 2012 and 2018 respectively. The investment income from the endowment of the Fund is used for the following purposes:

<b>Endowment</b>	<b>Purposes of the investment income</b>	<b>Beneficiary</b>
\$16 billion	Earmarked Research Grants (ERG)	University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities
\$4 billion	Theme-based Research Scheme	UGC-funded universities
\$3 billion	Competitive Research Funding Schemes for the local self-financing degree sector	Local self-financing degree sector

\$3 billion	Tuition waiver for local students enrolled in UGC-funded research postgraduate programmes	Local students enrolled in UGC-funded research postgraduate programmes
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3. Assuming an annual return rate of 4%, the \$20 billion substantial injection into the REF will add an annual investment income of around \$800 million for research funding. This, together with the proposed Research Matching Grant Scheme, will help realise the recommendation of doubling the overall competitive research funding in Hong Kong from \$2 billion to \$4 billion per annum in the coming few years and fulfil the following purposes.

To sustain the level of funding for research

4. The REF is currently placed with the Exchange Fund administered by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority for investment. However, the annual investment return rate of REF has been declining from 6.8% in 2009 to 2.8% in 2017, which is below the expected level when REF was established or when injections were made.

5. Deficits of REF were reported in 2016/17 and 2017/18. To provide adequate funding for schemes funded by REF and address the increasing funding requirement for competitive research, the Government has to put in new resources to provide a stable source of research funding.

To support impactful research

6. To encourage local universities to conduct more impactful research and engage in more collaboration with stakeholders outside the academia, the UGC launched the Research Impact Fund, which is administered by RGC, in January 2018 on a pilot basis. A total of \$995 million was requested in the first call for proposal, while the original funding amount was pitched at \$150 million. In view of the favourable response, the UGC increased the amount of funding to \$200 million. The funding results are expected to be announced in January 2019. Injection into the REF can support the long-term funding requirement of the regularisation of the Research Impact Fund.

To encourage cross-institutional/cross-disciplinary collaborations

7. The three funding schemes, namely the Collaborative Research

Fund, the Theme-based Research Scheme (TRS) and the Areas of Excellence Scheme, are designed to support collaborative research. A total of approximately \$570 million funding is granted under these schemes per annum. In response to the recommendation of the Task Force on Review of Research Policy and Funding, the RGC will review these three existing funding schemes and consider combining them to form a new scheme to cater for the existing research needs, and also support proposals from research institutes set up by universities and incentivise universities to conduct more collaborative research. Injection into the REF can provide additional resources to encourage cross-institutional/cross-disciplinary collaborations.

#### To rationalise the use of different pots of REF

8. At present, the investment income from different pots of the REF can only be used for designated purposes. Any underspending in a particular scheme in a given year cannot be re-deployed to other schemes. It is suggested to remove the restriction as set out in paragraph two above so that the RGC may, after having met the original intentions of the different schemes, including providing sufficient research funds for self-financing institutions, TRS and fully covering the tuition fees of all local students of UGC-funded research postgraduate programmes, flexibly redeploy the uncommitted funding for other pressing requirements. As it takes at least one year to generate investment income from the new injection, it is expected that there will be a substantial increase in the RGC funding in the 2020/21 academic year the earliest if funding approval for injection is obtained from the Legislative Council within this legislative session.

## **Research Matching Grant Scheme**

The proposed Research Matching Grant Scheme (the Scheme) is devised by making reference to the mode of operation of the Matching Grant Scheme (MGS), which was first introduced in 2003. Preliminary details of the Scheme are as follows.

### Timeframe

2. The Scheme will cover a period of three years from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2022.

### Coverage

3. The private donations and matching grants under the Scheme should only be used for research-related purposes in the universities/institutions and meeting research-related expenses (excluding capital works projects) regardless of disciplines. The Scheme covers the following eight University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities (including their self-financing/subsidiary higher education establishments) and 14 local self-financing degree-awarding institutions<sup>1</sup> –

#### The eight UGC-funded universities

- (i) City University of Hong Kong (including the School of Continuing and Professional Education)
- (ii) Hong Kong Baptist University
- (iii) Lingnan University (including Lingnan Institute of Further Education)
- (iv) The Chinese University of Hong Kong (including the School of Continuing and Professional Studies)
- (v) The Education University of Hong Kong (including the EdUHK School of Continuing and Professional Education)
- (vi) The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
- (vii) The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
- (viii) The University of Hong Kong (including the University of Hong Kong School of Professional and Continuing Education)

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<sup>1</sup> The RGC may revise the list of institutions as appropriate (e.g. to cover any newly established degree-awarding institutions).



The 14 local self-financing degree-awarding institutions

- (ix) Caritas Institute of Higher Education
- (x) Centennial College
- (xi) Chu Hai College of Higher Education
- (xii) Gratia Christian College
- (xiii) Hang Seng Management College
- (xiv) Hong Kong CT Institute of Higher Education
- (xv) Hong Kong Nang Yan College of Higher Education
- (xvi) Hong Kong Shue Yan University
- (xvii) School of Continuing Education, Hong Kong Baptist University
- (xviii) School of Professional Education and Executive Development, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
- (xix) Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong
- (xx) The Open University of Hong Kong
- (xxi) Tung Wah College
- (xxii) Yew Chung College of Early Childhood Education

Principle of Application

4. All private donations received by universities/institutions and contract research projects commissioned/research expenditure met by the private sector during the period covered by the Scheme are eligible for matching.

5. To ensure fairness in the provision of matching grant, “double matching” or “double subsidisation” is not allowed. In other words, projects which have already obtained publicly-funded financial assistance (such as the Innovation and Technology Fund, and the REF, Research Impact Fund and Research Matching Grant Scheme under the RGC) and donations which have already received public fund matching pursuant to other matching grant schemes are not eligible for matching under this Scheme.

Matching Formula

6. Based on the MGS, a preliminary matching formula for the Scheme is prepared as follows:

- (a) To encourage all universities/institutions to apply for matching, a “floor” will be set aside for each university/institution as a guaranteed minimum over the

three-year period. A university/ institution which has successfully secured private donations within that minimum amount will be provided with the matching grant;

- (b) By the end of the three-year period, funding under the guaranteed minimum which has yet to be matched by the concerned universities/institutions will be opened up for allocation to match donations of other universities/institutions above the floor on a first-come-first-served basis;
- (c) To prevent a single university/institution with strong fund-raising ability from capturing a dominating share of the matching grant, an upper limit (i.e. a “ceiling”) will be applicable to the aggregate amount of government matching grants received by each university/institution;
- (d) The matching should be \$1 for \$1 of donations received by a university/institution up to the floor level (i.e. \$1 government grant for every \$1 of private donations secured). For donations beyond the floor level but below the ceiling, a \$1 for \$2 matching ratio applies (i.e. \$1 government grant for every \$2 of private donations secured), while donations beyond the ceiling level will not be matched; and
- (e) Requests for matching grants for donations over and above the floor level by universities/institutions will be considered on a first-come-first-served basis.

#### Disclosure and Audit

- 7. To ensure accountability and transparency of the operation of the Scheme –
  - (a) the EDB will co-ordinate all participating universities'/institutions' disclosure of donations and the intended use of both the private donations and the matching grants received. Universities/Institutions are also required to disclose in their annual accounts the amount of donations/matching grants received and the income generated from donations/grants; and the total amount of expenditure using the donations/grants broken down into broad category of purposes;

- (b) the use of donations and government matching grants received shall be subject to audit. Auditors are required to confirm to the EDB that the universities/institutions concerned have met the conditions of the grants, reported the actual uses of the donations/grants, and the intended use of the unspent donations/grants as well as the date of use; and
- (c) the universities/institutions are required to ensure that the matching grants received are only used to meet research-related expenses (excluding capital works projects) and that the money is spent in a cost-effective manner.