

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)410/19-20

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by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

Panel on Education

**Minutes of meeting
held on Friday, 3 January 2020 at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

Members present : Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon IP Kin-yuen (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon Claudia MO
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP
Hon Dennis KWOK Wing-hang
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP
Hon CHAN Chun-ying, JP
Hon Tanya CHAN
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP
Hon HUI Chi-fung
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS
Hon CHAN Hoi-yan

Members attending : Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP
Hon KWONG Chun-yu

Members absent : Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP
Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP
Hon HO Kai-ming
Hon SHIU Ka-chun
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai

Public Officers attending : Agenda item III

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Secretary for Education

Dr Gloria CHAN
Principal Assistant Secretary (Curriculum Development)
Education Bureau

Agenda item IV

Dr CHOI Yuk-lin, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Mr Derek LAI
Principal Assistant Secretary (Higher Education)
Education Bureau

Mr David LEUNG
Deputy Secretary-General (2)
University Grants Committee Secretariat

Agenda item V

Dr CHOI Yuk-lin, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Mrs Elina CHAN
Principal Assistant Secretary
(Infrastructure and Research Support)
Education Bureau

Clerk in attendance : Ms Angel WONG
Chief Council Secretary (4)4

Staff in attendance : Miss Mandy NG
Senior Council Secretary (4)4

Miss Rachel WONG
Council Secretary (4)4

Ms Sandy HAU
Legislative Assistant (4)4

Action

I. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

Members noted that no information paper had been issued since the last meeting.

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(Appendix I to LC Paper No. CB(4)224/19-20 -- List of outstanding items for discussion

Appendix II to LC Paper No. CB(4)224/19-20 -- List of follow-up actions)

2. The Chairman advised that the list of outstanding items for discussion and the list of follow-up actions had been updated and circulated to members.

3. The Chairman informed members that the special meeting on governance, security arrangement and follow-up work of universities would be scheduled on 10 February 2020 at 4:30 pm. The notice of meeting would be issued to members in due course.

(Post-meeting note: The notice of meeting concerned was issued to members vide LC Paper CB(4)244/19-20 on 9 January 2020. The meeting was then rescheduled to a later date on consideration of the latest situation of the novel coronavirus infection.)

Duty visit to Finland

4. The Chairman referred members to the Deputy Chairman's letter dated 2 January 2020 which was tabled at the meeting [subsequently issued vide

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LC Paper no. CB(4)234/19-20(01) on 3 January 2020], requesting the Panel to hold a sharing session on the duty visit to Finland in September 2019 as early as possible.

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman said that members of the delegation to Finland had previously suggested the Panel to hold a session to share with members the relevant information and experience acquired from the visit, with a view to exploring measures to improve the education system in Hong Kong. Recently, a columnist also enquired about the observations of the delegation. As it might take some time to prepare the duty visit report, he hoped that the sharing session would be held before the report was issued. Dr Fernando CHEUNG echoed the Deputy Chairman's view.

6. To facilitate members' deliberations, Mr Tommy CHEUNG, Ms Elizabeth QUAT and Ms CHAN Hoi-yan considered it more appropriate to hold the sharing session after the report was completed.

7. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan said that the Panel had conducted a duty visit to Germany in September 2015 to acquire its implementation experience of vocational education and training, and suggested the Panel to take the opportunity to discuss the findings of that visit at the sharing session.

8. The Chairman advised that as the report would be completed in late January 2020 for the comments of the delegation leader, the timing for discussion would be scheduled when the report was ready for members. Members raised no objection.

III. Proposal to set up a subcommittee to study the development of textbooks and teaching materials for kindergartens, primary and secondary schools

(LC Paper No. CB(4)68/19-20(01) -- Letter dated 30 October 2019 from Hon YUNG Hoi-yan to the Chairman of Panel on Education

LC Paper No. CB(4)81/19-20(03) -- Letter dated 31 October 2019 from Hon YUNG Hoi-yan to the Chairman of Panel on Education

LC Paper No. CB(4)171/19-20(02) -- Letter dated 5 December 2019 from Hon SHIU Ka-chun to the Chairman of Panel on Education

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LC Paper No. CB(4)171/19-20(03) -- Submission from Hon IP Kin-yuen

LC Paper No. CB(4)224/19-20(01) -- Letter dated 20 December 2019 from Hon YUNG Hoi-yan to the Chairman of Panel on Education)

9. The Chairman recapitulated that as members had not finished the discussion on this agenda item at the meeting on 6 December 2019, the discussion would be continued at this meeting.

Discussion

10. Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered that the prevailing textbook review mechanism was effective. Textbooks which had been reviewed and considered acceptable by the relevant textbook review panels would be included on the Recommended Textbook List for schools' reference. In addition, a professional consultancy service had recently been provided to publishers of textbooks for Liberal Studies ("LS") subject to ensure the quality of these textbooks. As such, it was not necessary to set up the proposed subcommittee to study the development of textbooks and teaching materials for kindergartens, primary and secondary schools.

11. Mr HUI Chi-fung opined that there had already been a textbook review mechanism although membership of the textbook review panels was not disclosed. Such a non-transparent mechanism had already been a kind of political censorship. Setting up a subcommittee to study the development of textbooks and teaching materials for schools including kindergartens was a more serious political censorship, which would exert pressure on teachers and parents. Hence, he opposed to the setting up of the proposed subcommittee.

12. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen said that he opposed to Ms YUNG Hoi-yan's proposal. To his understanding, teachers were under enormous pressure in the past few months and their teaching materials might easily be accused of containing sensitive political messages. The Education Bureau ("EDB") should stop suppressing the school sector to avoid putting additional pressure on teachers.

13. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan expressed his support to the proposal. He said that although there was a textbook review mechanism, many textbooks and school-based teaching materials contained biased views. In the past few months, he had received complaints from many parents about biased teaching materials. In his view, teachers should not instill radical political beliefs into students through teaching materials. The establishment of the proposed

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subcommittee was necessary for the Panel to study the effectiveness of the prevailing textbook review mechanism and the root causes of the problem with textbooks and teaching materials.

14. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan said that she had received complaints from many parents about biased teaching materials prepared by teachers, particularly LS teachers. Although EDB had put in place mechanism to handle complaints about teaching materials, she considered there should be a mechanism to monitor biased teaching materials. As such, she supported Ms YUNG Hoi-yan's proposal.

15. At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan concluded that textbooks and teaching materials of different subjects including LS contained biased views. Parents in fact did not want their children to be instilled biased political views by teachers. The proposed subcommittee was not established to study whether politics should be included in school curriculum. The subcommittee, if formed, would study the development of textbooks and teaching materials (including worksheets) for different subjects, review the effectiveness of the prevailing school-based mechanism which monitored teaching materials prepared by teachers, explore feasible ways to deal with biased teaching materials, and review the role of EDB in monitoring textbooks and teaching materials.

16. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary for Education ("SED") advised that teachers would exercise their professional judgement to choose teaching resources including the development of school-based materials according to the curriculum concerned and the abilities of students. Given the voluminous teaching materials involved, it was not possible for EDB to review all of them before distributing to students. Instead, school management would be the gatekeeper to monitor the quality of teaching materials at the school level. EDB would make investigation upon receipt of complaints about biased teaching materials. If the proposed subcommittee was formed, the Administration would as usual fully support its work. In his view, it might be difficult for the subcommittee to examine the teaching materials including worksheets one by one and comment on whether certain contents were biased or inaccurate, as they should be read as a whole within the context of learning and teaching.

17. The Chairman put to vote whether the subcommittee to study the development of textbooks and teaching materials for kindergartens, primary and secondary schools proposed by Ms YUNG Hoi-yan should be set up. At members' request, the Chairman directed that the voting bell be rung for five minutes to notify members of the voting. Of the members present, the following 17 members voted for the proposal:

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Mr Abraham SHEK, Mr Tommy CHEUNG, Ms Starry LEE, Dr Priscilla LEUNG, Mr LEUNG Che-cheung, Ms Alice MAK, Ms Elizabeth QUAT, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan, Dr Junius HO, Mr Holden CHOW, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan, Mr CHAN Chun-ying, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, Mr LAU Kwok-fan, Mr Vincent CHENG, Mr Tony TSE and Ms CHAN Hoi-yan.

The following 11 members voted against:

Prof Joseph LEE, Ms Claudia MO, Mr Charles MOK, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen, Mr Dennis KWOK, Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Dr Helena WONG, Mr IP Kin-yuen, Mr CHU Hoi-dick, Ms Tanya CHAN and Mr HUI Chi-fung.

18. No member abstained. The Chairman announced that the subcommittee to study the development of textbooks and teaching materials for kindergartens, primary and secondary schools would be set up under the Panel. At present, the subcommittee was the second policy subcommittee on the waiting list for activation.

IV. Targeted Taught Postgraduate Programmes Fellowships Scheme

(LC Paper No. CB(4)154/19-20(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

Briefing by the Administration

19. Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the proposed Targeted Taught Postgraduate Programmes Fellowships Scheme ("the Scheme"), details of which were set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)154/19-20(01)].

Declaration of interest

20. Mr Tony TSE declared interest as a Court member of Lingnan University. Dr Priscilla LEUNG declared interest as an academic staff of the School of Law, City University of Hong Kong.

21. The Chairman said that the Chairman and the Secretary-General of the University Grants Committee ("UGC") had approached her previously and expressed wish for the Panel's support to the Scheme.

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Discussion

Criteria for selection of seven priority areas

22. While expressing support to the Scheme, the Deputy Chairman considered it inappropriate that only taught postgraduate ("TPg") programmes encompassed one or more of the seven priority areas as mentioned in the Administration's paper would be eligible for the fellowships. People might think that those ineligible programmes not conducive to the development of Hong Kong. He enquired how and why the seven priority areas were selected.

23. The Chairman considered that all TPg programmes were of equal importance. As the seven priority areas were selected in response to economic needs, she enquired whether the Administration had conducted any manpower projections to facilitate the selection.

24. US(Ed) advised that the main objectives of the Scheme were to attract more meritorious local students to pursue further studies in priority areas conducive to the development of Hong Kong, and to encourage universities to establish more innovative and multi-disciplinary programmes that were beneficial to the society. UGC proposed the seven priority areas after consulting the eight UGC-funded universities and taking into consideration the manpower requirements of different disciplines. Of the seven priority areas, "Promoting good health", "Development a sustainable environment", "Enhancing Hong Kong's strategic position as a regional and international business centre" and "Advancing emerging research" dovetailed with the themes for the Theme-based Research Scheme run by the Research Grants Council. The other three areas, namely "STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics)", "Promoting the creative industries" and "Promoting the cultural and heritage industries" were selected in response to the recent development of the society after consultation with the universities.

25. Mr Tony TSE expressed support to the Scheme and sought information about the criteria for selecting eligible programmes relevant to the priority area of "Developing a sustainable environment" under the Scheme. He was also concerned as to whether UGC and the universities had consulted the relevant professional bodies and associations to carry out academic planning and curriculum design for those eligible programmes so as to cater for the needs of the industries.

26. US(Ed) undertook to provide information about the criteria for selecting eligible programmes relevant to the priority area of "Developing a sustainable environment" under the Scheme after the meeting and explained that all eligible TPg programmes in the first cohort of the Scheme were existing programmes with good track records. On curriculum design, universities had regular and ongoing

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contact with relevant professional bodies and associations. Therefore, they had a good understanding of the needs of the industries.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)384/19-20(01) on 11 March 2020.)

27. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan and Dr Priscilla LEUNG supported the establishment of seven priority areas with manpower needs and market demand under the Scheme. Dr CHIANG opined that it was important to encourage universities to nurture talents for industries with growing manpower requirements. Dr LEUNG pointed out that there was keen global competition for talents specialized in emerging research, such as robotics and big data.

28. While appreciating the good intention of the Scheme to subsidize local students to pursue TPg programmes, Dr Helena WONG expressed dissatisfaction that the Scheme would not cover all TPg programmes. She considered that the Administration should not take the lead in discriminating TPg programmes in arts, science, humanities and social sciences which were also conducive to the development of Hong Kong and the promotion of creative industries. She suggested that the Administration should relax the eligibility criteria for the Scheme or include all TPg programmes under the Scheme, with a view to nurturing talents of different areas.

29. Dr Fernando CHEUNG opined that the Administration should not only nurture talents in response to economic needs. TPg programmes in humanities, social work and social sciences which were important to the sustainable development of Hong Kong should also be included in the Scheme.

30. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen considered that all TPg programmes were conducive to the long-term development of Hong Kong. Given the recent disputes, talents with social work and administrative management skills were necessary in the coming 20 years. He enquired when the Administration would review the Scheme and make adjustment to the coverage of the priority areas.

31. US(Ed) explained that the Administration attached great importance to all TPg programmes. In order to kick start the Scheme which would be implemented on a pilot basis for five cohorts from the 2020-2021 academic year, seven priority areas embodying inter-disciplinary knowledge were identified when formulating its implementation arrangements. After the universities had completed assessing the applications in the first cohort of the Scheme, UGC would discuss with them the implementation arrangements of the second cohort of the Scheme (i.e. the 2021-2022 academic year). UGC would also conduct a timely review of the Scheme and, depending on its effectiveness, make recommendations to the Government on the way forward, including whether adjustment to the coverage of the priority areas was needed.

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Criteria for selection of fellowship recipients

32. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan enquired about the criteria for selecting meritorious students who would be provided with fellowships. US(Ed) advised that student admission was a matter of institutional autonomy. Depending on the nature of different TPg programmes, criteria for selecting fellowship recipients might vary slightly among programmes. However, high academic achievement was an essential criterion.

33. In view of the recent social events, Mr Holden CHOW enquired whether fellowship recipients would need to comply with a conduct requirement. Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Mr CHAN Chi-chuen considered it inappropriate to specify conduct requirement for fellowship recipients. US(Ed) advised that admission of TPg programmes was merit-based. While universities had regulations and rules governing TPg students, the Administration would not impose any other additional conditions under the Scheme.

34. Mr Tony TSE noted that applications for the fellowships would be assessed by the universities themselves and asked whether there would be an appeal mechanism for the applicants who did not accept the assessment results. US(Ed) advised that universities would develop their own appeal mechanisms.

35. Mr Holden CHOW expressed concern over the career prospect of TPg graduates, and asked whether the Administration would provide job placement services to fellowship recipients upon graduation. He pointed out that some universities overseas such as those in Singapore requested scholarship recipients to take up employment related to the subject of study. US(Ed) advised that in assessing the proposals submitted by universities, employment situation of the past graduates presented by universities was one of the factors for selection of eligible TPg programmes. As the majority of TPg students were adults possessing undergraduate qualifications and work experience, it might not be necessary for the Administration to provide job placement services. Moreover, the Scheme would encourage and not mandatorily require graduates to take up employment related to the fields or professions of study.

36. Dr Priscilla LEUNG highlighted the need to retain fellowship recipients to stay to work in Hong Kong after their studies. Otherwise, they might go to cities in the Greater Bay Area to develop their career. She suggested that measures to encourage entrepreneurship in Hong Kong should be put in place. US(Ed) advised that the Scheme was targeted for local TPg students who should have close ties with Hong Kong and should be willing to stay in Hong Kong for career development.

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Scope of the Scheme

37. The Deputy Chairman suggested that apart from TPg programmes, the Administration should also consider providing students of research postgraduate ("RPg") programmes with fellowships and living expenses to ease their financial burden. US(Ed) advised that starting from the 2018-2019 academic year, all local students enrolled in UGC-funded RPg programmes had been provided with tuition waiver.

38. Dr Fernando CHEUNG suggested that the number of fellowship places under the Scheme should be increased to cover TPg programmes offered by self-financing universities, namely The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong, The Open University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Shue Yan University. US(Ed) advised that various schemes, such as the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors, were in place to ease the financial burden of students enrolling in self-financing programmes. Nevertheless, the Administration would timely review the effectiveness of the Scheme to decide whether TPg programmes operated by self-financing universities would be covered by the Scheme in future.

39. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan was worried that the number of postgraduate students from the Mainland would be decreased owing to the recent social disputes. In her view, implementation of the Scheme would encourage more local students to pursue TPg programmes. However, as a ceiling of \$120,000 per fellowship would be set for the first cohort, the Scheme might not attract many meritorious students. The Administration should at the same time explore measures to help meritorious students who were in financial need. US(Ed) advised that fellowship recipients were still eligible to apply for certain student financial assistance schemes.

40. Mr Tony TSE requested the Administration to provide relevant statistics (such as enrolment rate, drop-out rate, etc.) showing whether the number of non-local postgraduate students (including those from the Mainland) had been affected by the recent disputes in the society. US(Ed) advised that student admission of TPg programmes for the forthcoming academic year was still underway. The Administration would provide the required statistics in due course.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)384/19-20(01) on 11 March 2020.)

41. Noting that most TPg programmes were provided on a self-financing basis, the Chairman sought information on publicly-funded TPg programmes. US(Ed) advised that publicly-funded TPg programmes were offered to cater for specific manpower needs, such as programmes related to the professions of law, psychology, dentistry, etc.

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Summing up

42. The Chairman concluded that members in general were supportive of the implementation of the Scheme and sought clarification on whether the non-recurrent funding of around \$570 million for the Scheme would be included in the Estimates of Expenditure 2020-2021. US(Ed) responded in the affirmative.

V. 8095EB - Partial Redevelopment and Conversion of the Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club College at 2B, Tai Cheong Street, Sai Wan Ho

(LC Paper No. CB(4)154/19-20(02) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

Briefing by the Administration

43. US(Ed) briefed members on the proposed partial redevelopment and conversion of the Hong Kong Women's Club College ("HKCWCC"), details of which were set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)154/19-20(02)].

Discussion

Mechanism for school redevelopment

44. Noting there were still a number of schools operating in matchbox-style school premises or schools older than HKCWCC that had not been redeveloped/reprovisioned, Dr Helena WONG enquired about the mechanism for shortlisting schools for redevelopment/expansion and urged EDB to take the initiative to identify schools for redevelopment. The Chairman also expressed concern about the selection criteria for school redevelopment.

45. US(Ed) advised that schools might indicate their intention for in-situ redevelopment to EDB which would assess whether it is technically feasible based on factors including the size of existing school sites, schools' capability to deliver the redevelopment projects in parallel with their day to day operation, etc. As the site area of schools operating in matchbox-style school premises was generally too small, they would not benefit from redevelopment but reprovisioned. When a school site is available for reprovisioning, EDB would openly invite applications from schools according to the established practice. In assessing the applications for reprovisioning, factors including the quality of education, operational track record of the school sponsoring body ("SSB"), physical condition of the school's existing premises, etc. would be considered.

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46. The Deputy Chairman commented that there appeared to be no consistent criteria for shortlisting schools for reprovisioning/redevelopment. He recalled that according to EDB, priority would not be accorded to schools that had benefited from the School Improvement Programme ("SIP") when prioritizing requests received from schools for in-situ redevelopment. However, HKCWCC had in fact participated in SIP in 2004. As there were still schools falling short of standard facilities such as assembly hall, he urged EDB to improve these schools' teaching and learning environment by expediting the redevelopment/reprovisioning process, regardless whether they had benefited from SIP in the past.

47. US(Ed) stressed that the Administration attached great importance to students' learning environment. In 2019-2020, \$1.5 billion were earmarked for carrying out major repairs and emergency repairs in schools. For redevelopment/reprovisioning, the physical condition of a school's existing premises would also be taken into account when prioritizing the requests from schools. Given the uniqueness of each school, school proposals were generally considered on a case by case basis.

Proposed Project

48. Dr CHAING Lai-wan expressed support to the proposal which would improve HKCWCC's teaching and learning environment. However, she considered the provision of two deputy principals' offices not necessary because open plan office would facilitate more relationship-building interactions. Moreover, she sought information on the fund-raising activity conducted by HKCWCC for its construction project in 2007 and enquired whether HKCWCC would have to raise funds to meet the cost of the proposed redevelopment.

49. US(Ed) explained that the two offices concerned were standard provision according to prevailing school building standards. The estimated cost of \$285.39 million from the Government would be sufficient for the proposed redevelopment with standard provision of facilities. Non-standard facilities, if any, would have to be funded by SSB. On Dr CHANG's question regarding the 2007 project by HKCWCC, EDB would try to provide the relevant information available after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)350/19-20(01) on 25 February 2020.)

50. Dr Helena WONG expressed concern about the impact of noise and dust from construction works on teachers and students on campus if the construction site was enclosed by hoardings only. She also enquired whether EDB had explored the feasibility of adopting the modular integrated construction ("MIC") method, with a view to shortening the construction time.

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51. US(Ed) responded that to minimize disturbances, construction works would be conducted in phases and acoustic lining would be used. Also, noisy construction activities would only be carried out during long holidays or non-school days so as not to affect school operation. Principal Assistant Secretary (Infrastructure and Research Support) supplemented that efficiency and hence economic of scale under MIC method could be achieved mainly through the production of standardized dimension and requirements of modules. Given the HKCWCC redevelopment project mainly covered school hall, special rooms and facilities which had different requirements in terms of sizes and ancillary requirements, MIC method was not suitable for use under the project.

52. The Chairman enquired about the time taken for processing the request from HKCWCC for redevelopment and requested the Administration to ensure cleanliness and tidiness of the construction site by disallowing graffiti on hoardings. US(Ed) said that it had taken more than five years to process the project, as HKCWCC had spent more time than planned to settle the various changes to the detailed design of the project. During the construction period, the Architectural Services Department, the contractors and SSB of HKCWCC would ensure a clean and safe environment for teachers and students.

Summing up

53. The Chairman concluded that the Panel supported the Administration's submission of the proposal to the Public Works Subcommittee.

VI. Any other business

54. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:40 pm.