

For discussion
on 1 November 2019

**Legislative Council Panel on Education
2019 Policy Address
Education Bureau's Policy Initiatives**

The Chief Executive delivered the 2019 Policy Address on 16 October 2019. This paper sets out the major education-related initiatives set out in the Policy Address and the Policy Address Supplement.

2. Success in education requires the collaborative efforts of all who care about our next generation. The current-term Government keeps devoting substantial resources to education, maintaining professional leadership in charting the way forward and listening carefully to voices of the education sector. A total of at least \$8.3 billion recurrent expenditure has been allocated in the past two years for the implementation of improvement measures, covering education manpower, funding and hardware, to improve the quality of education. Among the eight in-depth reviews proposed by the current-term Government, six have been completed and some valuable proposals have been implemented. The other reviews are also being carried out in full swing. We hope that schools, teachers, parents and students can make good use of and be benefitted from the resources. The Education Bureau (EDB) will continue to monitor, review and follow up on initiatives implemented, so as to achieve quality education and to strengthen parents' and the society's confidence in education.

New Initiatives

A. Kindergarten (KG), Primary and Secondary Education

(i) Minor Internal Conversion Works Programme

3. We understand that the community is concerned about facilities at old school premises. Over the years, we have put in place various measures to improve the teaching and learning facilities for schools. We have also worked out new practicable measures to enhance the efficacy of the use of existing school premises based on the experience gained from such measures and views gathered. To this end, taking into account experience gained from the "matchbox-style school premises" improvement programme implemented earlier and views of different stakeholders, we have reserved \$1 billion to implement a time-limited

minor internal conversion works programme to conduct similar minor internal conversions for some 600 aided schools operating in premises built according to previous building standards. The programme aims to facilitate more flexible use of existing space by schools and hence enhancing the teaching and learning environment and efficacy. Schools may make conversion proposals to the EDB in 2019 and 2020 in light of the conditions of their premises and school-based needs.

(ii) Student Subsidy

4. As part of the \$19.1 billion relief measures announced in August 2019, the Financial Secretary proposed a one-off student grant of \$2,500 for secondary day school, primary school and KG students. The Chief Executive proposed in the 2019 Policy Address that the provision of the student grant will be regularised from the 2020/21 school year with an annual grant of \$2,500 for each student. The grant will benefit about 900 000 students in Hong Kong. Details of the scheme are set out in the discussion paper of the proposal.

(iii) Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs

5. We have been implementing integrated education (IE) to cater for the learning of students with special educational needs (SEN). Starting from the 2020/21 school year, we plan to implement the following enhancement measures to further support the students with SEN:

- (a) Enhancing the support for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) by assisting public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools in phases to deploy a 3-tier intervention model with proven effectiveness to help them develop emotional regulation, social communication and adaptive learning skills. The support will also include provision of tier-2 support with a non-governmental organisation-school collaboration approach on small group training on social adaptive skills. It is expected to benefit a total of about 10 000 students with ASD.
- (b) Enhancing the staff establishment of the boarding section of aided special schools with a view to improving the service quality so that the boarders in special schools could receive better services. The measures include:
 - (i) improving the week-end and Sunday manning ratios in the boarding section;
 - (ii) providing an additional cash grant to the boarding section for schools

for children with physical disability (PD), schools for children with moderate intellectual disability (ID), schools for children with severe ID, and the school for children with visual impairment (VI) cum ID to employ personal care worker or hire related services; and

- (iii) upgrading the rank of warden and assistant warden of boarding section with an approved capacity of 40 or above, and increase their number of assistant warden and houseparent-in-charge.

The above measures require an additional annual expenditure of about \$130 million.

(iv) Strengthening Support for Non-Chinese Speaking Students

6. 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) As regards support for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students in learning Chinese, the EDB has substantially increased the additional funding to schools admitting NCS students to currently over \$200 million per year since the 2014/15 school year. Starting from the 2020/21 school year, we will adjust the additional funding models concerned and step up the monitoring and support. In this regard, we will provide all schools admitting a handful of NCS students (i.e. ordinary schools admitting less than 10 NCS students and special schools admitting less than 6 NCS students) with a new two-tiered subsidy of enhanced additional funding. This initiative will involve additional recurrent expenditure of about \$49 million per year. The amount of the additional funding provided to schools admitting NCS students will also be adjusted based on the annual change of the Composite Consumer Price Index and/or the annual Civil Service Pay Adjustment.
- (b) We will continue to support NCS students in Chinese language learning, including the provision of teacher professional development programmes, school-based professional support services and learning and teaching resources to facilitate the implementation of the Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework ("Learning Framework"). We will also continue to provide different language learning opportunities for NCS students to enhance their confidence in learning Chinese. We will also explore how to gauge their progress in learning Chinese Language, and to provide feedback to

schools for enhancing support measures.

- (c) Learning Chinese is not easy for NCS students. While schools, teachers and students have to keep up their efforts, support from families is also needed to create an environment conducive to learning of the Chinese language. We will strengthen parent education and encourage NCS parents to enrol their children to local KGs, and strengthen their communication with schools. Starting from the 2020/21 school year, we will provide a series of parent education programmes for NCS parents to help them support their children's learning, encourage their children to master the Chinese language and help them have more comprehensive understanding of the multiple pathways available to their children. The initiative will involve non-recurrent funding of about \$15 million for five years. We will continue to accumulate our experience so as to enhance the modes and contents of, and resources for, parent education programmes for NCS parents as necessary.

(v) Implementing the Improvements of the Ranking Arrangement of School Management in Public Sector Schools

7. The Government has accepted the recommendations put forward by the Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers in March 2019, which include the establishment of a professional ladder for teachers, implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy, enhancement of the manpower arrangements for senior teachers and vice-principals in public sector primary and secondary schools, rationalisation of salaries of heads and deputy heads in public sector primary schools, improvement of the demarcation arrangements for headship rankings in public sector secondary schools, and establishment of commendation schemes at multiple levels to acknowledge teachers with outstanding performance. Among them, the Government has decided to implement in one go the all-graduate teaching force policy in public sector primary and secondary schools. Schools may, taking into account their own circumstances, achieve full implementation in two years starting from the 2019/20 school year. In tandem with the implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy and whole-day primary schooling, proposals to improve the manpower at the middle management level and rationalise the salaries of heads and deputy heads in public sector primary schools have been submitted to the Finance Committee (FC) of the Legislative Council for approval. As regards the implementation of other proposals relating to the improvements of the ranking arrangement of school management in public sector schools, it is estimated that the amount of additional funding involved is about \$360 million.

B. Post-secondary Education

(i) Development of Self-financing Post-secondary Education

8. The Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education published its review report in December 2018. The Government has accepted the report and is following up on the Task Force's recommendations. The EDB has decided to strengthen the role and functions of the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education (CSPE) to offer strategic and policy advice on the development of the self-financing sector, including measures to facilitate, support and coordinate the development of the self-financing sector in its operation, quality and governance. The EDB has announced recently the revamp of CSPE to include new members from various sectors as well as non-local members. The CSPE will start to discuss various issues, including amendment proposals for the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320), enhancement of standards and practices of academic accreditation, improvement in coordination of and support for the self-financing post-secondary sector, and review of sub-degree education at the next phase, etc.

9. Moreover, the Government agrees that self-financing institutions need more support for developing their distinct character and niche areas, and for launching quality programmes which will better respond to community needs. However, self-financing institutions may be financially constrained to develop certain programmes if their start-up costs are substantial, despite the programmes' high market demand and the availability of Government subsidy for students. To enhance support for the self-financing post-secondary sector, encourage self-financing institutions to offer specialised programmes in view of community needs, the Government will launch the "Enhancement and Start-up Grant Scheme for Self-financing Post-secondary Education" to provide financial support for self-financing institutions interested in offering sub-degree or undergraduate programmes that meet market needs but require high start-up costs, so as to help the institutions take-off such programmes. The financial support will cover programme and faculty development and improvements in campus facilities, so as to enhance teaching and learning in designated academic areas. A total non-recurrent expenditure of \$1.26 billion has been earmarked for the scheme. We will consult the CSPE and the Panel on Education on the proposal, as well as to seek funding approval from the FC.

(ii) Providing Fellowships to Meritorious Local Students Enrolled in Targeted Taught Postgraduate Programmes

10. Taught postgraduate programmes can nurture professional and multi-disciplinary talent that meet Hong Kong's development needs. The Government

will implement a pilot scheme from the 2020/21 academic year to incentivise local students pursuing relevant programmes. For each cohort, fellowships amounted up to \$120,000 will be provided to a maximum of 1 000 meritorious local students who are enrolled in targeted taught postgraduate programmes. The EDB will consult the Panel on Education on the details of the pilot scheme in due course.

C. Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET)

(i) Strengthening Promotion of VPET

11. The Government has all along been committed to promoting the development of VPET, and has continued to put in place various measures to provide quality VPET programmes. The Training and Support Scheme implemented through the Vocational Training Council (VTC) has been regularised since the 2019/20 academic year, the Government will continue to support the VTC in improving the scheme to encourage more trainees to join industries which require specialised skills under the “Earn and Learn” model. To further enhance the VPET learning experience, for three years starting from the 2020/21 academic year, the Government will provide a non-recurrent funding of about \$20 million in total to support trainees under the Training and Support Scheme to take part in study and exchange programmes outside Hong Kong, attend short-term skills and practical courses as well as visit institutions/enterprises in those places, allowing them to understand the development of relevant industries and the learning experience of VPET students in other places, thereby facilitating skills exchange and broadening their exposure. If the scheme proves to be effective, we will consider extending it to cover more students of suitable VPET programmes in the VTC and other institutions.

12. With regard to promotion of VPET in the community, the Government will strengthen promotion of a series of activities next year under the theme of “2020 Hong Kong Skills Year” in order to raise public understanding and awareness of VPET. This includes supporting the VTC in organising the VPET International Conference, International STEM Students’ Forum as well as WorldSkills Hong Kong Competition and Carnival, with a view to promoting the importance of professional skills to young people, which involves an expenditure of about \$25 million.

13. The Government established the Task Force on Promotion of VPET in April 2018 to further enhance the promotion of VPET. The Task Force has deliberated on matters relating to promoting VPET in secondary schools, reviewing the positioning of VPET in the higher education system in Hong Kong as well as building clear articulation pathways in the vocational sector under the Qualifications Frameworks. The Task Force on Promotion of VPET and the

Task Force on Review of School Curriculum both issued their consultation documents a few months ago. Both Task Forces noted that, facing the challenges in the 21st century, the education system needs to nurture the applied skills to integrate different knowledge, skills, values and attitudes; and courses with more emphasis on application are also a good choice outside courses focusing on academic elements to cater for different students' aptitudes, develop their talent and broaden their experience and exposure. Hence, both Task Forces recommended to strengthen the promotion of VPET.

14. Both Task Forces will submit their final review reports by the end of 2019/ in early 2020. The reports will help us strengthen VPET, and encourage different stakeholders to recognise VPET as a valued choice among the multiple articulation pathways in the long run. As for certain recommendations that are widely accepted by the sector during the public consultation, for example, Applied Learning (ApL) could be offered as early as in Secondary Four and the funding eligibility for students taking ApL as the 4th elective could be relaxed, etc., they would be implemented early depending on the situation. Upon the submission of review reports by the Task Forces, we will carefully consider other recommendations that require more time for in-depth policy analysis.

15. 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

16. The new KG education policy has been 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 three 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, 2018/19 and 2019/20 school years are around \$730, \$790 and \$820 respectively). Needy families can apply for fee remission and a grant to defray the school-related expenses.

17. Under the new policy, we continue to enhance the quality of KG education in various aspects. We have implemented measures to strengthen the

professional development of principals and teachers in KGs. Starting from the 2018/19 school year, all principals and teachers of KGs joining the kindergarten education scheme (Scheme-KGs) should take part in 60 hours of continuous professional development activities in a three-year cycle, so as to enhance teachers' professional competency. In addition, 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 on catering for students with developmental needs and supporting NCS students which we have also set training targets¹. As regards the enhanced support for NCS students, starting from the 2019/20 school year, we provide tiered subsidies to Scheme-KGs according to the number of NCS students admitted so that these KGs can render more appropriate support to the NCS students, thereby assisting them in learning Chinese, fostering a diversified culture and building an inclusive environment, etc. Regarding quality review, all Scheme-KGs have used the refined performance indicators for self-evaluation starting from the 2018/19 school year and the EDB also conducts quality reviews on the basis of the refined performance indicators. To enhance the transparency of quality review, in addition to involving external independent members as observers, 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. Regarding parent education, we have rolled out a parent education framework² for KGs, encouraging KGs to draw reference from the framework in organizing school-based parent education programmes. We will continue to offer relevant programmes on a territory-wide basis.

18. As regards teachers' salaries, starting from the 2018/19 school year, we adjust the salary-related subsidies 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. In addition, 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. Having collected the data concerned initially, we have started to review the implementation of the new policy and consult the stakeholders starting from mid-2019. Apart from the issues on salary arrangements for KG teachers, we will also review the operation of KGs, including the administrative work, providing financial support to parents in need, enhancing support to students with special needs and NCS students, fee charging

¹ 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.

² 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".

practices, provision of KG premises and the setting up of KG resource centres, etc.

(ii) Providing Recurrent Air-conditioning Grant and Related Facilities

19. To create a more comfortable teaching and learning environment for teachers and students, starting from the 2018/19 school year, we have provided 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. The air-conditioning grant is included in the unit subsidy rates of Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools. 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) were completed in 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.

(iii) Enhancing the Professional Development of Teachers and Principals

20. 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 (COTAP) and to implement various measures and the relevant work to enhance the professional development of teachers and principals starting from the 2018/19 school year, with an annual disbursement of around \$50 million. Teachers, principals and students of primary and secondary schools, KGs and special schools may all benefit from the initiative. Since the 2018/19 school year, the EDB has deployed the funding to implement various professional development programmes under the T-excel@hk work plan, for example, Sabbatical Leave Scheme for Professional Development of Teachers and Principals, Professional Study Tour for Teachers and Scholarship for Teachers, to create space for professional development of teachers and principals, broaden their professional horizons and promote the culture of professional exchange. Currently, COTAP is steering the establishment of professional ladder for teachers, formulating appropriate professional training programmes and will deploy the aforementioned non-recurrent funding of \$500 million for their implementation in accordance with the recommendations in the report submitted by the Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers in March 2019.

(iv) To introduce Paid Non-local Study Leave Scheme for Secondary School Teachers

21. To create space for teachers to enhance their professional capacity, broaden their horizon and enable them to learn about the latest trends of education development, since the 2017/18 school year, the Government has introduced a paid non-local study leave scheme on a three-year pilot basis for serving secondary school teachers (the scheme). The customised programmes of the scheme, with themes on “Interdisciplinary Learning & Entrepreneurship Education”, “Catering for Students with Special Educational Needs”, “STEM Education” and “Assessment Literacy”, were conducted in Finland, Australia, the United Kingdom and Singapore. The first batch of the scheme has been accomplished and the dissemination event has been conducted, providing an opportunity for 50 participating teachers to share their learning achievement and experience in implementing the school-based initiative/ research with the sector. 40 participants of the second batch of the scheme have finished the overseas learning programmes. Their respective school-based initiative/ research will be implemented the 2019/20 school year. Preparation for the third batch of the scheme is underway. Further details will be announced in due course.

(v) Stabilising Teaching Force and Enhancing Teachers’ Professional Roles

22. The EDB has devoted significant resources in the past few years to implement various initiatives to increase regular teaching posts, stabilise the teaching force and enhance teachers’ professional roles. These include increasing the teacher-to-class ratio for public sector schools by 0.1 across the board with effect from the 2017/18 school year, implementing the all-graduate teaching force policy in the 2019/20 school year to enhance teachers’ professional roles, allowing aided secondary schools with surplus teachers arising from the reduction of Secondary One classes from the 2013/14 to 2017/18 school years to apply for extension of the retention period of the surplus teachers to the 2021/22 school year, thus maintaining a stable school environment, and with effect from the 2019/20 school year, implementing targeted relief measures of tolerating redundant teachers arising from class reduction due to the decline of Primary One student population up to a maximum of three school years and relaxing the criteria for approving classes from 25 to 23 students per class in case of class reduction in headcount. On the premise of stabilising the teaching force and facilitating the sustainable development of schools, we will continue to discuss with primary and secondary schools measures to cope with the fluctuation of student-age population.

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

23. 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 of advisory visits to schools, provision of diversified professional development activities for teachers and promotion of district-based development networks.

24. The EDB will also continue to encourage more business entities and organisations 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 350 partners have joined BSPP, offering more than 5 000 career exploration activities and benefitting more than 1 150 000 student participants. 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 220 commercial and community organisations have participated in the WEM and offered over 5 100 places of work experience quota for students, covering more than 30 trades and industries.

(vii) Enhancing School Facilities

25. The Government has all along put in place various measures, including the completed School Improvement Programme, the existing reprovioning and redevelopment/extension programmes, and the annual major repairs mechanism, to improve the teaching and learning environment and facilities according to individual schools’ needs. Based on the consensus reached with the school sector earlier on, the EDB has, since the summer of 2017, progressively taken forward improvement works for the 24 primary schools operating in “matchbox-style premises”³ with a focus on addressing the common problems arising from the unique design features of these premises. Relevant works have mostly been completed by the 2019 summer break. Under this improvement works programme, the EDB consultants have also explored technically feasible means for better utilising the existing space of the school premises concerned. We are

³ When the EDB commenced the said improvement works programme in July 2017, there were 28 primary schools operating in “matchbox-style premises”. Four of the primary schools have been allocated with new or vacant school premises for reprovioning purpose under the 2014 and 2017 School Allocation Exercises respectively. Therefore, improvement works were taken forward in the remaining 24 schools.

arranging the works in accordance with schools' wishes and needs, with a view to improving the teaching and learning environment within the limitation of existing space and architectural design. We will also continue to review the vacant school premises and reserved school sites under the EDB, and expedite the allocation of suitable 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 the past five years (i.e. 2014 to 2018), the EDB has allocated, through open School Allocation Exercises, a total of nine school sites/school premises for reprovisioning / extension purpose. Among the allocatees, six were primary schools operating in "matchbox-style premises". In parallel, we will continue to provide resources for carrying out major repairs and emergency repairs for schools. The estimated non-recurrent subvention for such works is about \$1.5 billion in 2019-20, which is similar to the provision in 2018-19.

(viii) Curriculum Development and Relevant Resources

a. Chinese History and Chinese Culture

26. 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. 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.

27. The EDB will continue to adopt diversified strategies to enhance Chinese history education, including strengthening professional development for teachers, developing teaching and learning resources, enriching Mainland exchange programmes and learning activities for teachers and students, etc. 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.

b. Diversified Life-wide Learning

28. The EDB has provided public sector and DSS schools with the Life-wide Learning Grant (the Grant) starting from the 2019/20 school year to support schools to take forward, on the present foundation, life-wide learning with enhanced efforts. The experiential learning will help students gain knowledge, acquire skills and develop positive values and attitudes to facilitate their lifelong learning and whole-person development. In line with their school-based

curriculum and students' learning needs, schools can make use of the Grant to organise diversified experiential learning activities, such as visits, field trips and community service, to enhance students' interest and effectiveness in learning. We will organise professional development programmes and exchange activities for teachers to support them in promoting life-wide learning.

c. STEM Education

29. We have progressively implemented 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. We will further enhance various kinds of support measures, with emphasis on further enhancing students' IT skills and their capability in information literacy, and launch a series of teacher professional development programmes to meet their needs, as well as provide a variety of learning and teaching resources for schools. In addition, we will continue organising large-scale learning activities in collaboration with tertiary institutions and other relevant organisations to enhance student learning in STEM-related areas. Regarding the provision of resources, the EDB has been providing the Life-wide Learning Grant to schools starting from the 2019/20 school year. Schools can use this new Grant to enhance the school-based STEM education through organising diversified out-of-classroom experiential learning activities. 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

30. 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. All along, the EDB has been providing teacher training, developing learning and teaching resources, organising Mainland visits for teachers and students, and student activities in support of schools for implementing Basic Law education. Since 2015, the EDB has been organising the "Territory-wide Inter-school Basic Law Competition" on an annual basis. Five rounds of competition have been held since then with over 70,000 participation times and an increasing number of student participants. The EDB would continue to adopt diversified strategies to

promote Basic Law education with a view to coordinating the curricula and student activities as a whole so as to strengthen teachers' and students' learning of the State's Constitution as well as the Basic Law and "One Country, Two Systems".

e. Quality Education Fund

31. The Quality Education Fund (QEF) Steering Committee, in response to the invitation of the Government, has set aside \$3 billion for the implementation of the Dedicated Funding Programme for Publicly-funded Schools (the Programme) for application by public sector secondary and primary schools (including special schools), DSS schools and Scheme-KGs for launching school-based curriculum and/or student support measures, as well as related school improvement works and/or procurement of supplies. The Programme is implemented for four school years starting from the 2018/19 and there are two calls for submission of applications by schools every year. Since the launch of the Programme, the QEF has received a total of over 1000 applications with the amount of funding sought of over \$1 billion. As at September 2019, about 500 applications have been processed. Among the applications assessed, over 90% have been granted with funding support with the approved funding amounting to about \$0.3 billion and benefitting more than 300 schools. This initiative has provided schools with more possibilities in enhancing learning and teaching and is well received by the school sector.

f. Promotion of Reading Grant

32. The EDB continues to implement various measures to support schools in promoting reading. Starting from the 2018/19 school year, a new promotion of reading grant has been disbursed to all public sector primary and secondary schools and a "Pilot Scheme on the Promotion of Reading Grant for Kindergartens" was also implemented. In light of the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme, a recurrent grant for the promotion of reading has also been disbursed to all Scheme-KGs starting from the 2019/20 school year. The amount of grant for each primary and secondary school is based on the number of approved classes. For example, the amount of grant for a secondary and a primary school with 24 classes is about \$60,000 and \$30,000 respectively. For KGs, the amount of grant being disbursed is set at \$10,000, \$15,000 and \$ 20,000 based on the total number of students enrolled at Kindergarten One to Kindergarten Three. In addition, we will continue to organise in collaboration with different organisations a variety of activities, encourage schools to continue to promote reading, foster a more ideal reading atmosphere as well as to further enhance students' interest and cultivate a good habit in reading.

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

33. 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. In the 2019/20 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

34. To further promote the professional interflows and multi-faceted collaboration of Hong Kong-Mainland sister schools and encourage more Hong Kong schools to join the Sister School Scheme, with effect from the 2018/19 school year, the EDB has provided recurrent grant and professional support to public sector, DSS primary and secondary schools as well as special schools that have formed sister schools with their counterparts in the Mainland. The amount of the grant for the 2019/20 school year is about \$155,000 per school.

(xi) After-school Learning and Support

35. 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.

(xii) Parent Education

36. Parents play a vital role in the growth and learning of their children. The Task Force on Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education submitted its report to the EDB in April 2019. The EDB has fully accepted the

recommendations and relevant measures are implemented progressively. Among others, from the 2019/20 school year onwards, we have increased the subsidy to Parent-Teacher Associations of schools and Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations in districts for organising more school-based and community-based parent education programmes or activities, involving additional recurrent funding of about \$30 million. Besides, we are preparing for the launch of the territory-wide “Positive Parent Campaign” to enhance the public’s understanding about the importance of happy and healthy development of children and enhance parents’ awareness of positive parenting through a series of activities.

(xiii) Student Activities Support Fund

37. The Government set up the \$2.5 billion Student Activities Support Fund (the Fund) in early 2019, to generate investment return for the EDB to provide public sector and DSS schools with the Student Activities Support Grant (the Grant), 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. As the rate of investment return from the Fund in 2019 was lower than expected, we will reserve \$50 million for a non-recurrent commitment to meet the expected shortfall in funding for the Grant in 2020-21 and 2021-22 for supporting students with financial needs to participate in out-of-classroom learning activities.

(xiv) Enhancing the Development of Gifted Education

38. To further enhance the development of gifted education, the Government made an injection of \$800 million into the Gifted Education Fund in early 2019 for generating investment income to support the service enhancement of the Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education, to implement measures recommended by the Advisory Committee on Gifted Education, and to encourage gifted education providers to provide quality off-school advanced learning programmes for gifted students. The Advisory Committee on Gifted Education has now received from various organisations applications for funding support, which will be processed in accordance with the established procedures.

B. Post-Secondary and VPET

(i) Strengthening Research Capacity of Post-secondary Education Sector

39. The Government has injected \$20 billion into the Research Endowment Fund for substantially increasing the funding of the Research Grants Council (RGC). The RGC launched the Research Matching Grant Scheme (MGS) in

August 2019; and will implement three regular fellowship schemes within the 2019/20 academic year.

(ii) The Eighth Matching Grant Scheme

40. The Eighth MGS, which covers a period of three years, was launched in July 2019, providing a total of \$2.5 billion of matching grants for the ten publicly-funded post-secondary institutions.

(iii) Hostel Development Fund

41. The Hostel Development Fund (HDF) was established in July 2018 and a one-off grant of \$10.3 billion in total has been disbursed to six universities. Among the 15 hostel projects covered by the HDF, construction works of four projects have commenced.

(iv) Regularisation of the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme

42. The Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme has been regularised since the 2019/20 academic year to continue the effort to subsidise up to 100 outstanding local students per cohort in their pursuit of undergraduate and postgraduate studies at world-renowned universities outside Hong Kong, with a view to nurturing more top talent in various fields to support the development of Hong Kong.

(v) Support for Students Pursuing Self-financing Post-secondary Education

43. We will continue to provide support for students pursuing self-financing post-secondary education programmes through the Non-means-tested Subsidy Scheme for Self-financing Undergraduate Studies in Hong Kong (NMTSS) and the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors (SSSDP). In the 2018/19 academic year, about 16 700 students pursuing full-time locally accredited local and non-local self-financing undergraduate (including top-up degree) programmes in Hong Kong offered by eligible institutions received subsidy under the NMTSS; about 7 500 students pursuing designated full-time locally accredited self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines received subsidy under the SSSDP. To provide more opportunities and subsidies for local students to pursue post-secondary education, the coverage of the SSSDP has been expanded to subsidise about 2 000 students per cohort enrolling in designated sub-degree programmes in selected disciplines, starting from the 2019/20 academic year.

(vi) Promotion of VPET

44. To further enhance VPET, the Government will continue to implement the Training and Support Scheme through the VTC to provide 1 200 training places on a recurrent basis, and to implement workplace assessment on a pilot basis for three years from the 2019/20 academic year for three years to improve the scheme. Furthermore, to encourage working adults in designated industries to pursue higher qualifications, VTC has extended the Pilot Subsidy Scheme for Students of Professional Part-time Programmes for three more years starting from the 2019/20 academic year, which will benefit about 8 000 students admitted to designated professional part-time programmes offered by the VTC. The above schemes will enhance the employability of young people and working adults, and attract and retain talents for the relevant industries.

45. Having regard to the VTC's need for campus development, the Government will continue to support the 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

46. Paragraph 6 describes the enhancement measures the Government will implement to strengthen the support for NCS students. Starting from 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 to facilitate their integration into the community. Major support measures include the 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 the introduction of Applied Learning Chinese (for NCS students) courses at the senior secondary levels as a subject for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education 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. Since the introduction of the "Learning Framework", the EDB has been soliciting teachers' views so that refinements can be made to the "Learning Framework". In January 2019, the EDB revised the "Learning Framework" in light of the views of teachers and uploaded the revised "Learning Framework" onto the EDB webpage for teachers' reference and use. In parallel, relevant assessment tools and teaching resources have been updated accordingly. In addition, the EDB has been conducting relevant

professional development programmes to enhance teachers' understanding of the "Learning Framework".

47. To facilitate the implementation of the "Learning Framework" and creation of an inclusive learning environment in schools, starting from the 2014/15 school year, all ordinary 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 241 in the 2018/19 school year. Ordinary schools admitting less than 10 NCS students may also apply for an additional funding of \$50,000 on a need basis for organising diversified modes of after-school support for learning Chinese to consolidate their NCS students' learning in an immersed Chinese language environment. The number of the schools concerned has increased from 58 in the 2014/15 school year to 216 in the 2018/19 school year. Besides, special schools admitting 6 to 9 NCS students and offering an ordinary school curriculum, and special schools admitting 6 or more NCS students and offering an adapted curriculum are provided with an additional funding of \$650,000. The funding model for special schools admitting 10 or more NCS students and offering an ordinary school curriculum is the same as that for ordinary schools mentioned above. The number of special schools receiving the additional funding mentioned above remained to be around 25 in the past five school years. As regards special schools admitting less than 6 NCS students, they are also provided with an additional funding of \$50,000 on a need basis to offer after-school support programmes in learning Chinese. The number of schools concerned has increased from 8 in the 2014/15 school year to 16 in the 2018/19 school year. Paragraph 6 sets out the enhanced financial support measure for schools admitting a handful of NCS students (i.e. ordinary schools admitting less than 10 NCS students and special schools admitting less than 6 NCS students). 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. We will also continue to provide support measures to primary and secondary schools admitting NCS students to facilitate the implementation of the "Learning Framework". In the three school years from 2019/20 to 2021/22, more resources have been allocated to commissioning tertiary institutions to provide professional support services for about 200 KGs, primary and secondary schools. The non-recurrent expenditure is about \$45 million in total.

48. The EDB will continue to review and evaluate the effectiveness of various support measures for NCS students on an ongoing basis, and refines the measures as necessary.

(ii) Students with SEN

49. In addition to the new measures to be implemented in the 2020/21 school year set out in paragraph 5 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 IE, so as to enhance the effectiveness of their support for students with SEN.

50. The EDB has restructured various subvented programmes for IE. In the 2019/20 school year, the grant rate of the Learning Support Grant (LSG) for tier-3 support has been increased. LSG has been extended to all public sector ordinary schools and schools will be provided with regular teaching posts and subsidies according to the needs of the students. Under the enhanced LSG, about 80% of the public sector ordinary schools are provided with additional regular teaching posts.

51. To further support NCS students with SEN to adapt to school life and make smooth transition through different learning stages, the EDB provides the Grant for Supporting NCS Students with SEN to public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools admitting NCS students with SEN from the 2019/20 school year. This enables schools to strengthen the emotional, communication and social support for the students concerned.

52. DSS schools will also benefit from the enhancement measures mentioned in paragraphs 50 and 51 above. Other IE measures will continue to be included in calculation of the DSS unit subsidy.

53. 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 school's assignment of a designated teacher to take up the role of special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) to support IE. In the 2019/20 school year, this initiative has been fully implemented in all public sector ordinary schools. At the same time, if schools admit a comparatively large number of students with SEN, the rank of their SENCO will be upgraded to a promotion rank. About 80% of the public sector ordinary schools benefit.

54. From the 2017/18 school year, the LSG 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 professional capacity to identify and support students with mental health needs. In the 2017/18 and 2018/19 school years, some 620 teachers at large and 540 designated teachers of public sector ordinary schools completed elementary and in-depth training respectively under the Programme. We will continue to organise the Programme in the 2019/20 school year, providing approximately 1 000 training places.

55. The Government has launched the "Student Mental Health Support Scheme" since the 2016/17 school year by setting up multidisciplinary teams in 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 and occupational therapists, etc. to enhance medical-educational-social collaboration among different professionals in order to provide support services to students with mental health needs at the school setting. The Scheme has been extended to cover 90 schools in the 2019/20 school year. The Government will continue making reference to the outcome of the evaluation study to consider how to provide better support services for students with mental health needs.

56. Since the 2016/17 school year, the School-based Educational Psychology Service (SBEPS) has covered all public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools. From the same school year, the educational psychologist to school ratio has been progressively enhanced to 1:4 (Enhanced SBEPS) in public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools admitting comparatively large number of SEN students, in order to support schools in providing more comprehensive and regular follow-up and intervention services to the students concerned, as well as strengthen preventive and supportive work. We aim at extending the Enhanced SBEPS to cover about 60% of public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools by the 2023/24 school year, while the related ratio in the remaining 40% of schools will be enhanced to 1:6. In the 2019/20 school year, there is a total of 169 primary and secondary schools provided with Enhanced SBEPS. In order to meet the manpower needs, local universities will provide an additional of 45 educational psychologist training places in the 2019-2022 triennium as compared with the previous triennium.

57. The EDB will implement the Enhanced School-based Speech Therapy Services in public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools in phases starting from the 2019/20 school year. We will create school-based speech therapist (SBST) posts for schools to allow schools to form clusters to employ

SBSTs to facilitate schools, teachers and parents in the domains of prevention, intervention and development to support students with speech and language impairment and students with other SEN to develop their communication, speech and language abilities. In the 2019/20 school year, about 220 schools implement the service. Most of the schools form clusters of two schools. About 100 SBSTs are needed to be employed.

58. To improve the implementation of various measures, we will review the implementation of IE and listen to the views of different stakeholders on an on-going basis.

(iii) Students in Special Schools

59. 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 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.

60. Besides, we provide additional grant to schools for children with severe ID, schools for children with 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. This 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

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

**Education Bureau
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