

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(4)1769/20-21  
(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

**Panel on Education**

**Minutes of policy briefing-cum-meeting  
held on Monday, 18 October 2021, at 4:30 pm  
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** : Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP (Chairman)  
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP  
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP  
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBM, GBS, JP  
Hon MA Fung-kwok, GBS, JP  
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP  
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP  
Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP  
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP  
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, GBS, MH, JP  
Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, BBS, JP  
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP  
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding  
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP  
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP  
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP
- Members attending** : Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP
- Members absent** : Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP  
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP  
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH, JP

**Public Officers** : Agenda item II  
**attending**

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP  
Secretary for Education

Ms Michelle LI, JP  
Permanent Secretary for Education

Dr CHOI Yuk-lin, JP  
Under Secretary for Education

Mr Esmond LEE, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Education (1)

Ms Priscilla TO, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Education (2)

Mrs CHAN SIU Suk-fan  
Deputy Secretary for Education (3)

Mr Edward TO, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Education (4)

Mrs HONG CHAN Tsui-wah  
Deputy Secretary for Education (5)

Ms Cora HO, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Education (6)

Ms Teresa CHAN  
Deputy Secretary for Education (Special Support)

Agenda item III

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP  
Secretary for Education

Ms Priscilla TO, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Education (2)

Ms Cynthia CHAN  
Principal Assistant Secretary  
(Education Commission and Planning)  
Education Bureau

Mr LEE Kam-kwong  
Principal Assistant Secretary (School Development)  
Education Bureau

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

**Staff in attendance** : Miss Wincy LO  
Senior Council Secretary (4)4

Ms Rachel WONG  
Council Secretary (4)4

Ms Sandy HAU  
Legislative Assistant (4)4

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

(LC Paper No. CB(4)1645/20-21(01) -- Information paper provided by the Administration concerning annual progress report on implementation of the Hostel Development Fund)

Members noted the above paper issued since the last meeting.

**II. Briefing by the Secretary for Education on the Chief Executive's 2021 Policy Address**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)1638/20-21(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration

*Other relevant documents*

The Chief Executive's 2021 Policy Address

The Chief Executive's 2021 Policy Address Supplement

LC Paper No. CB(4)1638/20-21(04) -- Submission from Alliance for Children Development Rights

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LC Paper No. CB(4)1653/20-21(01) -- Letter dated 12 October 2021 from Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen to the Chairman of Panel on Education)

Briefing by the Administration

2. The Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the initiatives on education in the 2021 Policy Address, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)1638/20-21(01)).

(*Post-meeting note*: The speaking note of SED was issued to members via LC Paper No. CB(4)1665/20-21(01) on 19 October 2021.)

Discussion

*Teacher professionalism*

3. Noting that public sector schools would be required to appoint only new teachers who had passed the Basic Law ("BL") Test starting from the 2022-2023 school year, the Chairman and Mr LEUNG Che-cheung enquired whether the arrangement would be applicable to private school and Direct Subsidy Scheme ("DSS") school teachers, and tutors in tutorial schools.

4. SED advised that the relevant requirement would initially apply to public sector school teachers. The Education Bureau ("EDB") would keep in view of the situation and consider extending the arrangement to teachers of DSS schools and kindergartens ("KGs") joining the kindergarten education scheme in a progressive manner.

5. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan suggested that to foster students' sense of belonging to the country and national identity, the Administration should enhance teachers' professional development. Mainland professionals or the Chinese Academy of Governance should be invited to conduct training programmes for teachers to enable them to have a better understanding of the national conditions. The Chairman expressed concern about the adequacy and quality of BL training for serving teachers.

6. SED took note of members' concern and advised that EDB had all along organized training programmes to enrich teachers' knowledge of the national development in the Mainland. Starting from the 2020-2021 school year, more systematic training programmes on the Constitution, BL and national security education were provided for newly-joined teachers and all serving teachers. Mainland study tours had also been included as part of the core training for

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newly-joined teachers and teachers aspiring for promotion with a view to providing them with first-hand experience to learn about the development of education on the Mainland and the achievements of the country. EDB had liaised with relevant Mainland authorities in planning the programmes, such as visits and thematic seminars, for these tours. However, due to the COVID-19 epidemic, these tours had been postponed. On the other hand, EDB would also invite local experts and academics to conduct seminars on the Constitution and national security for teachers.

7. Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that apart from the initiatives announced in the Policy Address, the Administration should pursue the revision of the Code for the Education Profession of Hong Kong as soon as possible to uphold teachers' professional conduct. In addition, he opined that the registration for teachers should not be valid for life. The Administration should draw reference from overseas practices and introduce a periodic renewal mechanism for teacher registration. To be eligible for renewal, teachers should meet certain renewal requirements, such as completion of certain hours of professional training.

8. SED advised that EDB targeted to issue a set of guidelines on teachers' professional conduct in 2022. EDB would capitalize on the experience of handling teacher misconduct cases and provide examples to illustrate the expectations for teachers and the penalties on misconducted teachers. It was expected that the guidelines would help teachers be mindful about their words and deeds and law-abiding. Besides, EDB would, by making reference to the relevant overseas practices, review matters about teacher registration and consider the way forward.

9. Mr KWOK Wai-keung opined that many parents had lost confidence in the education system as there were a few misconducted teachers. It was necessary to explore ways to re-build trust between parents and schools/teachers. Moreover, he relayed some KG teachers' appeal for a mandatory salary scale and asked if the Administration had consulted KG teachers and principals on such issue. To his understanding, some KGs were willing to adopt a salary scale for their teachers.

10. SED advised that the Administration attached importance to enhancing home-school co-operation and put in much resources to that effect. Through various activities organized by Parent Teacher Associations, parents and schools should be able to communicate and build mutual trust. On the introduction of a mandatory salary scale for KG teachers, EDB had conducted a comprehensive review of its feasibility and held various consultation sessions with the stakeholders. Under the premise of maintaining KGs' flexibility and diversity, introducing a mandatory teacher salary scale for KG teachers, which might undermine the stability of teaching force, was not feasible. Hence, EDB would maintain the existing arrangement of providing salary ranges for teachers.

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*National education and national security education*

11. Dr Junius HO urged EDB to make an effort to ensure proper implementation of national education and national security education (including the conduct of national flag raising ceremony) in KGs, primary and secondary schools and post-secondary education institutions. He suggested that EDB could consider seeking assistance from voluntary organizations and volunteers (such as retired teachers) in carrying out school inspections so as to monitor teaching quality without engaging extra manpower and resources.

12. SED explained that primary and secondary schools were required to display the national flag on each school day and conduct a national flag raising ceremony weekly starting from 1 January 2022. To support schools to do so, EDB would organize training programmes on displaying the national flag so as to strengthen schools' knowledge of national symbols. Post-secondary education institutions in general must make reference to the directions given by SED to primary and secondary schools in matters relating to the daily display of the national flag and the weekly conduct of a national flag raising ceremony. A letter had been issued to remind post-secondary institutions of their responsibilities under the National Flag and National Emblem (Amendment) Ordinance. As for school inspectors, statutory powers were conferred upon them to carry out their duties and their appointment was governed by the legislation. EDB could explore the feasibility of collaborating with the community organizations to facilitate improvement in school operations.

13. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung pointed out that the Hong Kong Independent Battalion of the Dongjiang Column, a local guerrilla force, had made great contribution in the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression. He asked whether the history of this local battalion would be included in the curriculum of Chinese History or Liberal Studies, with a view to fostering students' knowledge of Hong Kong's resistance against Japanese aggression and strengthening their sense of national identity. Ms Elizabeth QUAT considered it necessary for EDB to impart correct information of the national history to all students.

14. SED advised that instead of including the history of anti-Japanese war in the Chinese History and History curriculum, EDB might provide schools with relevant teaching resources so that teachers could enrich contents covering the history of the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, especially the heroic deeds of the Hong Kong Independent Battalion of the Dongjiang Column, to facilitate students' understanding of this chapter of Hong Kong history.

*Information literacy and positive values*

15. Ms Elizabeth QUAT stressed the importance of developing students'

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information literacy so that they would not be easily misled by false or biased messages from different media. Noting that EDB was updating the learning framework on "Information Literacy Framework for Hong Kong Students" to facilitate schools to strength the relevant information literacy learning elements in primary and secondary curricula, Ms QUAT and Mr KWOK Wai-keung sought information in this regard. Moreover, they considered it important to develop students' positive values and enquired about EDB's plan for implementing values education.

16. SED advised that elements of media and information literacy and promotion of positive values and attitudes were incorporated in the school curriculum to provide authentic contexts for students to apply the skills and benefit their learning. The Moral and Civic Education Curriculum Framework would be revised as the Values Education Curriculum Framework and be piloted in this academic year, with a view to providing guidance for schools in planning their values education and nurturing their students the nine priority values and attitudes.

17. The Chairman pointed out that a book distorting historical facts was sold at a retail bookstore chain, which was easily accessible by the public. She enquired whether EDB would collaborate with the relevant bureaux/departments to monitor the quality of books available on the market, with a view to preventing teachers and students from being affected by reading materials with inappropriate content and distorted values.

18. SED advised that there was a rigorous textbook review mechanism to ensure the quality of textbooks. Textbooks that reached the acceptable standard were listed on the Recommended Textbook List for schools' reference in their selection of textbooks. Non-textbooks available on the market were not under the purview of EDB. Nevertheless, EDB would remind schools to exercise prudence in the selection of appropriate reading materials and convey member's concern to other relevant bureaux, including the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, for follow-up.

*Multifarious development of students*

19. While expressing support to the initiatives on education in the Policy Address, Mr Vincent CHENG was concerned about the physical fitness of students and the long suspension of inter-school sports competitions under the COVID-19 epidemic. He asked how EDB and schools would encourage students to be physically active to keep their body healthy and whether inter-school sports competitions could be resumed in an orderly manner. In addition, he noted that EDB would collaborate with the Home Affairs Bureau ("HAB") in strengthening sports development in schools and enquired about the progress.

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20. SED advised that while attaching importance to the physical well-being of students, EDB had to strike a balance between meeting students' learning needs and preventing the spread of COVID-19. EDB would, taking into consideration the actual circumstances of the schools, allow the students of schools with high vaccination rate (say 70%) to resume normal school life, including whole-day face-to-face classes, luncheons, as well as extra-curricular activities. On the initiative of enhancing sports development in schools that had just been announced, EDB and HAB would work in collaboration to enhance students' interest in participating in sports activities. As for inter-school sports competitions, they had resumed gradually.

21. Noting the various policy initiatives to develop Hong Kong into an international innovation and technology ("I&T") hub, Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok enquired about EDB's plan for nurturing future I&T talent. Ms Elizabeth QUAT urged EDB to consider making STEM-related subjects (including coding and artificial intelligence) compulsory in primary and secondary schools so as to tie in with the national strategy and development.

22. SED advised that EDB would continue to support the future development of higher education and research, such as exploring the feasibility of increasing the number of the University Grants Committee-funded research postgraduate places, extension of the Research Matching Grant Scheme, etc. As for primary and secondary schools, EDB had introduced coding education in recent years and recommended schools to adopt the relevant curriculum to cultivate students' computational thinking. EDB would continue to strengthen STEM education in primary and secondary schools.

23. The Chairman opined that the existing education system gave preference to arts disciplines over science disciplines, which led to an oversupply of arts/social science graduates in the job market. She suggested that the Administration might consider providing training programmes for these graduates to expand their career pathways.

24. SED advised that EDB had all along encouraged students to accord equal importance to both arts and science disciplines. The implementation of the optimizing measures of the four senior secondary core subjects would release lesson time so that schools could provide more diversified learning experiences and cater for students' different interests, abilities and aspirations. Capable students could choose to utilize the released lesson time to take up an additional elective subject to broaden their knowledge.

25. Mr MA Fung-kwok said that the Central Government had, in the 14th Five-Year Plan, mentioned its support for Hong Kong to develop into an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. As strong cultural



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confidence was essential for promoting quality cultural exchanges and communications, he asked how the Administration would enhance students' awareness of traditional Chinese culture and upgrade their cultural quality; and how the post-secondary institutions, such as The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, would complement the development of Art Tech and nurture arts talent.

26. SED advised that HAB had been working on the strategies to promote Hong Kong's cultural development. In tandem, the provision of the Life-wide Learning Grant by EDB had enabled public sector schools to organize out-of-classroom experiential learning activities to broaden students' horizons and foster their whole-person development. Examples of activities included visits to exhibitions and cultural performances. EDB would continue to organize various activities such as the "Chinese Classic Sayings" campaign to strengthen students' understanding of the essence of Chinese culture.

*School facilities*

27. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan noted that EDB would primarily consider reprovisioning use when launching allocation of school premises in the light of the decline in student population and enquired about the time-table for reprovisioning schools operating in matchbox-style school premises to improve the teaching and learning environment.

28. SED advised that EDB attached importance to improving schools' teaching and learning environment. Matchbox-style school premises were constructed according to the past building standards. EDB had completed a specific programme to improve the teaching and learning environment of matchbox-style school premises within the limitation of their existing space and architectural design. Apart from matchbox-style schools, there were other schools that were built according to previous standards which would also have reprovisioning needs. In the light of the decline in student population, EDB would mainly allocate school premises to address the reprovisioning needs of schools and encourage schools to be reprovisioned to other districts which are expected to have a greater demand for school places.

**III. Planning for the provision of public sector primary and secondary school places in light of changes in student population**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)1638/20-21(02) -- Paper provided by the Administration

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LC Paper No. CB(4)1638/20-21(03) -- Updated background brief on the provision of public sector primary and secondary school places in light of student population prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

Briefing by the Administration

29. SED briefed members on the planning for the provision of public sector primary and secondary school places in light of changes in student population, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)1638/20-21(02)].

Discussion

30. The Chairman, Mr Tommy CHEUNG, Mr LEUNG Che-cheung and Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan were of the view that small class teaching ("SCT") should not be implemented as a measure to handle oversupply of teachers arising from class reduction due to the drop in student population. The Chairman and Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan considered that EDB should continue the implementation of SCT to promote students' learning effectiveness.

31. Noting that the class size for schools implementing SCT was 25 students, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan had no particular view as to whether the number of students should be lowered. The Chairman considered it acceptable to reduce the class size for schools implementing SCT to 20 students, with a view to further enhancing teaching and learning effectiveness. Nevertheless, schools with outstanding performance in certain areas, such as academic, extra-curricular activities, etc. should be allowed flexibility in admitting more students under the prevailing SCT policy.

32. SED advised that SCT was a teaching strategy aiming at promoting students' learning effectiveness as well as enhancing learning and teaching, rather than an approach to retain redundant teachers arising from the decline in school-age population. Regarding the number of students per class, it was a standing policy that the class size for all primary schools implementing SCT was 25 students, which was on par with other developed countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, etc. At present, about 80% of the public sector primary schools in Hong Kong adopted SCT with a class size of 25 students. EDB would continue to maintain close communication with the school sector on the full implementation of SCT and explore the future development direction for SCT.

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33. The Chairman said that to her understanding, many Mainland children of Hong Kong residents were afraid of studying in Hong Kong after the social incidents in 2019. As a result, some schools in the New Territories had to reduce classes or even cease operation due to insufficient student intake. She asked the Administration to ease the worries of the Mainland children of Hong Kong residents and attract them to study in Hong Kong. SED advised that the Government welcomed mainland children of Hong Kong residents to study in Hong Kong. To attract these children to come to Hong Kong, the Administration would restore the confidence of the public in the Hong Kong education system by enhancing the quality of education.

34. The Chairman further suggested that EDB could consider turning a school which might need to cease operation due to the decline in school-age population into a school with its special characteristics, such as facilitating schools to specialize in Astronomy, to enhance school diversity. To minimize the negative impact of class reduction and school closure on students and teachers, EDB should formulate long-term planning of school places based on population projections and early communicate with the schools to be affected. SED advised that supporting schools to develop their special characteristics could be one of the options for consideration. Nevertheless, the respective schools and school sponsoring bodies ("SSBs") played a major role to explore and provide the Administration with justifications for any possible development direction in a sustainable way. In adopting measures to cope with the declining student population, EDB would bear in mind the need to maintain the stable development of the school sector.

*(At about 6:29 pm, the Chairman proposed and members agreed that the meeting would be extended for 15 minutes.)*

35. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan said that the number of vacant school premises ("VSP") might increase in the long run because some schools would cease operation due to the decrease in student population. He enquired whether the Administration had an anticipated number of VSP in the coming 10 to 20 years. Moreover, he pointed out that many existing VSP had been left idle for a long period of time before they could be reallocated for alternative long-term land uses. He enquired about the time required for EDB to assess a VSP's suitability for school use or other educational use. The Chairman urged EDB to formulate long-term strategy to make the best use of VSP.

36. SED explained that the number of student intake of individual schools depended on a number of factors including parental choices. There were difficulties in making a firm forecast on the number of schools which would cease operation due to insufficient student intake. Nevertheless, EDB, in view of the decline in student population, had commenced discussion with some SSBs to

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cease the operation of schools in relevant districts with a substantial surplus in school places for a long period of time in an orderly and gradual manner. It was hoped that the impact on students and teachers could be minimized and the long-term uses of the to-be-vacant school premises could be early reviewed and considered by the relevant government departments.

**IV. Any other business**

37. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:31 pm.

Council Business Division 4  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
29 November 2021