

For discussion  
on 8 February 2022

## **Legislative Council Panel on Education**

### **2021 Policy Address**

#### **Implementation of the Education Bureau's New Policy Initiatives**

This paper sets out the implementation of the major education-related initiatives in the 2021 Policy Address. For details of the major education-related initiatives in the 2021 Policy Address and the 2021 Policy Address Supplement as well as various on-going education initiatives, please refer to the paper CB(4)1638/20-21(01) for the meeting of the Panel on Education of the Legislative Council held on 18 October 2021.

2. The current-term Government attaches great importance to education. Over \$13.5 billion recurrent expenditure has been allocated in the past four years for the implementation of a series of policy measures covering the entire education system. The role of the Government in education is not merely a provider of resources, but is also a policy maker, administrator and regulator. Our vision for education is to nurture our young people into quality citizens with a sense of national identity and social responsibility, an affection for Hong Kong as well as an international perspective. To enhance the quality of education, the current-term Government has set up task forces<sup>1</sup> to review eight areas of education, and is implementing the recommendations of the task forces in partnership with school sponsoring bodies, schools and relevant organisations to enhance the quality of education. Meanwhile, the Education Bureau (EDB) will continuously monitor and follow up on issues involving schools and conduct of teachers, with a view to restoring Hong Kong's educational order.

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<sup>1</sup> The eight task forces are the Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy, the Task Force on Review of Research Policy and Funding, the Task force on Review of Self-financing Post-Secondary Education, the Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers, the Task Force on Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education, the Task Force on School-based Management Policy, the Task Force on Promotion of Vocational and Professional Education and Training, and the Task Force on Review of School Curriculum.

## **Implementation of Major New Initiatives in 2021**

3. The EDB has been proactively implementing education-related new initiatives with details set out as follows.

### I. National Education and National Security Education

4. The EDB will continue to adopt a “multi-pronged and co-ordinated” approach to enhance support for schools to implement national education and national security education in tandem with the curriculum inside and outside the classroom, so as to enable students to understand Chinese culture, Chinese history, national conditions, the Constitution, the Basic Law, the national flag, the national emblem, the national anthem and the concept of national security, as well as cultivate students’ identity with Chinese culture and the nation, and strengthen the awareness of teachers and students of their common responsibility to safeguard national security.

#### *Guidelines on School Administration and Education*

5. Upon promulgation of the National Security Law, the EDB has provided schools with detailed administration and education guidelines on safeguarding national security and promoting national security education. Schools are required to review their current situations, formulate plans and implement relevant measures as soon as possible with a view to maintaining a safe and orderly learning environment in schools and nurturing students to become good law-abiding citizens. All primary and secondary schools as well as kindergartens offering local curriculum have submitted the review reports of current situations and work plans for the 2021/22 school year. The EDB is following up with the schools regarding the review reports submitted on their actual implementation of related measures to ensure compliance with relevant requirements. In addition, the EDB is going to organise sharing sessions in the 2021/22 school year to facilitate professional sharing and experience exchange among schools to enhance their effectiveness in planning and implementing measures in relation to safeguarding national security and national security education.

#### *Teacher training*

6. We will continuously provide holistic and systematic training in various modes for all Hong Kong teachers (including topics covering whole-school curriculum planning) in supporting full implementation of national

education and national security education by schools. All primary and secondary schools which implement the local curriculum have signed up for the Onsite Teacher Workshop on National Security Education (the Workshop) organised by the EDB and the EDB has smoothly conducted the Workshop for about 26 000 principals and teachers from approximately 500 primary and secondary schools. To enhance schools' understanding of the importance of planning as early as practicable, the EDB has organised two seminars on "Implementation of National Security Education in Schools: Whole-school Curriculum Planning" and about 800 primary and secondary schools have participated in the seminars. Besides, by engaging in diversified training activities including online self-learning programmes, all principals and teachers in Hong Kong can acquire the knowledge and skills in implementing national education and national security education inside and outside the classroom through a whole-school approach.

### *Enriching the curriculum/Provision of curriculum guides*

7. The learning elements of national education and national security education are embedded in various subjects. In 2021, the EDB released the "Curriculum Framework of National Security Education in Hong Kong" and 15 subject curriculum frameworks of national security education to facilitate schools to better understand the related contents. The introduction of the revised Chinese History curriculum at the junior secondary level has been implemented since the 2020/21 school year and the curriculum has been extended to Secondary 2 this school year to enable all students in Hong Kong to study Chinese History in a holistic and systematic manner. The senior secondary Citizenship and Social Development subject has been introduced from Secondary 4 in the 2021/22 school year. Its curriculum content is closely related to the national development, which enables students to gain an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the topics related to national conditions and national security. The EDB will continue to keep in view the learning and teaching of the subject in response to the societal expectations on our effort in getting the subject back on track. Regarding the promotion of Chinese culture, the EDB has introduced 93 recommended classical texts to the primary and secondary Chinese Language curriculum this school year for students to embrace virtues and enhance cultural literacy. Besides, the EDB has released the Values Education Curriculum Framework (Pilot Version) (further details in paragraph 15 of this paper), with emphasis placed on enhancing students' sense of belonging towards our country from an early age, developing a correct understanding of Chinese history, appreciating the

Chinese culture and traditional values, showing respect for the national symbols and signs (including the national flag, the national emblem and the national anthem), and understanding the Constitution, the Basic Law and the importance of national security, so as to cultivate students' sense of national identity.

### *Learning and teaching resources*

8. We continue to provide schools with diversified learning and teaching resources, including “Traditional Virtues and Positive Values: Learning Resource Package”, online games, audio picture books and a newly launched “National Education One-stop Portal” web-based resource platform, which covers topics such as the Constitution, the Basic Law and national security education, national symbols and signs (including the national flag, the national emblem and the national anthem), Chinese history and Chinese culture, as well as museum learning. We also, through the funding programmes of the Quality Education Fund (QEF), provide additional funding for schools' application<sup>2</sup> to conduct pertinent activities to enhance students' sense of national identity. Taking the provision of support to schools in implementing the Citizenship and Social Development curriculum as an example, the EDB continues to develop and enrich diversified learning and teaching resources, including presentation slides for teachers, illustrative examples for teachers' reference, worksheets, and online self-learning courses specifically designed for students, which have been uploaded progressively to the Citizenship and Social Development web-based resource platform (cs.edb.edcity.hk). The subject has been included in the textbook review mechanism and it is expected that the reviewed textbooks for Secondary 4 and 5 to be included in the “Recommended Textbook List” will be launched in the 2022/23 school year. We have also disbursed a one-off grant of \$300,000 to support schools in procuring learning and teaching resources and conducting relevant learning activities.

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<sup>2</sup> The Quality Education Fund (QEF) launched an enhancement measure in November 2021 for application by publicly-funded primary schools and secondary schools (including special schools) for funding of not exceeding \$300,000 to conduct project activities lasting for about 24 months for further strengthening measures to promote national education, national security education, and media and information literacy education. Each kindergarten joining the kindergarten education scheme may apply for funding of not exceeding \$150,000 to step up measures to promote national education and national security education. Schools may submit application to the QEF by the end of January 2022.

## *Multifarious activities*

9. In tandem with the introduction of the 93 recommended texts, the EDB has launched another round of the campaign to promote Chinese classic sayings this school year with 40 selected classic sayings as the basis for promotion. We have provided diversified resources, including a self-learning platform, calligraphy appreciation, videos and booklets, to enable students to have a better understanding of the essence of Chinese culture and to appreciate the wisdom of Chinese classics and develop virtues. In the 2021/22 school year, we have organised the “National Day Online Quiz Competition” and the “National Constitution Day Online Quiz Competition” with enthusiastic response from schools<sup>3</sup>. The EDB will continue to organise the “Territory-wide Quiz Competition on Chinese History and Culture” this school year. The “Territory-wide Junior Students Quiz Competition on Chinese History” will also be held for the first time, while the second phase of the Student Self-learning Platform of Chinese History will be developed concurrently. As this year marks the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong’s return to the Motherland, the content of the 8th Territory-wide Inter-school Basic Law Competition will be enriched and the competition will be open to Primary 1 to Secondary 6 students. We will organise activities on the National Day, the National Security Education Day and the important dates related to the history of the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression with a view to achieving greater synergy in promoting national education.

10. The EDB will continue to organise Mainland exchange programmes, and upon re-opening of borders, organise those in support of the curriculum (including various subjects such as Chinese History, History, Citizenship and Social Development, Economics, Geography) for teachers and students as soon as possible. We are also preparing the Mainland study tour as part and parcel of the curriculum of Citizenship and Social Development to enable students to gain first-hand experience of national conditions and the latest developments of our country, enhance their understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture, and cultivate in them a sense of national identity.

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<sup>3</sup> More than 95 000 primary and secondary students from over 510 schools participated in the former competition while more than 81 000 primary and secondary students from over 550 schools participated in the latter competition.

## II. Professional Teaching Force

11. The EDB will strengthen the overall management of the teaching force, promote teachers' professional development and enhance their professional conduct and capacity. Specific measures include arranging sufficient and appropriate teacher training, formulating a set of guidelines on teachers' professional conduct and strengthening teachers' entry requirements. For instance, starting from the 2022/23 school year, public sector schools should appoint only new teachers who have passed the Basic Law Test (BLT). In this connection, the EDB is conducting two rounds of BLT in January and February 2022 respectively for teachers on a pilot basis. The first round BLT was held on 8 January 2022 with about 4 300 participants. The second round will be conducted in end February 2022. In tandem, the guidelines on teachers' professional conduct to be formulated by the EDB will include clear guidelines and examples to illustrate the penalties on misconducted teachers to help teachers to be mindful about their words and deeds and law-abiding. These guidelines will also serve as reference for the EDB in reviewing the registration status of the teachers. We will seriously handle cases of teachers involving in unlawful acts or misconduct, while teachers with distinguished talents and virtues will be commended. In this regard, the EDB will enhance collaboration with the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals (COTAP)<sup>4</sup>, listen to the views from frontline educators and other stakeholders, and continue to collect views from various sectors through multiple channels.

12. On teacher training, the EDB will continue to arrange systematic training with a view to strengthening teachers' understanding of the Constitution, Basic Law, national security education, and teachers' professional conduct. We will also help teachers gain first-hand experience about the development of our country and enhance their sense of national identity through study tours to the Mainland. The above-mentioned training and study tours have been included as core training for newly-joined teachers and teachers aspiring for promotion. In tandem, we will continue to enhance collaboration with teacher education institutions with a view to further enhancing the quality of pre-service training for prospective teachers.

13. On the other hand, we will continue to seek to improve the manpower at the middle management level and rationalise the salaries for school heads and deputy heads in public sector primary schools. The detailed

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<sup>4</sup> COTAP was set up in 2013 comprising frontline educators, academics from tertiary institutions, parents and other members from the community.

proposal would be re-submitted to the Legislative Council for consideration and for Members' support. Besides, to capitalise on the manpower resources in the education sector, the EDB proposed to amend the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) to extend the retirement age of newly-employed teachers in aided schools from 60 to 65; and to amend the Grant Schools Provident Fund Rules (Cap. 279 sub. leg. C) and the Subsidized Schools Provident Fund Rules (Cap. 279 sub. leg. D) to correspondingly adjust the provident fund arrangements for the newly-employed teachers in aided schools<sup>5</sup>. The proposal would only be applied to those who are employed to fill a teaching post within the approved staff establishment of aided schools for the first time starting from the effective date of the amended Education Ordinance. The adjusted years of continuous contributory service and Government donation would not create additional pressure on government expenditure. Members are invited to support the proposal as detailed at the Annex. The amendment bill is expected to be introduced into the Legislative Council for scrutiny in the first half of 2022.

### III. Values Education

14. Positive values permeate cross-curricular domains such as moral education, civic education, national education (including Constitution, Basic Law and national security education), anti-drug education, life education, sex education, media and information literacy education, education for sustainable development and human rights education under the legal framework, and are embedded in the curricula of various subjects. The EDB has adopted “values education” as the collective term since 2017 to encourage schools to promote the various domains of values education, including media and information literacy education, inside and outside the classroom through an integrative approach.

15. The EDB released the Values Education Curriculum Framework (Pilot Version) in November 2021, with emphasis placed on enhancing students' sense of belonging towards our country from an early age, developing a correct understanding of Chinese history, appreciating Chinese culture, cultivating students' sense of national identity, and protecting our country. The Framework also provides examples to support schools in promoting positive values education through a whole-school approach. It sets out the domains of values education and learning expectations for students pertaining

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<sup>5</sup> The EDB had conducted public consultation on the proposal from June to September 2018 and it was generally supported by the sector. The proposal was submitted to Panel on Education of the Legislative Council for scrutiny in January 2019.

to various key stages of learning at the primary and secondary levels, and provides examples to facilitate schools' holistic planning for integrating values education into various Key Learning Areas/subjects and life-wide learning activities with due regard to the growth characteristics and needs of students, thereby promoting values education inside and outside the classroom. The 10 priority values and attitudes proposed by the EDB, namely Perseverance, Respect for Others, Responsibility, National Identity, Commitment, Integrity, Care for Others, Law-abidingness, Empathy and Diligence, are all rooted in Chinese culture and can help enhance students' sense of national identity and promote patriotism.

16. In this digital age, information is available in huge quantity. In view that it is hard to distinguish whether a piece of information is real or fake, there is a genuine need for our society to develop students' media and information literacy so that they know right from wrong based on positive values and make right choices for themselves. The EDB is updating the learning framework on "Information Literacy for Hong Kong Students" so that schools can strengthen the relevant information literacy learning elements in primary and secondary curricula, and to nurture students' ability and attitude to use information and communication technology effectively and ethically. More effort will go into strengthening their critical thinking abilities so that they can select, evaluate and understand information in various forms, use information to solve problems properly, and develop their positive values, attitudes and behaviours. The QEF also provides additional resources<sup>6</sup> for primary schools and secondary schools to conduct school-based activities, training and develop learning and teaching resources to teach students how to distinguish the authenticity of information and nurture their critical thinking skills, thereby consolidating values education. In addition, the EDB organised 10 seminars and workshops for teachers in 2021 in collaboration with the Journalism Education Fund, with topics covering media and information literacy and making good use of social media. The related learning and teaching resources had been trialled in schools by the end of 2021. It is anticipated that these resources will be launched in the first half of 2022.

17. We will continue to collaborate with other governmental departments, post-secondary institutions, non-government organisations and other stakeholders to provide more learning and teaching resources for schools, professional development programmes for teachers as well as student learning activities. These initiatives further support schools in helping students

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<sup>6</sup> See footnote 2.



develop positive values and attitudes to deal with the complex situations of everyday life and display good behaviour. Cultivating virtues and nurturing our students are the responsibilities of the EDB and the school sector. With the joint efforts of various stakeholders in society, we will be able to create a positive social atmosphere for the benefit of our students.

#### IV. Optimising the curriculum

18. The curriculum-related initiatives in the 2021 Policy Address and the implementation of the recommendations set out in the Final Report of the Task Force on Review of School Curriculum are closely intertwining. Besides strengthening values education, creating space and catering for learning diversity, fostering students' whole-person development and further promoting Applied Learning are the focuses of our work. The measures to optimise the four senior secondary core subjects (i.e. Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Citizenship and Social Development) have taken effect from Secondary 4 in the 2021/22 school year. The optimising measures help release lesson time, reduce examination pressure and enhance the flexibility of the senior secondary curriculum. Taking into account the school context and student needs, schools can flexibly utilise the space created to provide more diversified learning experiences, thereby catering for students' interests, abilities and aspirations as well as fostering their whole-person development and diverse talents. At the same time, the number of Applied Learning courses has increased to over 50<sup>7</sup> with more diversified content, including newly developed courses such as Practical Translation (CHI-ENG), and Korean Language and Culture. The EDB will also provide different support measures<sup>8</sup> to schools.

19. The "Standing Committee on STEM Education" has been set up by the Curriculum Development Council to oversee the related policies and overall direction for the development of STEM education in primary and secondary schools. The EDB is now optimising the support measures for STEM education further, including the introduction of the elements related to innovation and technology to teacher training programmes for enhancing teachers' professional knowledge and curriculum leadership, as well as continuously optimising the curriculum to promote the learning of information

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<sup>7</sup> The number of Applied Learning courses in the 2024 HKDSE Examination has increased to 52 for students to choose from.

<sup>8</sup> Examples: start offering Applied Learning courses as early as at Secondary 4; provide subsidy for students to take Applied Learning as the 4<sup>th</sup> elective subject; offer Applied Learning taster programmes at the junior secondary level; enhance promotion such as organising course exhibition, etc.

technology and introduce the learning elements related to innovation and technology.

20. Appropriate exercise and physical training is integral to our effort in further promoting students' whole-person development and a healthy lifestyle. The EDB launched the "Active Students, Active People" Campaign ("ASAP") in early October 2021 to rally the concerted effort of different stakeholders to create an optimised sports atmosphere in schools and in society, and to encourage students to engage in physical activities regularly from an early age. We have progressively launched territory-wide student activities, relevant teacher training programmes as well as elite athletes' sharing sessions, and developed diversified and interesting learning and teaching resources to support schools' promotion of physical activities on all fronts, thereby encouraging students to adopt an active and healthy lifestyle.

21. The School Nominations Direct Admission Scheme will be launched in the 2022/23 academic year. It provides opportunities for secondary students who have demonstrated exceptional talents and interests in specific disciplines / areas to be considered for direct admission to local universities, and students taking the 2022 HKDSE Examination could be benefitted.

#### V. Kindergarten Education

22. The Government has completed the review on the kindergarten education scheme (Scheme) which has been implemented from the 2017/18 school year. The enhancement measures have also been implemented progressively, including -

- (a) Streamlining administration: The EDB has implemented streamlined procedures for processing applications for frozen and reduced school fees in the 2021/22 school year. This will be expanded to cover applications for fee increase not exceeding specified percentages starting from the 2022/23 school year in order to benefit more kindergartens (KGs). Besides, the EDB has adopted a streamlined mechanism in assessing applications for the allocation of KG premises since July 2021. Templates for preparation of applicants' operation plan are provided to reduce their administrative work.
- (b) Improving the school environment for KGs: We have extended the Relocation Grant (\$1.5M for each KG) for one year to the 2022/23 school year while the quota for the Renovation Grant (\$0.5 million

for each KG) has been increased to 250 in the 2021/22 school year.

- (c) Enhancing teachers' professional development: The EDB will provide an in-service course for middle leaders with a longer duration (e.g. lasting for several weeks) for experienced teachers, senior teachers or teachers aspiring for senior posts starting from the 2021/22 school year. Subsidies for supply teachers will be provided in this regard. Besides, a one-off Professional Capacity Enhancement Grant will be provided to the KGs joining the Scheme (Scheme-KGs) in the 2021/22 school year for enhancing the capacity and professional development of KG teachers. A subsidy from \$100,000 to \$200,000 will be disbursed to the successful applicant KGs. KGs may effectively deploy the grant to enhance teachers' professional development.
  
- (d) Promoting parent education: The EDB will provide an additional one-off subsidy up to \$100,000 to Scheme-KGs in the 2021/22 school year for them to strengthen school-based parent education. In this regard, each successful applicant KG will receive \$80,000 for organising structured parent education programmes and an additional grant of \$10,000 for setting up/ enhancing a designated webpage "Resources for Parents" on their school websites. If KGs have established a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) or undertake to form a PTA by 31 August 2024, an additional grant of \$10,000 will be provided.
  
- (e) Enhancing support to families with financial needs: We will seek to uplift the fee remission ceiling under the Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme from the existing 75<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 100<sup>th</sup> percentile of the school fees of Scheme-KGs starting from the 2022/23 school year so that parents eligible for full fee remission need not pay any difference.

## VI. Post-secondary Teaching and Research

23. The Government strongly supports the development of post-secondary education. The Chief Executive-in-Council approved in January 2022 the recommendations submitted by the University Grants Committee (UGC) on the funding allocation and distribution of student places in the 2022/23 to 2024/25 triennium. The Government will provide a total of \$63,211.3 million recurrent funding to the UGC-funded universities during the

triennium, while UGC will encourage the universities to flexibly deploy resources to bring forth new ideas for nurturing talents compatible with the future development needs of Hong Kong.

24. We are pleased to see that the resources invested by the current-term Government in university research are playing a highly positive role and yielding encouraging results. For example, according to the results of the Research Assessment Exercise 2020 published by the UGC last year, among some 16 000 research projects across 13 areas and 41 disciplines assessed by distinguished international and local scholars, 25% were rated world leading and 45% were rated internationally excellent. In addition, scholars conducting research in Hong Kong have received numerous international awards and honors for their research achievements in recent years. To allow the higher education sector to explore continuously different funding sources for research, the Research Matching Grant Scheme has been extended to 2024, so that the industrial and commercial sectors can continue to make good use of the Scheme to support the research work of the higher education sector. Moreover, to allow the UGC-funded universities to flexibly redeploy resources to nurture more research talents in support of their research activities, UGC will further relax the over-enrolment limit of UGC-funded research postgraduate (RPg) programme students from 70% to 100% progressively beginning from the 2022/23 academic year. UGC is also conducting a review to assess the supply and demand for RPg places and consider the feasibility of increasing the number of such places.

25. To further consolidate the edge of Hong Kong universities in basic research, the Government has agreed in principle to the recommendations of the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong to provide the two universities with land for the construction of facilities for scientific research use. The Government has also invited the MTR Corporation Limited to undertake a study on the construction of a railway station on the basis of the present site of the Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK) Sports Centre, and the reprovisioning of the Sports Centre to a site near EdUHK's main campus. We are working with relevant policy bureaux and departments in taking forward the project. In addition, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) is exploring the use of the Hung Hom Bay Campus, which is currently used for the provision of self-financing post-secondary education, for academic and research use. We will consider PolyU's proposal in detail and facilitate the plan.

26. As regards self-financing post-secondary education, the EDB is preparing the amendments to the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320), with a view to enhancing the regulatory framework and improving the governance of self-financing post-secondary education institutions. The amendment bill is expected to be introduced into the Legislative Council for scrutiny this year. The EDB will consult the Panel on Education on the legislative amendment proposals in a timely manner.

#### VII. Diversified Progression Pathways and Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET)

27. The Diploma Yi Jin programme provides an alternative pathway for secondary six school leavers as well as adult learners to obtain a formal qualification for the purposes of employment and further study. The Government is reviewing the Diploma Yi Jin programme subsidy scheme with a view to optimising its curriculum and regularising it from 2023/24 academic year onwards.

28. The Government will further promote VPET through strengthening the collaboration with the industries, including enhancing the participation of industry partners in Applied Learning, exploring the further incorporation of workplace learning and assessment elements in VPET programmes, and commissioning a consultancy study to explore the overall development of work-based learning under the qualifications framework. To promote the further collaboration with the institutions in the Greater Bay Area in nurturing talent, the Government will also support the Hong Kong Vocational Training Council to strengthen collaboration with vocational institutions in the Mainland, including operating more programmes with the Shenzhen Polytechnic.

#### VIII. Information Technology to Improve Services

29. In line with the “Smart Government” strategy, the EDB will implement comprehensive digitalisation of primary one and secondary one admissions by phases starting from 2023, with a view to providing better quality school places allocation services by enhancing the service efficiency and user-friendliness of the processes of application and announcement of allocation results of primary one and secondary one admissions. We are actively engaged in related computer system development and preparatory work aiming that parents can submit their applications for secondary one discretionary places for the Secondary School Places Allocation 2023 through

the e-Platform in January 2023 the earliest. As for the applications for primary one admission, it is planned that parents can make school choices at the central allocation stage for the Primary One Admission 2023 through the e-Platform as early as around January/February 2023.

30. Besides, the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency (WFSFAA) has further enhanced its e-service platform to facilitate the public to submit online applications for various student financial assistance schemes and upload supplementary documents. The improvement measures implemented has increased the usage of online services for making applications under the student financial assistance schemes at pre primary, primary and secondary levels from about 1% in the last school year to about 40% in the current school year. The WFSFAA will continue its efforts to strengthen publicity and enhance the platform functions to encourage the public to use e services, and will start using mobile platform and handheld devices for conducting home visits and interviews in the first quarter of this year to improve the efficiency of processing applications. The chatbot under development is also making good progress, and is expected to be launched in the latter half of 2022 to provide round the-clock enquiry services to the public.

### **Views Sought**

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

**Education Bureau**  
**January 2022**

## **Extension of Retirement Age for Newly-joined Aided School Teachers**

The EDB proposes to extend the retirement age of teachers who are newly employed to teaching posts within the approved staff establishment of aided schools to 65 through legislative amendments to the Education Ordinance (“EO”), Cap 279, the Grant Schools Provident Fund (“GSPF”) Rules, Cap 279C, and the Subsidized Schools Provident Fund (“SSPF”) Rules, Cap 279D. We seek Members’ view on the key elements of the proposal. This document introduces the main content of the proposal.

### **Background**

2. Currently, as governed by sections 58A and 58B of the EO, the retirement age of aided school teachers and principals within the approved staff establishment is 60 unless special permission is given to extend their service beyond the retirement age. An aided school may submit an application to the EDB for extension of service of teachers and principals beyond the retirement age if the school cannot find a replacement for the incumbent after making every reasonable effort.

3. To address the possible challenges arising from an aging population and a shrinking labour force in 2015, the Government extended the normal retirement age of newly-employed civilian officers to the civil service (including government school teachers) to 65; and in the 2015 Policy Agenda encouraged other employers, in particular public and subvented organisations, to implement appropriate measures according to their own circumstances to extend the working life of their employees. As the education sector will be facing the challenges brought by demographic changes in the long run, drawing reference to the retirement age of government school teachers, the Government proposes to extend the retirement age of newly-employed teachers to teaching posts within the approved staff establishment of aided schools to 65, starting from the effective date of the amended EO. The Government has to amend relevant parts of the EO for the implementation.

4. All teachers employed by aided schools under the provisions of the Codes of Aid, except temporary teachers and teachers who aged over 55 on first appointment to a grant/subsidised school, are required to contribute to the GSPF/SSPF. Provident fund contributions are made up of two parts: a

monthly contribution by the teacher at the rate of 5% of his/her salary, and a Government donation based on the teacher's year(s) of continuous contributory service. The rates of Government donation increase progressively based on aided school teachers' years of continuous contributory service. As the GSPF Rules and the SSPF Rules are the legislation underpinning the operation of the GSPF and the SSPF, any change to the retirement age of aided school teachers and principals within the approved staff establishment will require amendment to the GSPF Rules and the SSPF Rules in addition to amendment to the EO.

5. The EDB conducted consultation on the proposal in 2018. Apart from seeking views from the stakeholders, e.g. the major school councils and associations, education bodies, school sponsoring bodies as well as representatives of teacher education universities, the EDB released a Consultation Document and conducted open consultation sessions. The proposal was generally supported. The EDB then proceeded with the legislative work and submitted the proposal to the Legislative Council Panel on Education for discussion in January 2019<sup>1</sup>. It was supported by the Members. The 2021 Policy Address proposes to amend the EO (Cap. 279). In this connection, the EDB has communicated with major school councils and relevant groups in late January 2022 to collect further views.

## **Recommendation**

### Target group

6. The proposal applies to those who are newly employed in the approved staff establishment of aided schools, excluding serving teachers and re-appointed teachers. Specifically -

- The extended retirement age should only apply to those who are employed to fill a teaching post within the approved staff establishment of aided schools for the first time from the effective date of the amended EO (i.e. newly-employed teachers). These teachers have never been appointed by aided schools to fill vacant posts within the approved teaching staff establishment. Broadly speaking, these teachers include those who are fresh graduates without any teaching experience in aided schools, or are formerly appointed to fill non-establishment posts of aided schools by means of cash grants, or are formerly appointed to teaching posts in

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<sup>1</sup> For details, please refer to LC Paper No. CB(4)375/18-19(03) on 4 January 2019 <https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr18-19/english/panels/ed/papers/ed20190104cb4-375-3-e.pdf>



schools of other finance types, or are formerly appointed as daily-rated supply teachers/ monthly-paid temporary replacements in aided schools.

- The proposed new retirement age of 65 is not applicable to in-service teachers within the approved staff establishment of aided schools (i.e. serving teachers) and those formerly appointed to teaching posts within the approved staff establishment, including “regular teachers” with defined contract period and part-time teachers on approved staff establishment as well as re-employed teachers with break of service.

7. The above proposal has taken into consideration the adequate supply of teachers to meet the manpower demand in the aided school sector at present and in coming years, the objective of the proposal being to help tackle the challenges brought by demographic changes in the long run. Furthermore, in proposing any changes, it is important not to dampen the entry prospect of those wishing to join the teaching force of aided schools or the career aspirations for young teachers. For aided schools to have a full complement of experienced and young teachers, injection of new blood is still necessary. If an option is given for serving teachers to retire beyond 60, it will have an impact on young graduates and may lead to promotion blockage for other serving teachers. It is in the interest of the education sector and of students to strike a balance among various factors, including the need to retain the services of the experienced teachers, to provide new graduates with reasonable entry prospect and to ensure a stable teacher supply and demand situation.

8. With the considerations set out above, we propose that the target group of the changes should be those who are employed to fill a teaching post within the approved staff establishment of aided schools for the first time on or after the effective date of the amended EO. For individual cases where an aided school has an exceptional need to retain the service of a teacher beyond his / her retirement age, the school may do so by applying to the EDB as provided for by the existing section 58B of the EO. This administrative measure, as a long-established practice, has been proved effective and flexible in its implementation.

## The GSPF and the SSPF

### 9. Proposed adjustment to the GSPF and the SSPF -

- The period of continuous contributory service that qualifies a teacher for a higher Government donation rate is lengthened by two years as follows -

Rate of Government Donation (%)	Existing Arrangement for Government Donation (Years of Continuous Contributory Service)	Proposed Adjustment to the Arrangement for Government Donation (Years of Continuous Contributory Service)
5%	less than 10 years	less than 12 years
10%	not less than 10 years but less than 15 years	not less than 12 years but less than 17 years
15%	not less than 15 years	not less than 17 years

- The ceiling age of the newly-employed teachers to first contribute to the GSPF / SSPF will be extended from 55 to 60.
- As regards the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) school donation to provident funds for teachers on transfer from aided schools to DSS schools, the same arrangements apply<sup>2</sup>.

10. As Hong Kong is gearing up to meet the challenges of an aging society, the proposal should not generate additional pressure on public finance and should help maintain the overall financial stability of the Government. Also, the above proposal involves the least changes.

## **Financial implications**

11 With the proposed arrangements, the new initiative would not create additional pressure on government expenditure.

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<sup>2</sup> For the teachers who are contributors of the GSPF/SSPF, they may, in accordance with the GSPF/SSPF Rules, opt to contribute the GSPF/SSPF after their school has become a DSS School. GSPF contributors may also opt to contribute GSPF if they have joined a DSS School on their own accord for the first time. By that, the DSS Schools should donate to the GSPF/SSPF as appropriate for contributors in their employment and at the same rate as Government would have done had the teachers remained in the aided school sector.

**Advice sought**

12. We plan to make a submission of the Amendment Bill in the second quarter of 2022.

**Education Bureau  
January 2022**