

# 立法會 *Legislative Council*

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## **Report of the Panel on Education for submission to the Legislative Council**

### **Purpose**

This report gives an account of the work of the Panel on Education (“the Panel”) during the Legislative Council 2024 session. It will be tabled at the meeting of 11 December 2024 of the Council in accordance with Rule 77(14) of the Rules of Procedure of the Council.

### **The Panel**

2. The Panel was formed by a resolution passed by the Council on 8 July 1998 and as amended on 20 December 2000, 9 October 2002, 11 July 2007, 2 July 2008 and 26 October 2022 for the purpose of monitoring and examining government policies and issues of public concern relating to education matters. The terms of reference of the Panel are in [Appendix 1](#).

3. The Panel comprises 20 members, with Prof Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun and Prof Hon CHOW Man-kong elected as its Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively. The membership list of the Panel is in [Appendix 2](#).

### **Major work**

#### Post-secondary education

##### *Building an international post-secondary education hub*

4. The Chief Executive’s 2023 Policy Address set out clearly the strategic directions and objectives for enhancing the quality of education in Hong Kong, with a view to developing Hong Kong into an international post-secondary education hub and a cradle of future talents, nurturing a diversified pool of talents, enhancing Hong Kong’s momentum of development and contributing to national development.

5. Members generally supported the policy initiative of building Hong Kong as an international post-secondary education hub to nurture and attract outstanding talents, and were pleased that the Administration had taken on board their suggestion to increase the non-local student quota of publicly-funded post-secondary institutions starting from the 2024-2025 academic year. In order to develop Hong Kong into an international post-secondary education hub, members were of the view that apart from Mainland students, the Administration should actively attract more students from abroad, especially those from ASEAN and Belt and Road (“B&R”) countries. To achieve this, the Administration should identify target countries and implement targeted publicity measures.

6. While expanding the development scale of Hong Kong’s higher education, local post-secondary institutions must also identify their strengths and develop their niche areas to attract non-local students. On the other hand, the Administration should strengthen post-secondary education sector’s collaboration and exchanges with institutions from around the world, encourage post-secondary institutions to set up campuses on the Mainland and provide joint programmes, expedite the process of mutual recognition of academic qualifications with the Mainland, encourage world-class universities to set up campuses in the Northern Metropolis (such as providing land or tax incentives), attract top teaching/research personnel to work in Hong Kong, facilitate mutual recognition of academic qualifications with overseas countries, etc.

7. It was also of vital importance to provide appropriate support services for non-local students in Hong Kong. The Administration should increase the supply of student hostels of post-secondary institutions (such as considering partnering with private developers/non-governmental organizations to develop student hostels), facilitate institutions to provide students with global learning and cultural exchange experiences, invest additional resources to promote integration among local and non-local students, etc.

8. In addition, members considered it necessary for the Administration to explore different ways, including relaxing immigration policy, to encourage non-local graduates to stay and work in Hong Kong. Some members pointed out that while attracting non-local students to come to Hong Kong, the Administration must ensure the employment of local graduates and should not neglect the support for local students.

9. The Subcommittee on Promoting the Development of Hong Kong into an International Education Hub has been set up under the Panel for members’ focused discussion on relevant issues. With Hon TANG Fei and Prof Hon William WONG Kam-fai as the Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively, the

Subcommittee commenced work in June 2024 and had held a total of three meetings up to early December 2024.

### *Research Matching Grant Scheme*

10. The Panel was consulted on the Administration's proposal to launch a new round of Research Matching Grant Scheme with \$1.5 billion of matching grants. The Scheme aimed to encourage the higher education sector to continue to expand their research funding sources, to foster more research collaboration with other sectors, and to consolidate and leverage Hong Kong's strengths in research and development ("R&D"), with a view to strengthening and sustaining Hong Kong's development as an international hub for post-secondary education.

11. Members were pleased that the last round of the Scheme had achieved resounding success in fostering collaborative R&D. In addition to the publication of research journal articles, monographs, conference papers, universities and post-secondary institutions had also established research centres through the Scheme. There were also commercialized research output or patents filed in various fields. Members supported the new round of the Scheme and hoped that it could ensure fairness in the provision of matching grants among participating universities and institutions, promote commercialization of more research output and enhance Hong Kong's overall standard of research.

### Vocational and professional education and training

#### *Vocational Training Council*

12. Members were briefed on the work of the Vocational Training Council ("VTC") on vocational and professional education and training ("VPET"). As the largest VPET institution in Hong Kong, VTC's programmes cover seven major professional areas, including health and life sciences, business, childcare, elderly and community services, design, engineering, hospitality, and information technology ("IT"), awarding various qualifications ranging from Certificate, Diploma, Higher Diploma, Bachelor's Degree to Master's Degree. Members supported the work of VTC and recognized its contribution in VPET.

13. Members expressed concern that VPET was still not well understood by many students, parents and employers. They suggested that the Administration and VTC could further adjust the promotion strategies of VPET, and enhance the public's positive understanding of VPET and VPET's professional image to make it an attractive progression pathway. In this connection, the Administration should actively implement life planning education in primary and secondary schools, enhance the recognition of Applied Learning ("ApL") subjects of

secondary schools, organize teacher training (including understanding of VPET and life planning education), enhance parents' perception towards VPET, maintain close contact with employers so that VPET could meet social needs, deepen interface with the Mainland (including promoting mutual recognition of sub-degree level VPET qualifications), assist students in developing their career in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, invite VPET graduates to share their successful examples, etc.

14. VPET played an important role in developing Hong Kong into an international post-secondary education hub. To attract more non-local students to enrol, VTC should continue to offer quality VPET, review admission criteria; invite local chambers of commerce to provide tuition fee subsidy, offer more technical courses and strengthen the support for non-local students.

15. According to the Education Bureau ("EDB") and VTC, they would continue to promote VPET at different levels through a multi-pronged approach, collaborate closely with the industries and nurture skilled talent needed for various industries. Furthermore, they would endeavour to enhance the competitiveness of our talent in the current globalized economy, with the goal of meeting the current and future manpower needs in Hong Kong.

#### *Universities of applied sciences*

16. In his 2023 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced that the Government would press ahead with the establishment of universities of applied sciences ("UAS") to nurture higher quality talent with applied knowledge and skills to support the development of strategic industries and the economy, thereby creating impetus for Hong Kong's development. Members supported the development of UAS to further enhance the status of VPET at degree level.

17. To foster the long-term development of UAS, members considered there was a need for the Government to formulate a plan to enable aspiring self-financing post-secondary institutions to develop into UAS. Meanwhile, the Administration should explore ways (e.g. providing incentives to enterprises) to encourage enterprises to offer internship opportunities to enrich the work-based learning experience of UAS students and enhance the publicity of UAS to raise the status of VPET. There were also views that the UAS could consider according priority to students who had taken ApL courses and micro-credential programmes to lay a holistic and complete VPET progression pathway for students.

18. The Administration noted members' views and advised that EDB had, in conjunction with the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and

Vocational Qualifications (“HKCAAVQ”), drawn up the criteria for qualifying as UAS, having regard to international experience and local context. The relevant application procedures and criteria, which were set out in the Manual for Institutional Review for UAS, had been announced.<sup>1</sup>

### Primary and secondary education

#### *Senior secondary curricula and assessment*

19. Since the implementation of the senior secondary (“SS”) curriculum framework and the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (“HKDSE”) Examination in 2009 and 2012 respectively, the Panel had been closely monitoring their development. Members supported the Administration’s ongoing renewal and optimization of SS curricula and assessment to ease the pressure on teachers and students, and enhance learning effectiveness. During renewal, the Administration should widely gauge the views of the school sector and various stakeholders, enhance teacher training, keep pace with the latest local and global development, and enable students to grasp the opportunities brought about by the development of our country and the world, so as to nurture pillars of society with a sense of national identity, an affection for Hong Kong and an international perspective.

20. Members put forth a number of optimization proposals for the curricula of different SS subjects, including incorporating elements of financial management education into “Personal, Social and Humanities Education” or “Business, Management and Law”, offering Arabic language courses, optimizing the teaching contents of Chinese History to increase students’ interest in Chinese history as well as strengthen their cultural confidence and affection for the nation, enhancing the statistical contents of Mathematics to fully nurture students’ mathematical literacy, raising the recognition of ApL subjects in the context of continuing education and work (such as incorporating ApL subjects into the progression pathways under VPET/Qualifications Framework (“QF”), implementing micro-credential programmes in secondary schools for articulating to VTC courses), and providing diverse SS courses in the long run. Some members considered that after streamlining the contents and assessment requirements of SS curricula, the new curricula should retain the depth and breadth of the subjects and facilitate articulation to the relevant university programmes, without affecting the recognition of HKDSE Examination.

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<sup>1</sup> The Hong Kong Metropolitan University and Saint Francis University, having successfully gone through an institutional review by HKCAAVQ, became the first two UAS in March and November 2024 respectively.

21. The Administration took note of members' views and explained that the optimization of elective subjects was premised on the principle that it would not jeopardize the integrity of the SS curriculum and assessment frameworks, nor undermine the aims and objectives of the related subject curricula. EDB had been collecting feedback from schools to understand their needs for support through various channels, including school visits, school inspections and questionnaire surveys. Besides, EDB had also taken diversified and concrete measures, including the provision of relevant teacher professional development programmes and production of learning and teaching resources on an ongoing basis, to further support schools in enriching students' learning experience and fostering their whole-person development.

### *Physical Education and Arts Education*

22. The Panel was briefed on the Administration's strategies in implementing primary and secondary Physical Education ("PE") and Arts Education ("AE") and the progress. PE and AE are integral to Hong Kong primary and secondary curriculum. EDB has been updating curriculum guides, providing training for teachers, developing learning and teaching, as well as offering various grants and resources to support the implementation of PE and AE in schools.

23. Members were of the view that the Administration should place more emphasis on PE and AE, which could help students develop resiliency, enhance perseverance and reduce stress. The most imminent tasks were to define clearly the positioning of PE and AE, explore creative promotion initiatives, arouse community awareness of the importance of PE and AE, and continue to promote "one sports/arts in life" actively.

24. On PE, the Administration should require schools to arrange at least one hour for physical activities daily by reducing homework load, promote morning exercise and exercise between class periods and update the relevant teachers' handbook, make use of IT to make PE lessons more interesting and to monitor students' health status, introduce an award system to motivate schools and students to organize/participate in physical activities, strengthen home-school cooperation in promoting PE, increase the number of places of Postgraduate Diploma in PE Education Programmes, and implement the "one school one sports promotion coordinator" policy.

25. On AE, the Administration should review the time allocation for each subject, increase the lesson time for Music and Visual Arts ("VA") lessons and add Chinese cultural elements, stipulate the minimum lesson time for Music and VA, encourage schools to utilize IT to enhance teaching, implement "specialized

teaching”, offer afresh part-time study programmes for VA and Music teachers, organize Drama Festival for schools, and promote community arts.

26. According to the Administration, it had been encouraging schools to adopt a school-based approach in the implementation of PE and AE. In fact, schools could arrange the flexible lesson time for PE and AE according to the school-based context and students’ needs. Besides, schools could organize after-school arts/physical activities to enrich students’ learning experiences. For “specialized teaching”, although it might not be feasible to implement it in all schools, the Administration believed that schools would employ teachers with suitable qualifications to ensure teaching quality.

### *Information technology in education*

27. The Panel continued to monitor the implementation of IT in education (“ITE”) in primary and secondary schools. To enhance teaching and learning effectiveness, members considered it necessary for the Administration to support the implementation of ITE through resource allocation and diversified strategies, as well as continually update ITE in response to the global IT development trend.

28. As the developments of e-learning, STEAM education and artificial intelligence (“AI”) were closely related, members suggested that the Administration should set targets for the development of ITE (including how ITE would support the national strategy of invigorating the country through science and education), launch a comprehensive policy on STEAM teaching, devise overall AI-related curriculum planning (including adding elements of Chinese culture and patriotic education), renew ITE strategies, review the policy on promoting e-textbooks, alleviate the digital divide, and make good use of AI to track students’ learning progress with a view to catering for students’ diversity.

29. Members attached great importance to the nurturing of students’ information literacy (“IL”) and were pleased to note that EDB was working closely with the relevant government departments and non-governmental organizations to organize activities and develop teaching materials to foster students’ ability to use information and communication technology effectively. There were views that students’ IL could be enhanced through home-school cooperation and parent education activities. Besides, in view that online fraud cases and students’ addiction to online games had become increasingly serious, members suggested that the relevant part in the “Information Literacy for Hong Kong Students” Learning Framework should be enhanced to raise students’ awareness of fraud prevention. The Administration could also draw reference from our country to formulate relevant policy to prevent children from addicting to online games.

30. On the use of resources, members suggested that the Administration should allow schools flexibility in the use of the relevant grants for purchasing advanced learning software (including those which facilitated the learning of students with special educational needs (“SEN”)), strengthen school cyber security and increase IT manpower (such as improving the remuneration package of IT Assistants). To ensure that schools had made good use of resources, EDB should monitor how schools used the relevant grants to implement ITE effectively.

31. According to the Administration, it would continue to integrate the strategies on ITE with STEAM education, proactively facilitate schools to use innovative education technologies, support needy students to use IT in learning, conduct Mainland and overseas exchanges to press ahead with the promotion of digital education. In addition, the Administration would continue to gather information on the implementation of ITE in schools through various channels, conduct timely reviews and consolidate the experience in promoting e-learning with a view to formulating/enhancing ITE-related policies and support measures, thereby optimizing the development of ITE.

#### *Primary Science and Primary Humanities*

32. The Panel discussed with the Administration the introduction of Primary Science (“PS”) and Primary Humanities (“PH”), its progress and relevant support measures for schools. To dovetail with the Government’s objective of nurturing talents and support the continuous development of our country and Hong Kong, all primary schools will progressively implement PS and PH starting from the 2025-2026 school year. The curriculum design of the two subjects is based on the General Studies curriculum which has been implemented in primary schools for years.

33. Members supported the introduction of PS and PH, hoping that the Administration would proactively encourage schools to promote diversified and engaging learning activities both within and beyond the classroom, and adopt diversified modes of assessment to enhance students’ motivation in learning PS and PH, thereby reducing the pressure on students and parents as well as facilitating learning.

34. On PH, the curriculum should enhance students’ sense of national identity and understanding of the world, with a view to nurturing a new generation with an affection for our country and Hong Kong and global perspectives. Furthermore, real life examples should be used in teaching to make the Constitution and the Basic Law easier to understand.



35. On PS, the Administration should, where practicable, provide schools with additional PS-related teaching equipment, laboratories, laboratory technicians; organize more experience sharing sessions for teachers, develop district training bases for PS teachers; and recruit retired education workers and professionals to provide support to those bases.

36. Another area of concern of members was the training for PS and PH teachers. They considered that a teaching force with professionalism was key to the effective implementation of the two subjects. However, given the various areas covered in the curricula of the two subjects, members suggested that the Administration should liaise with teacher education universities to provide enrichment programmes (such as one-year specialized programmes) to enhance teachers' knowledge in Science Education and Humanities Education. In addition, teachers would inevitably encounter difficulties in teaching the new curricula, EDB should listen to and address frontline teachers' concerns so as to boost their enthusiasm in stimulating and motivating students' learning.

37. As advised by the Administration, EDB would continue to provide professional support to schools, including teacher training and curriculum resources to facilitate their implementation of curricula. On training for teachers, The Education University of Hong Kong ("EUHK") would, starting from the 2024-2025 academic year, provide two professional development programmes on PS and PH for in-service teachers, with an aim to enhance teachers' professional knowledge. EDB had suggested EUHK organize more such courses in the coming years to meet teachers' training needs.

### Catering for students with diverse learning needs

#### *Students with special educational needs*

38. The Panel continued to follow up with the Administration on the support provided for students with SEN in public sector ordinary schools. Members attached great importance to integrated education ("IE") and considered there was a need to strengthen cross-bureaux/inter-departmental collaboration to support the learning of students with SEN. Hence, members urged EDB, the Labour and Welfare Bureau and the Health Bureau ("HHB") to work closely together to provide holistic support for students with SEN and their families through medical-educational-social collaboration.

39. On school-level, members considered it necessary to arrange adequate medical professionals for schools (such as speech therapists and clinical psychologists) to provide various professional services to students with SEN, allow schools to flexibly deploy resources to help implement IE, provide

sufficient training to strengthen teachers' professional knowledge and teaching skills (such as increasing the number of places of the Postgraduate Diploma in Special Education programmes), assist secondary schools in offering QF-related courses to cater for the needs of students with SEN, and strengthen their life planning.

40. Timely transfer of relevant information of SEN students to their present/future schools was key to ensure their smooth transitions to proceed into different stages of education. In members' view, schools should adopt an "opt-out" approach in seeking parental consent for transferring SEN information of their children (i.e. schools might proceed to transfer the relevant information if parents had not opted out.) Also, EDB should enhance the Special Education Management Information System to facilitate schools in realizing earlier the SEN of students and provide appropriate support timely.

41. As advised by the Administration, public sector ordinary schools implementing IE had been working closely with specialists to achieve an inter-disciplinary approach for supporting the learning of students with SEN. A host of measures had also been put in place by EDB to assist schools in meeting the learning needs of students with SEN and preparing for their future pathways, such as reducing the teacher/student ratio of kindergartens ("KGs"), strengthening teachers' training and fully implementing the Enhanced School-based Speech Therapy Service.

#### *Non-Chinese speaking students*

42. Education support for non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") students had been a long-standing concern of the Panel. While appreciating EDB's effort in encouraging and supporting NCS students to master the Chinese language and integrate into the community, members made a number of suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of support. These included encouraging more KGs to admit NCS students, assisting schools in early identifying NCS students with SEN, strengthening life planning education support services (such as arranging job matching), creating a coordinator rank to lead and coordinate the implementation of support services for NCS students, continuing to monitor the use of additional funding provided to schools for supporting NCS students, enhancing parent education, encouraging schools to share best practices in providing support for NCS students more frequently, and examining the effectiveness of various support measures from time to time.

43. Members considered that NCS students should master the Chinese language well for further studies and future employment. To achieve this, the Administration should help NCS students utilize AI to learn, introduce vocational

Chinese Language courses for NCS students at senior secondary levels, collect data on NCS students' attainment scores in Chinese Language for setting appropriate learning targets, and provide training for teachers teaching NCS students (including Chinese Language subject teachers and those teaching non-language subjects in Chinese). There was also a view that post-secondary institutions could consider lowering the Chinese Language requirements for the admission of NCS students.

44. On the other hand, some members considered it important to enhance NCS students' understanding of our country and foster their sense of belonging to our country in order to facilitate their mastery of the Chinese language and integration into the community. There were views that the Administration should extend the Sister School Scheme to international schools and private schools with NCS students, organize mentorship programmes, subsidize the visa fees for NCS students participating in Mainland study tours, and in the long run, set up community centres to provide support services for NCS students and their families.

45. The Administration took note of members' views for consideration and explained that EDB had been providing NCS students with all-encompassing learning support from KG to secondary levels through diverse strategies, and would continue to review the implementation of various support measures and make enhancement as necessary. Nevertheless, it might not be appropriate to set up community centres specifically for NCS students because this would be contrary to the policy intent and objective of enabling them to integrate into the community.

#### Mental health of students

46. The Panel was gravely concerned about the recent student suicide spate and held a joint meeting with the Panel on Health Services and the Panel on Welfare Services to discuss the mental health policy and relevant measures in Hong Kong.

47. Members noted that the Three-Tier School-based Emergency Mechanism implemented in all secondary schools in Hong Kong could effectively identify and provide support to students at higher risk. Since its implementation in December 2023, school personnel's knowledge and skills in caring for students with mental health needs had been enhanced. Some members suggested that the Administration might consider extending the Mechanism to cover primary schools to enhance mental health services.

48. To effectively support students with mental health needs, some members suggested that the Administration should offer training on mental health to school-based social workers under the “two school social workers for each school” policy, arrange psychiatric nurses or educational psychologists to provide on-site services, provide specialist healthcare vouchers to SEN students, and set up a hotline for parents to seek help.

49. Members highlighted the importance of following up on student suicide cases, and were pleased to note that the Administration would engage experts to study the underlying causes of each case, identify and mitigate the “risk factors” (such as peer bullying, family background) as far as possible and at the same time enhance the “protective factors” (such as implementing the “4Rs Mental Health Charter” in schools) to help them build a safety net for students.

50. In some members’ view, the Administration lacked an overall strategy for addressing mental health issues. Individual bureaux launched different services on their own under fragmented policies, which led to overlapping of resources sometimes. They suggested that a cross-bureaux coordination mechanism should be established to consolidate resources and address the problem at a higher level. The Administration concurred with members’ view that cross-bureaux coordination was important and advised that “Student Mental Health Support Scheme” jointly launched by HHB, EDB, the Hospital Authority and the Social Welfare Department was a successful example. Moreover, the Advisory Committee on Mental Health was tasked to advise the Government on mental health policies, which was conducive to consolidating the services of various bureaux.

### Sister School Scheme

51. Starting from the 2018-2019 school year, EDB had provided local publicly-funded schools<sup>2</sup> (including special schools) that had formed sister school pairs with their counterparts in the Mainland with recurrent grant and professional support, so as to foster stable partnership between sister schools in the long run and enable schools to plan long-term sister school exchange activities. As of September 2024, a total of 950 local publicly-funded schools had formed sister schools with their Mainland counterparts. The amount of the Grant for the Sister School Scheme (“the Scheme Grant”) for the 2024-2025 school year was set at about \$165,000 per school.

52. Members considered that the Administration had achieved a desirable result in terms of the number of schools participating in the Sister School Scheme.

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<sup>2</sup> Publicly-funded schools comprise public sector schools (government, aided and caput schools) and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools.

It was however still necessary for the Administration to find out why some schools had not participated in the Scheme so as to take forward the relevant work in an appropriate manner. Meanwhile, the Administration should continue to enhance the quality and quantity of sister school exchanges, including supporting schools in planning and organizing exchange activities fulfilling their school-based development goals, broadening and deepening exchanges, thereby enhancing the sustainable and multi-faceted development of sister school exchanges.

53. In some members' view, our country had a vast territory with abundant resources and diverse characteristics. EDB should keep encouraging local schools to pair up with Mainland schools across different provinces and municipalities, so as to promote multi-cultural exchanges. Besides, some members suggested that a scheme covering South-East Asia or B&R countries could be introduced in the long run.

54. The Panel was also gravely concerned about the amount of the Scheme Grant. Members considered that \$165,000 was insufficient and there were too many limitations on its use. The Administration should consider adjusting the amount of the Scheme Grant (such as according to the number of sister schools paired up with) and allowing schools greater flexibility in its use. There was also a view that consideration should be given to expanding the scope of subsidy to cover international schools and private schools.

55. According to the Administration, pair-up arrangements were being made for some of the schools which had not participated in the Scheme through the coordination of EDB. On the Scheme Grant, private schools (including international schools) had to bear all operating expenses as they were self-financing, market-driven and autonomous in their operation. Hence, it was not appropriate to provide the Scheme Grant to private schools. Nevertheless, EDB would continue to offer help and encourage schools (including private schools) to engage exchanges with different provinces and municipalities on the Mainland, enhance students' understanding of the history and culture of China, and examine on an ongoing basis the effectiveness of the Scheme.

#### Home-school cooperation and parent education

56. The Panel continued to follow up with the Administration on ways to foster home-school co-operation and home-school partnership, and encourage schools to implement parent education to facilitate the healthy development of children.

57. Members recognized that fostering home-school cooperation and parent education could benefit students, parents as well as schools. There were views

that the Administration should call upon employers to provide flexible work arrangements so that dual working parents could participate more in home-school cooperation and parent education activities. Moreover, EDB should take the initiative to approach families which had little or nil participation in parent activities to find out the underlying causes and follow up with corresponding measures to encourage active participation of parents.

58. To enhance effectiveness, the Administration should plan diversified home-school cooperation and parent education activities in a holistic and systematic manner, including activities related to patriotic education, vocational education, life planning, positive education, cyber bullying, mental health. Upon completion of each activity, EDB should collect feedback from participants to ensure that intended effects could be achieved. The Administration might also make reference to the Law of the People's Republic of China on Family Education Promotion and set an International Family Education Day and a National Family Education Promotion Week, with a view to raising public awareness of the importance of parent education.

59. As advised by the Administration, EDB would continue to review and enhance the relevant measures and collaborate closely with different stakeholders, so as to work hand in hand to further nurture students' positive attitudes and whole-person development, foster their physical and psychological well-being through home-school cooperation and parent education, thereby enabling them to grow up healthily and happily.

### High-quality teaching force

#### *Professional conduct*

60. The Panel attached great importance to teachers' professional conduct. In members' view, teachers are role models for students. Their words and deeds, conduct and values have a profound impact on students. Members urged the Administration to make every effort to uphold teachers' professional conduct; perform firmly its gate-keeping role on teacher registration, entry requirements and management; and continuously provide a wide variety of professional development activities (including Mainland study tours) for teachers (including substitute teachers) to build a teaching force with virtues and talents, thereby safeguarding the well-being of students. There were also views that in safeguarding the education professionalism, the Administration should pay more attention to teachers' morale and offer a second chance to teachers whose teacher registration had been cancelled.

61. As advised by the Administration, if a teacher was found to have committed a serious offence or an act of immorality or professional misconduct, EDB could cancel his or her teacher registration after taking into account the nature and gravity of the case. On teachers' professional development, EDB would continue to strengthen teachers' professional knowledge and competencies in subject-related and other areas such as national education and offer more Mainland study opportunities.

62. Members expressed concern over the significant increase in the number of cancellations of teacher registration in 2023 arising from the implementation of strengthening measures in the 2021-2022 school year about performing criminal record check on all registered teachers every three years. To strengthen the protection for students, some members considered that apart from teachers, the Administration should also conduct criminal conviction record check on non-teaching staff (including sports coaches) in schools, and tutors of tutorial centres.

63. The Administration noted members' concerns and advised that all of the aforesaid de-registered teachers had already left the teaching profession. To further strengthen the protection for students, EDB had issued guidelines reminding schools on matters relating to the appointment of teaching staff and non-teaching staff. Besides, EDB had formulated the Guidelines on Teachers' Professional Conduct to clearly stipulate the professional conduct and norms of behaviour required of teachers, and encourage teachers to have self-awareness and self-discipline to abide by the Guidelines. The Administration would review and revise the Guidelines as appropriate.

#### *Teacher Professional Development Fund*

64. Members supported the Administration's proposal of setting up the Teacher Professional Development Fund to provide diversified training programmes to enhance teachers' professional competencies and professional capacity, thereby building a high-quality teaching force. Under the Fund, the expenses of all the teacher professional development programmes would be met by the investment income generated. Resources would be deployed more flexibly to continuously enhance and launch teacher training and exchange programmes, thereby providing a steady funding source for the long-term development of the teacher profession.

65. Members suggested that the Administration should formulate a comprehensive plan for teacher training. In particular, it was necessary to enhance training on supporting the healthy growth of students, which should include training on early identification and intervention for students with SEN,

mental health support for students in need, Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Ordinance, etc. The Administration should also enhance teachers' training on national security and establish a mechanism for reporting training programmes which contained biased elements or contravened the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Furthermore, there was a view that the Administration should keep in view the workload of teachers as they had to cope with both heavy teaching duties and training requirements at the same time.

#### Changes in school-age population

66. The Panel continued to closely monitor the impact brought about by the decline in school-age population. Members considered that the most important task of the Administration was to formulate medium- and long- term school-age population policies so that schools could plan ahead and maintain the healthy development of the education ecosystem.

67. Closure of schools due to under-enrolment would affect students, teachers and parents alike, and should therefore be avoided as far as possible. Members suggested that the Administration could tie in with various talent admission schemes and draw up specific measures to enhance the quality of education, so as to attract students from neighbouring cities and increase the number of students at source. In this connection, the Administration might collect data on the dependants of newly arrived talents, provide them with information on selecting the right schools and help them adapt to the life in Hong Kong. There were views that the Administration should, when necessary, proactively support school sponsoring bodies to plan ahead the merging of schools to safeguard the well-being of students and maximize effectiveness.

68. On enhancing teaching quality, members were of the view that the Administration could consider reducing the class size to promote interaction between teachers and students, thereby raising the effectiveness of teaching; strengthening teacher training on new knowledge (such as innovation and technology) which met students' needs or training to facilitate teachers in keeping pace with the times so that they could undergo transformation (such as enrolling in train-the-trainer programmes recognized by QF or training on teaching SEN students); and increasing the number of non-teaching posts in schools to support teachers in performing administrative duties so that they could be more focused on the growth of students. There was also a suggestion that in the light of the decline in the school-age population, the Administration might, when consolidating resources, consider allocating more resources to enhance the learning of students with SEN, mental health of students, home-school cooperation, etc.



69. The Administration noted the suggestions of members and advised that in the light of the structural decline in the school-age population, the Administration would aim for a “soft landing” and pragmatically consider different feasible options to consolidate resources, so as to ensure the well-being of students and a stable transition.

#### Other financial proposals

70. The Panel gave views on two capital works projects and supported the submission of the relevant proposals to the Public Works Subcommittee. These projects were “Transformation of K.K. Leung Building into Research and Development Hub for The University of Hong Kong” and “Construction of an Engineering Building at Central Campus for The Chinese University of Hong Kong”.

#### Meetings held

71. From January to November 2024, the Panel held a total of 11 meetings, including a joint meeting with the Panel on Health Services and the Panel on Welfare Services. The Panel has scheduled a meeting on 6 December 2024 to discuss (a) Proposed Member’s Bill to amend the City University of Hong Kong Ordinance (Cap. 1132); (b) Updates on the implementation of national education and national security education in schools; and (c) Two public sector school building projects.

#### Duty visit

72. The Panel conducted a duty visit to Shanghai and Suzhou from 12 to 15 August 2024. During the trip, the delegation met officials of the local government and visited patriotic education bases; industry, education and research bases; science and research parks; universities; an experimental school; a KG; and a special school.<sup>3</sup> Details of the visit are set out in its [Report](#).

Council Business Division  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
4 December 2024

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<sup>3</sup> A delegation of East China Normal University in Shanghai paid a return visit to the Panel on 15 October 2024.

**Legislative Council**

**Panel on Education**

**Terms of Reference**

1. To monitor and examine Government policies and issues of public concern relating to education.
2. To provide a forum for the exchange and dissemination of views on the above policy matters.
3. To receive briefings and to formulate views on any major legislative or financial proposals in respect of the above policy area prior to their formal introduction to the Council or Finance Committee.
4. To monitor and examine, to the extent it considers necessary, the above policy matters referred to it by a member of the Panel or by the House Committee.
5. To make reports to the Council or to the House Committee as required by the Rules of Procedure.

**Panel on Education**

**Membership list for 2024 session**

<b>Chairman</b>	Prof Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, GBS, JP
<b>Deputy Chairman</b>	Prof Hon CHOW Man-kong, JP
<b>Members</b>	Dr Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, GBS, JP Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBM, GBS, JP Hon CHAN Chun-ying, BBS, JP Hon CHU Kwok-keung Dr Hon TIK Chi-yuen, SBS, JP Hon Stanley NG Chau-pei, SBS, JP Hon LAM Chun-sing Hon LAM San-keung, JP Hon Dennis LEUNG Tsz-wing, MH Hon Edward LEUNG Hei Hon Kenneth LEUNG Yuk-wai, JP Hon Rock CHEN Chung-nin, SBS, JP Hon Lillian KWOK Ling-lai Hon Benson LUK Hon-man Revd Canon Hon Peter Douglas KOON Ho-ming, BBS, JP Hon TANG Fei, MH Prof Hon LAU Chi-pang, BBS, JP Prof Hon William WONG Kam-fai, MH

(Total : 20 Members)

<b>Clerk</b>	Angel WONG
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<b>Legal Adviser</b>	Quincy NG
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