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Panel on Education

Meeting on 7 February 2025

Background brief on teachers' professional conduct

Purpose

This paper summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by members of the Panel on Education (“the Panel”) on upholding teachers’ professional conduct.

Background

2. President Xi Jinping emphasizes that education is the foundation for building a strong nation and for national rejuvenation. As teachers are key figures in nurturing students, teachers should first be strengthened in order to strengthen education. Apart from **professional knowledge and competencies in teaching**, teachers must also process **high moral standards and noble virtues**, such that students can be **nurtured with correct moral values**.

Major views and concerns

3. In the seventh term of the Legislative Council, the Panel discussed issues relating to teachers’ professional conduct on several occasions. Members’ major views and concerns are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Handling of suspected professional misconduct cases

4. Members considered that all **teacher misconduct cases** should be **made public**, **teachers involved in criminal offence should be disallowed**

to take up teaching duties before the completion of legal proceedings, and teachers who were convicted of offences should be **de-registered**.

5. The Administration explained that if teachers were under criminal investigation, schools would take appropriate actions to minimize the negative influence brought to students depending on the nature of the offence. Teachers who had committed a serious offence/misconduct would be disqualified. Actions taken by the Education Bureau (“EDB”) against teachers’ professional misconduct in 2021 to 2023 are tabulated as follows:

	2021	2022	2023
Cancellation of teacher registration	7	21	47
Reprimand letter	36	12	13
Written warning	70	43	69
Written advice	22	11	13
Verbal reminder / Record for future reference	16	17	29

6. To ensure that **misconducted teachers** who were still taking up teaching posts in schools would **not commit professional misconduct again**, members suggested providing them with **improvement training** to raise their professional quality and law-abiding awareness; **monitoring the behaviour and performance** of the teachers concerned (e.g. increasing the number of lesson observation, collecting parents’ views on a regular basis); and conducting in-depth **analysis of the root causes of misconduct** in terms of the teachers’ age, educational background, workload, etc.

7. As advised by the Administration, EDB had requested schools to strengthen their monitoring and supervision of the teachers who had received advisory, warning or reprimand letters, including encouraging them to participate in training. In the long run, EDB would analyze the data of teachers who had committed professional misconduct with a view to understanding the specific factors that might have affected their behaviour.

8. Members suggested that the Administration should draw up clear guidelines explaining to schools the **procedures for reporting** suspected teacher professional **misconduct cases**; encourage **community monitoring** and reporting of suspected misconduct cases; establish a **strictly confidential complaint mechanism** to protect complainants and a **sharing mechanism** with the Security Bureau to enable timely identification of unreported convictions.

9. As advised by the Administration, schools were required to report cases of criminal offence committed by teachers to the Police and EDB according to the procedures set out in the [School Administration Guide](#) and relevant circulars issued by EDB. [The Guidelines on Teachers' Professional Conduct](#) with examples of professional misconduct of teachers and follow-up actions taken by EDB had also been promulgated.

10. Members pointed out that the role of school management committees ("SMCs")/incorporated management committees ("IMCs") in handling complaints against teachers was not well defined in the Guidelines on Teachers' Professional Conduct and such members might not possess the necessary legal knowledge, communication and conciliation skills, etc. for handling complaints against teachers. There were suggestions that the Administration should enhance the school-based complaint management mechanism and provide **clear guidelines to facilitate SMCs/IMCs' effective handling of such complaints and management of teachers.**

11. As advised by the Administration, upon receipt of a complaint against a teacher, EDB would request the school concerned to conduct investigation and submit a report to EDB afterwards. To ensure that the investigation was properly and fairly conducted, EDB would examine the content of the report before determining any follow-up actions.

12. There was a view that it was not desirable for EDB to handle suspected cases involving teachers' misconduct after the Council on Professional Conduct in Education had officially come to an end. The Administration should **establish an independent council** and invite professionals (such as those with knowledge of professional counselling, teachers and various stakeholders in the education sector) to **handle cases of professional misconduct by teachers** and regularly review the relevant mechanism to increase participation of teachers.

13. As advised by the Administration, EDB had set up a dedicated task force comprising experienced directorate grade officers who were familiar with the work of frontline teachers, education policies and the education system to handle complaint cases involving teachers' misconduct. In addition, the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals comprising frontline educators, academics from tertiary institutions, parents and other members from the community had also been set up, with a view to continuously collecting the views from various sectors through multiple channels to promote the development of teachers.

Upholding teachers' professionalism

14. To raise the professional quality of teachers, members considered it necessary for the Administration to **strengthen training on teachers' professional conduct**, which included requiring newly-appointed teachers to complete the necessary training before commencement of teaching duties, enhancing teachers' understanding in national policies (such as the Legislation Law of the People's Republic of China, spirit and operations of the annual sessions of the National People's Congress and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference), providing mandatory training to teaching assistants, school managers and tutors working in tutorial centres, and evaluating the effectiveness of the professional training (such as by requiring participants to sit for an examination upon completion of the training).

15. As advised by the Administration, EDB was enhancing communication with teacher education institutions for strengthening pre-service teachers' training on professional conduct. Starting from the 2020-2021 school year, EDB had included contents about the Constitution, the Basic Law ("BL") and national security education in core training programmes for newly-joined teachers and teachers aspiring for promotion. Schools could arrange training for staff such as teaching assistants, school managers, etc. based on their actual needs and circumstances. Nevertheless, examinations might not be an effective tool to assess whether teachers' knowledge and capabilities had been enhanced after training. Schools should assess teachers' performance through lesson observation, feedback from students and parents, etc.

16. There was a suggestion that the Administration could consider **introducing awards** (such as the Chief Executive's Award for Great Teachers) to specifically **recognize teachers who demonstrated high moral standards and created a caring environment for nurturing students' character**. The Administration advised that it would explore the possibility of introducing awards for teachers with high moral standards and continue to tell good stories of teachers in Hong Kong.

17. Concern was raised over the **timeline for all teachers to take oath to uphold BL and bear allegiance to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ("HKSAR")**. The Administration advised that all civil servants, including government school teachers, were required to take oath to pledge allegiance to BL and HKSAR. The Government would holistically consider the oath taking requirements for employees in

organizations receiving government subventions, including teachers in aided and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools.

Latest position

18. The Administration will brief the Panel on measures to enhance teachers' professional conduct and their implementation on 7 February 2025.

Relevant papers

19. A list of relevant papers on the website of the Legislative Council is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Divisions
Legislative Council Secretariat
28 January 2025

Teachers' professional conduct

List of relevant papers

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Education	7 May 2021	Agenda Item III: Teachers' professional conduct Minutes Follow-up paper
	7 June 2022	Agenda Item IV: Teachers' professional conduct Minutes
	24 March 2023	Agenda Item IV: Teachers' professional roles and development Minutes
	2 February 2024	Agenda Item IV: Teachers' professional conduct and professional development Minutes Follow-up paper
	1 November 2024	Agenda Item III: Briefing by the Secretary for Education on the Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address Minutes

Council meeting	Paper
8 January 2020	Question 6 : Complaints about teachers' professional conduct
18 March 2020	Question 3 : Complaints about teachers' professional conduct
17 June 2020	Question 15 : Impacts of social incidents on teachers, students and parents
15 July 2020	Question 5 : Professional conduct of teachers
21 October 2020	Question 6 : Professional conduct of teachers
28 October 2020	Question 12 : Procedure for handling complaints against teachers
11 November 2020	Question 2 : Mechanism for handling complaints against teachers
24 March 2021	Question 4 : Ordering teachers alleged to have breached the law to be suspended from duties
26 May 2021	Question 1 : Professional conduct of teachers
23 June 2021	Question 1 : Training of school principals and teachers
1 September 2021	Question 22 : Teachers' understanding of national affairs and upholding of the Basic Law
23 November 2022	Question 2 : Reviewing the mechanism for registration of teachers

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