EDUCATION BUREAU
CIRCULAR MEMORANDUM NO. 21/2016

From: Permanent Secretary for Education
To: Supervisors / Heads of all Aided (including special schools), Government, and Caput Schools, and Schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme

Ref.: EDB(SAM)/1-150/30/15/(I)
Date: 19 February 2016

Strengthening School Administration Management Grant

SUMMARY

This circular memorandum sets out the details of the one-off Strengthening School Administration Management (SAM) Grant which aims to facilitate schools to review their daily operation and establish a more effective administration management mechanism, thereby unleashing teachers’ capacity to enhance teaching and to cater for the needs of students.

BACKGROUND

2. To support schools to strengthen administration management and to relieve teachers’ administrative work, the Education Bureau (EDB) has implemented the Pilot Project on Strengthening Schools’ Administration Management (the Pilot Project) in some public sector schools by phases since the 2011/12 school year. Up till now, a total of 132 public-sector schools have participated in the Pilot Project which will be completed at the end of 2016. We have continuously reviewed the Pilot Project and collected views from the participating schools and school sponsoring bodies (SSBs) throughout the course of implementation. Both the participating schools and SSBs reflected that the Pilot Project had provided a good opportunity for schools to strengthen their existing administration management mechanism. Participating schools also considered that the cash grant of the Pilot Project provided them with greater flexibility in implementing school-based improvement measures on school administration.

3. In the light of the successful experience and good foundation of the Pilot Project, EDB will provide support for public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools to enable them to initiate improvement measures for enhancing school administration management, thereby unleashing teachers’ capacity.

DETAILS

Strengthening School Administration Management Grant

4. The SAM Grant will be released to all aided (including special schools), government, caput, and DSS schools which have not participated in the Pilot Project before. It is a one-off cash grant at the amount of $250,000 per school.
5. Schools can devise strategies\(^1\) appropriate to their circumstances and actual needs to implement measures in various areas with the SAM Grant to strengthen administration management. Examples of these areas\(^2\) include administrative procedure and framework / mechanism, financial management, student support / teaching-related administrative work, information management and communications, and school premises management.

\textit{Payment and Accounting Arrangements of the SAM Grant}

6. For aided, caput, and DSS schools, the SAM Grant will be disbursed in March 2016. Schools may use the Grant up to 31 August 2018. Any unspent balance by then according to the annual audited accounts for the 2017/18 school year cannot be used for other purposes and will be clawed back.

7. For government schools, the SAM Grant will be provided in the form of budget allocation in March 2016. Any unspent balance of the allocation will lapse by 31 August 2018 and cannot be used for other purposes; separate allocation for the unspent balance brought forward from the preceding financial year will be provided in the years between.

8. In the case of deficit, aided schools may deploy the surplus under the Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant / General Domain of the Operating Expenses Block Grant to top up the SAM Grant. If there is still unsettled deficit, it has to be borne by the school’s own funds. Government schools may deploy the surplus of the Expanded Subject and Curriculum Block Grant to cover the deficit. DSS and caput schools can deploy government funds or non-government funds to cover the deficit.

9. For accounting and auditing purposes, aided, caput, and DSS schools are required to keep a separate ledger account for the SAM Grant to record all the incomes and expenditures chargeable to the Grant. Government schools will be allocated with a designated user code for capturing the provision of the SAM Grant and the expenditure thereon. Besides, schools should refer to relevant EDB circulars and guidelines as appropriate in handling matters such as recruitment, hire of services, procurement of goods and services, etc.

\textit{Evaluation and Accountability}

10. The success factors in enhancing administration management include setting clear objectives, establishing a proper self-evaluation mechanism and prioritizing different strategies through timely consultation with teachers during the planning and implementation stages. To enhance transparency, the work plan on the use of the grant should be endorsed by the School Management Committees (SMC) / Incorporated Management Committees (IMC) and uploaded on the school’s homepage \textbf{before the end of October 2016}. A template for the work plan is at Annex I. The funding released is subject to clawback if schools fail to comply with this requirement.

\(^1\) Examples of popular strategies adopted in the Pilot Project include appointing administrative / supporting staff, appointing supply teachers / teaching assistants, procuring / developing electronic systems, hiring of consultancy services, and collaborating with SSB / partner schools, etc.

\(^2\) The different areas are consolidated from the try-out items implemented in the Pilot Project.
11. Schools are also required to report the implementation of the work plan to the SMC / IMC. The report on the use of the SAM Grant should be incorporated in the School Report of 2017/18 to be uploaded on the school’s homepage before the end of November 2018.

**Collaboration**

12. Some participating schools in the Pilot Project have collaborated with other schools in devising and implementing improvement measures to enhance cost effectiveness and to reduce duplication of work. There are different modes of collaboration, for example, collaboration with schools within the same district, collaboration between feeder / nominated schools, and collaboration among schools operated by the same SSB. The points to note regarding collaboration are provided at Annex II.

**Other Support**

13. Based on the experience in the Pilot Project, many participating schools have developed electronic systems to enhance the efficiency of administrative work. We will make reference to their successful experience and enhance the related modules of Web-based School Administration and Management System (WebSAM) to benefit all schools.

14. Besides, participating schools have developed different types of electronic systems covering various areas which provide good reference for other schools. We will promote professional sharing and invite the schools to share the implementation strategies of developing and application of electronic systems, as well as other related electronic solutions in school administration provided in the market, so that schools will have more information and options on the technologies and services available.

15. EDB will continue to consolidate the experience and implementation strategies of the Pilot Project as well as the practices and knowledge gained by the participating schools / SSBs, and upload the information by category on the EDB Homepage (http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/admin/SAM/index.html) for the reference of schools / SSBs to enable them to establish a more effective school administration management mechanism and operational strategies.

16. We will continue to promote the dissemination of successful experience and good practices and to facilitate the exchange of useful information in the sector through various channels including bulletins, different types of seminars and professional sharing activities (such as district-based / theme-based / SSB-based sharing sessions and professional development school networks) with a view to benefiting more schools.

17. Samples of the work plan for the SAM Grant and proposal for collaboration items coordinated by SSB, examples of improvement measures, points to note and other reference materials have been uploaded on the above Homepage.
**Briefing Sessions**

18. EDB will introduce the SAM Grant and other support measures for strengthening school administration management at two briefing sessions to be held on 14 and 16 March 2016. Schools and SSBs are invited to attend one of the above briefing sessions. For details and enrolment of the briefing sessions, please refer to the Training Calendars on the EDB website (Course ID: SA0020160051).

**Enquiries**

19. For enquiries, please contact the respective Senior School Development Officers.

Ms Teresa CHAN
for Permanent Secretary for Education

c.c. Heads of sections – for information
Name of School: ___________________________________________  (District: _____________)

Work Plan on the Use of Strengthening School Administration Management Grant

(To be uploaded on the school’s homepage before end-October 2016)

We (the School) have read and understand the stipulations stated in the EDB Circular Memorandum No.21/2016 on Strengthening School Administration Management (SAM) Grant. The following work plan on the use of the SAM Grant is drawn up after consultation with the teachers:

Objective

After reviewing the operation of the school, the measures below will be devised to enhance the overall……

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area¹</th>
<th>Expected Results</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Evaluation Criteria (Indicator)</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Sustainable Development Plan</th>
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Signature of Supervisor : ____________________________

Name of Supervisor : ____________________________

Date : ____________________________

¹ Examples: Administrative procedure and framework / mechanism, financial management, student support / teaching-related administrative work, information management and communications, and school premises management.
Strengthening School Administration Management Grant

Principles and Points to Note for Collaboration

Basic Principles

1. The objectives of collaboration are to reduce duplication of work, enhance cost effectiveness and facilitate professional communication.

2. There are different modes of collaboration, for example, collaboration with schools within the same district, collaboration between feeder/nominated schools, and collaboration among schools operated by the same SSB.

3. Based on the experience in the Pilot Project, it is not advisable to have too many schools in the collaboration cluster (preferably 5 schools or below) to ensure that the individual needs of different schools will be well taken care of.

Collaboration Items Coordinated by SSB

4. The items should aim at enhancing the efficiency of administrative work in the schools and reducing teachers’ non-teaching workload.

5. Each school can deploy a maximum of $50,000 of the SAM Grant to the SSB for coordination of the implementation of items, if there is such a need.

6. The SSB should complete and submit the Proposal (Appendices A1-A2) to EDB for vetting on or before 29 April 2016. The results of applications would normally be announced by the end of June 2016. (Submission of Proposal is NOT required if the collaboration does NOT involve deployment of the SAM Grant.)

7. The schools under collaboration should be benefited directly. That is, resources from a school cannot be utilized solely to support another school.

8. The Grant deployed to the SSB must be utilized for the items stated in the Proposal and cannot be used for other purposes, nor can it be used for procurement of hardware/equipment for the SSB.

9. If employment of additional staff by the SSB is required to implement the items, such staff must be appointed through open recruitment according to the established criteria and reasonable remuneration be offered. [Taking administrative staff in the Pilot Project as an example, the average remuneration was no more than $300,000 for 12 months, i.e. the average monthly salary (with MPF) was at $25,000 or below.]

10. The SSB must fully comply with the requirements as set out in relevant EDB circulars and guidelines (if applicable) in conducting trading operation/procurement for the schools.

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1 Proposals will be vetted according to the information and justifications submitted and the principles stated above, as well as making reference to the experience of the Pilot Project. The schools/SSB may be approached to discuss the proposals and required to provide supplementary information; and EDB may consult other parties if deemed necessary.
11. Information including details of the collaboration item(s), separate account reflecting the incomes and expenditures chargeable to the SAM Grant including the documents of recruitment and/or procurement, payment vouchers and invoices, etc. should be passed to the schools concerned for record and audit purposes.

12. Any unspent funds by 31 August 2018 should be returned pro rata to the schools concerned for clawback by EDB and cannot be used for other purposes.

13. The SSB should evaluate the effectiveness of the items upon completion of the utilization of the SAM Grant and provide an evaluation report to the schools concerned for incorporation in the School Report, which is to be uploaded on the respective schools’ homepages before end-November 2018.
To: Permanent Secretary for Education  
Attention: School Administration and Management Section (Email: posam1@edb.gov.hk)

Proposal for Collaboration Items Coordinated by School Sponsoring Body (SSB)  
(To be returned on or before 29 April 2016)  
(Applicable to the deployment of the SAM grant to SSB for collaboration only)

We (the SSB) (Name: ________________________) have read and understand the stipulations stated in the EDB Circular Memorandum No. 21/2016 on Strengthening School Administration Management (SAM) Grant, and confirm that the schools below have thoroughly consulted their teachers and obtained the endorsement from the respective SMC / IMC to deploy the SAM Grant for implementing the items stated in Annex II (Appendix A2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of schools consent to deploy the SAM Grant</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Amount to be deployed</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1.</td>
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Contact person(s) in the SSB:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Post title</th>
<th>Telephone no. and email address</th>
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We will fully comply with the requirements as set out in relevant EDB circulars and guidelines (if applicable) in conducting trading operation / procurement for the schools above. Information including details of the collaboration item(s), separate account reflecting the incomes and expenditures chargeable to the SAM grant, and the evaluation report after the implementation is completed will be passed to the schools above for record.

Signature of Chairperson / Representative* of SSB : ________________________
Name of Chairperson / Representative* of SSB : ________________________
Date : ________________________

*Please delete as appropriate
To: Permanent Secretary for Education  
Attention: School Administration and Management Section (Email: posam1@edb.gov.hk) 

Proposal for Collaboration Items Coordinated by School Sponsoring Body (SSB)  
(To be returned on or before 29 April 2016)  
(Applicable to the deployment of the SAM grant to SSB for collaboration only) 

Name of SSB: ________________________________ (No. of schools under collaboration: ____________) 

Objective 
We (the SSB) will devise the measures below to enhance the overall…. 

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<tr>
<th>Area¹</th>
<th>Expected Results</th>
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Signature of Chairperson / Representative* of SSB : ________________ 
Name of Chairperson / Representative* of SSB : ________________ 
Date : ________________ 

¹ Examples: Administrative procedure and framework / mechanism, financial management, student support / teaching-related administrative work, information management and communications, and school premises management. 

* Please delete as appropriate