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### Replies to supplementary questions raised by Legislative Council Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2024-25

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Education

Session No. : 3

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-EDB001**

**(Question Serial No. S003)**

Head: (156) Government Secretariat: Education Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (2) Pre-primary Education

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Education (Ms Michelle LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Education

Question:

It is mentioned in the reply that the Bureau is “supporting the sustainable development of kindergartens (KGs) in various ways”, and a list of relevant schemes involving quite a lot of expenditure was given. Please advise this Committee of the following –

1. What improvements have been made with the provision of the “Smart Kindergarten” Grant, which involved an expenditure of around \$57 million?
2. What are the details of the one-off Grant for Promotion of Chinese Art and Culture, which involved an expenditure of \$232 million? Has the Bureau evaluated its effectiveness, and have any key performance indicators or targets been set?
3. In addition to regularising the Relocation Grant for Kindergartens as mentioned in the reply, will the Bureau consider collaborating with the Labour and Welfare Bureau to introduce plans and resources to support KGs in need to convert into care centres for infants and young children aged 0 to 3, so as to meet the service needs of that particular age group?
4. It is mentioned in the reply that on retaining and attracting quality teachers, “KGs joining the Kindergarten Education Scheme are encouraged to establish a career ladder and offer competitive remuneration”, so what is the implementation progress of these measures? Will there be new initiatives such as reducing remuneration differentials to “retain talent”?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Yuk-wai, Kenneth

Reply:

1. The Education Bureau (EDB) provided kindergartens (KGs) joining the Kindergarten Education Scheme (the Scheme) (Scheme-KGs) with a one-off “Smart Kindergarten” Grant in March 2023 to assist all Scheme-KGs’ development into “smart KGs”. KGs can make use of the Grant to procure services, software or equipment to enhance work efficiency by

digitalising school administration, including but not limited to taking roll calls, maintaining records of student attendance/performance, processing student admission applications, collecting fees, or issuing circular letters to parents.

2.

Starting from the 2022/23 school year, all Scheme-KGs are required to organise at least one school-based activity relating to Chinese culture every year to help students learn Chinese culture from an early age and foster their sense of national identity. EDB provided Scheme-KGs with a one-off Grant for Promotion of Chinese Art and Culture in March 2023. The Grant was enhanced in March 2024 to, inter alia, increase the amount of subsidy, extend the deployment period of the Grant, so as to strengthen support for KGs to organise more diversified school-based activities of Chinese culture, and further promote students' understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture from an early age, cultivate in them a sense of national identity, as well as their sense of belonging, pride and affection for our country. The total expenditure involved is about \$232 million. KGs may use the Grant to organise diversified school-based activities, such as formulating learning themes related to Chinese culture, purchasing resources to organise experiential learning activities and interesting games, arranging visits or cultural performance appreciation tours, as well as providing picture books to encourage children and parents to read. Scheme-KGs may also fully utilise the unit subsidy to organise school-based national education activities.

EDB will keep monitoring and supporting KGs in the implementation of the related initiatives through school visits, scrutiny of documents submitted by KGs, daily communications with them, etc. We will also organise sharing sessions for the sector to share and learn from good experiences to enhance the effectiveness in school planning and organisation of related school-based activities.

3.

Under the prevailing arrangement, the Joint Office for Kindergartens and Child Care Centres (JOKC) of EDB manages operators setting up service units of Child Care Centre (CCC) and KG in the same place. JOKC is staffed with officers of EDB and the Social Welfare Department, jointly regulating the care and education services of these service units in accordance with the requirements on premises design, staffing, and safety measures, etc., under the Child Care Services Ordinance (Cap. 243), the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) and the Operation Manual for Pre-primary Institutions, providing one-stop services to applicants for CCC registration. If operators of existing aided CCC attached to KG intend to increase CCC service places for children under the age of three in the premises, the operators may apply to JOKC. If the application complies with the aforementioned requirements, the Government will provide relevant subsidies for the aided CCC attached to KG.

4.

On teachers' career ladder, given the diversity of the sector, KGs may, having regard to their school-based needs, deploy their resources flexibly for appointing teachers of different ranks and formulate the promotion arrangement of teachers so as to commensurate with their scale of operation. In this regard, we have provided KGs with the following for reference: out of five class teachers, one may be upgraded to senior teacher, and for KGs having three or more senior teachers, one of these teachers may be upgraded to vice-principal. As for the remuneration of teachers, various measures have been adopted to ensure that teachers are reasonably remunerated, including having set salary ranges for teachers of different ranks,

requesting Scheme-KGs to remunerate their teachers within the prescribed salary ranges, and following up on irregular cases. The KG management can decide flexibly the remuneration of its staff, taking into account their qualifications, teaching experience, performance, professional knowledge, among others. Scheme-KGs are also required to prescribe 60% of the unit subsidy as teachers' salary portion, which must be used on teachers' salaries and related expenses. KGs may deploy any portion of the remaining 40% for teachers' salaries and related expenses, but not vice versa. The accumulated surplus exceeding the reserve ceiling of both the teachers' salary portion and the whole unit subsidy will be clawed back to EDB to encourage schools' optimal use of the subsidy on teachers' salaries.

To allow Scheme-KGs to deploy their resources more flexibly, starting from the 2021/22 accounting year, the teachers' salary portion (60%) and the other operating cost portion (40%) will be combined when calculating the reserve ceiling for the accumulated surplus of unit subsidy, i.e. the calculation of the reserve ceiling is based on the whole unit subsidy. To further support the sustainable development of Scheme-KGs and their delivery of quality KG education, a special arrangement has been made for the 2021/22 to 2025/26 accounting years. The reserve ceiling of unit subsidy will be uplifted from 12 months to 18 months of the provision, so that Scheme-KGs can make use of the flexibility under the Scheme to deploy resources more flexibly to meet school-based needs.

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-EDB002**

**(Question Serial No. S004)**

Head: (156) Government Secretariat: Education Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (3) Primary Education

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Education (Ms Michelle LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Education

Question:

It is mentioned in the reply that “STEAM education is implemented in schools via cross-disciplinary activities both within and beyond the classroom”, will the Bureau please advise of the types of activities covered in the STEAM education activities held beyond the classroom? Will the Bureau subsidise the education sector in organising activities such as exchanges and competitions among schools and exchanges outside school, while at the same time, encourage students to take part in STEAM competitions held by the education sector as well as those held outside school? If yes, please provide the details of these incentive measures and the expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Yuk-wai, Kenneth

Reply:

As an on-going effort, the Education Bureau (EDB) collaborates with the Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education (HKAGE), innovation and technology (I&T) organisations, tertiary institutions, professional bodies (e.g. Cyberport and engineering professional bodies), to offer students STEAM/I&T-related activities, such as talks, integrated practical activities, training, experiential activities, competitions and exchanges among schools (e.g. Science and Innovation Forum, the Hong Kong Student Science Project Competition, Innovative Engineering Education Programme for Primary and Secondary Schools, Student Mentorship Programme on Innovation and Technology and CoolThink@JC Competition) beyond the classroom, thereby providing them with learning experience in STEAM featuring “fun” and “diversity” and strengthening their interest and abilities in I&T. In particular, EDB has injected a total of \$2.2 billion into the Gifted Education Fund (the Fund) to support HKAGE to conduct diversified activities for gifted students, including collaborating with various organisations to organise, and train or send representatives to participate in competitions and activities related to science and I&T at the territory-wide/cross-territory/national/international levels so as to provide more opportunities for gifted students to unleash their potential. Moreover, quality and challenging advanced programmes are provided for those exceptionally gifted, and the Off-school Advanced Learning Programmes supported by the Fund are offered for gifted students to carry out projects with the mentorship and guidance of academics, scientists or professionals of relevant industries.

In addition, EDB has all along provided schools with various subventions, including the recurrent subvention under the Expanded/Operating Expenses Block Grant and relevant subject resources, to promote STEAM education. EDB has been providing public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools with the recurrent Life-wide Learning Grant starting from the 2019/20 school year, with a total annual provision of about \$900 million to support schools in organising more out-of-classroom experiential learning activities, including STEAM learning activities.

With the exception of the above grants/funding programmes, the expenditure involved in the promotion of STEAM education in primary and secondary schools (including special schools) is subsumed under the overall expenditure of EDB and a breakdown of the expenditure is therefore not available.

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-EDB003**

**(Question Serial No. S005)**

Head: (156) Government Secretariat: Education Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (2) Pre-primary Education, (3) Primary Education, (4) Secondary Education, (5) Special Education, (6) Other Educational Services and Subsidies, (7) Post-secondary, Vocational and Professional Education, (8) Policy and Support

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Education (Ms Michelle LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Education

Question:

- (1) Regarding the Teachers' Helpline mentioned in the previous reply, will the Helpline provide advice and support tailored to individual cases for teachers seeking help? In general, what kind of follow-up support does the Helpline offer, and what is the average duration of the support provided?
- (2) Are knowledge and skills to identify students with emotional and mental health needs essential components of current teacher education and in-service training, given that teachers have the most direct contact with students in schools? If yes, what are the details? If no, will such elements be included in future training?
- (3) As mentioned, the Education Bureau will organise workshops and online courses on physical and psychological well-being, with the capacity to accommodate approximately 1 100 teachers. Is this estimated attendance considered adequate? Will efforts be made to further promote physical and psychological well-being among teachers in the future?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Yuk-wai, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 13)

Reply:

(1)

To help teachers cope with stress at work or personal emotional problems, the Education Bureau (EDB) has set up the Teachers' Helpline to provide telephone counselling and appropriate support services. The counselors of the Teachers' Helpline will do their best to understand each caller's situation and help them analyse and address their problems. Moreover, they will provide professional telephone counseling and suitable support measures tailored to the specific circumstances or needs of each caller. These measures include face-to-face counseling and the arrangement of clinical psychologists to follow up the cases.

Given the individual nature of each case, the professional counseling and support measures required and their duration may vary. EDB does not compile statistics on the average duration of the support provided.

(2)

Regarding pre-service training, EDB and teacher education universities formulated the Guiding Framework for Teacher Education Programmes in 2023. One of the core elements of these programmes is equipping prospective teachers with the knowledge and skills in supporting students with various learning and developmental needs. Besides, the current pre-service teacher education programmes will be enriched in the content relating to special education, which includes knowledge and skills for supporting student mental health.

Regarding in-service training, EDB provides teachers with structured programmes pitched at three levels, i.e. Basic, Advanced and Thematic Courses (BAT Courses). The respective course objectives of the Basic and Advanced Courses are to help teachers master the appropriate support strategies and skills and gain a more in-depth understanding of how to cater for students with special educational needs, including those with mental health needs. Furthermore, from the 2017/18 to 2020/21 school years, EDB provided primary and secondary teachers with the “Professional Development Programme for Mental Health”, comprising 18 hours of elementary training and 30 hours of in-depth training. Starting from the 2021/22 school year, the programme has been enhanced further to become a 60-hour Thematic Course focusing on students with mental illness, enabling teachers to delve deeply into the characteristics of students with mental illness, relevant educational theories, practical strategies and skills, as well as effective support measures and practices. Moreover, to further strengthen relevant training, EDB provided over 40 additional workshops for teachers and school guidance personnel in the 2023/24 school year, with a more intense focus on enhancing their knowledge and skills in caring for students with mental health needs.

(3)

EDB is deeply concerned about the mental health of teachers and has organised workshops and online courses on physical and psychological well-being for them starting from April 2024. The implementation and effectiveness of these courses will be reviewed in a timely manner when planning for future arrangements so as to ensure that teachers’ needs would be addressed more effectively. Moreover, EDB recently launched the 4Rs Mental Health Charter (the Charter) in April. Schools participating in the Charter will also join the Mental Health Workplace Charter, which is jointly implemented by the Department of Health, the Labour Department and the Occupational Safety and Health Council. Organisers will arrange in-house workshops for participating schools, provide information on mental health community resources, conduct talks, online seminars and mental health courses for school staff, as well as offering tailor-made mental well-being advisory services, with a view to assisting schools in providing a mental health-friendly workplace environment for their staff.

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-EDB004**

**(Question Serial No. S006)**

Head: (156) Government Secretariat: Education Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (4) Secondary Education

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Education (Ms Michelle LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Education

Question:

It is mentioned in the reply that “schools may either join the study tours under the ‘Greater Bay Area Career Exploration Tours’ organised by the Education Bureau (EDB) or apply for a grant of \$100,000 to arrange their own school-based study tours”. Please advise of the following –

1. the number of study tours arranged by schools and its percentage among all study tours organised;
2. whether support will be provided for schools that arrange their own study tours with regards to itinerary arrangements and the evaluation of activity effectiveness, among others; and
3. the measures in place to ensure that study tours arranged by schools achieve the objectives of the programme.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Yuk-wai, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

1. to 3.

Given that the deadline for application for the “Greater Bay Area Career Exploration Tours” Programme (the Programme) for the 2023/24 school year is early April 2024, and that the Education Bureau (EDB) is currently collating school applications and confirming application details with individual schools, relevant information including the number of study tours arranged by schools and its percentage among all study tours organised has not yet been confirmed at this stage.

EDB has already issued a circular memorandum and organised a briefing session to introduce to schools the Programme and points to note for using the Grant for “Greater Bay Area Career Exploration Tours” (the Grant) to arrange school-based study tours, including the objectives of the Programme, the activity content of the study tours, the scope of the Grant, etc. If schools apply for the Grant to arrange their own school-based study tours, they must attach relevant itineraries to their applications. EDB will review the itinerary information submitted by schools and provide them with timely support in relation to itinerary

arrangements and activity content, among others, to ensure that the school-based study tours organised by schools fulfill the requirements and objectives of the Programme.

All participating schools are required to include the details, financial reports and evaluation reports of the activities in their School Report for the respective school year upon completion of the study tours, and upload the School Report endorsed by the Incorporated Management Committees / School Management Committees to the school website for information of stakeholders (including teachers and school staff, parents, students, etc.). EDB will also take the opinions of schools and students into consideration when reviewing and enhancing the Programme in the future.

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-EDB005**

**(Question Serial No. S007)**

Head: (156) Government Secretariat: Education Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (6) Other Educational Services and Subsidies

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Education (Ms Michelle LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Education

Question:

On enriching students' understanding of our country and the relevant learning, it is mentioned in the reply that the average provision of the Life-wide Learning Grant is \$900 million in each of the past 3 school years, and the Quality Education Fund has approved funding of about \$75 million and \$79 million to secondary and primary schools respectively. Will the Government conduct regular reviews to see whether relevant projects have strengthened the sense of national identity among students and enhanced their awareness of national security? Will schools' feedback and views be collected so as to improve the overall implementation of patriotic education?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Yuk-wai, Kenneth

Reply:

The Education Bureau (EDB) has all along adopted a "multi-pronged and co-ordinated" approach to support schools in promoting national education, national security education (NSE) and patriotic education. Life-wide learning activities are one of the important realms for assisting students in learning in authentic contexts, with a view to providing them with essential learning experiences and fostering their whole-person development.

Starting from the 2019/20 school year, EDB has been providing public sector schools (including special schools) with a recurrent Life-wide Learning Grant (the Grant) to support schools in taking forward, on the present foundation, life-wide learning with enhanced efforts, and the total provision is about \$900 million each year. Schools may, in light of their school contexts, flexibly deploy the Grant to organise more out-of-classroom experiential learning activities in different Key Learning Areas and curriculum areas, including national education. In accordance with the principles of school-based management, schools are required to draw up a plan for the use of the Grant based on the objectives formulated, and incorporate the plan for the school year concerned into the Annual School Plan for endorsement by their School Management Committees (SMCs)/ Incorporated Management Committees (IMCs). Schools should also regularly monitor the use of the Grant, include the report on the use of the Grant consisting of the expenses and the evaluation results in the School Report of the school year concerned for submission and endorsement by their SMCs/IMCs, and upload the

report to their school websites for stakeholders' reference. Besides, EDB keeps in view the use of the Grant in schools and provide professional advice through daily communication (such as school visits and teacher professional development programmes), and organises sharing sessions regularly to disseminate good practices.

To support schools in nurturing students' positive values and attitudes, the Quality Education Fund (QEF) has included Positive Values encompassing national identity as a priority theme. To further support schools in promoting national education and NSE, QEF implemented an enhancement measure in November 2021 for schools to apply for additional funding to conduct relevant activities for further strengthening measures to promote national education, NSE as well as media and information literacy education. For projects funded by QEF, the grantees shall be responsible for reviewing the project effectiveness. They should submit reports to QEF as scheduled for evaluating and monitoring the progress, effectiveness and resource utilisation of the projects. QEF assesses the implementation and effectiveness of the projects through various means, for example, through reviewing the reports submitted by grantees and conducting interviews with them.

EDB keeps in view the implementation of national education in schools through various forms of inspections, including focus inspections of at least 50 schools in this regard, which will be conducted annually starting from the 2023/24 school year, while providing suggestions for improvement to facilitate schools' continuous development. In addition, schools are required to collect, and submit to EDB, the Key Performance Measures data in relation to national education annually. This will facilitate EDB's monitoring of schools' implementation of national education on different fronts and the compilation of reference data for school self-evaluation. Through regular sharing of inspection findings and promotion of good practices, EDB supports the school sector in implementing national education effectively based on a whole-school approach, thereby enhancing the quality and effectiveness of national education.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY****SV-EDB001****(Question Serial No. SV006)**Head: (156) Government Secretariat: Education BureauSubhead (No. & title): (-) Not specifiedProgramme: (7) Post-secondary, Vocational and Professional EducationControlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Education (Ms Michelle LI)Director of Bureau: Secretary for EducationQuestion:

What are the percentages of graduates from the Chinese Culinary Institute and International Culinary Institute of the Vocational Training Council joining the catering and hotel industries 1 to 2 years before the 2020/21 academic year?

Asked by: Hon CHEUNG Yu-yan, TommyReply:

The numbers of full-time students in the Chinese Culinary Institute and International Culinary Institute of the Vocational Training Council, and the percentages of graduates joining the catering and hotel industries in the 2018/19 and 2019/20 academic years are as follows –

<b>Academic year</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
No. of students	1 356	1 010
Percentage of graduates joining the catering and hotel industries (Note 1 and Note 2)	69%	61%

Note 1: There is no breakdown for the catering and hotel industries.

Note 2: Employment statistics of graduates of full-time short courses (i.e. fewer than 22 weeks) are excluded.

Students under the Higher Diploma programme in International Theme Park and Event Management are included in the number of students. Most of the graduates of this programme work in the community, social and personal services sectors.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SV-EDB002**

**(Question Serial No. SV007)**

Head: (156) Government Secretariat: Education Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (3) Primary Education, (4) Secondary Education

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Education (Ms Michelle LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Education

Question:

What are the respective numbers of cross-boundary students studying in each level at primary and secondary schools in the 2023/24 school year?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu (LegCo internal reference no.: 74)

Reply:

The number of cross-boundary students (CBS) studying in primary and secondary schools by level for the 2023/24 school year is tabulated as follows –

<b>Level</b>	<b>Number of CBS</b>
P1	262
P2	194
P3	217
P4	319
P5	746
P6	1 729
<b>Total (primary schools)</b>	<b>3 467</b>
S1	2 429
S2	2 200
S3	2 136
S4	1 739
S5	1 328
S6	838
<b>Total (secondary schools)</b>	<b>10 670</b>

Note: Figures are based on the annual survey on the number of students travelling daily across the boundary conducted via schools in Wong Tai Sin, Tsuen Wan & Kwai Tsing, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long, North, Tai Po, Sha Tin and Tung Chung districts as of mid-October of the 2023/24 school year.

- End -