Guidelines on the Use of the Promotion of Reading Grant

Purpose

1.　　To support schools in strengthening the promotion of reading and encourage students to develop a good reading habit from a young age, the EDB has disbursed the Promotion of Reading Grant to all public sector schools starting from the 2018/19 school year.

Amount of Grant

2.　　The EDB will disburse the grant to all public sector schools. As for schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS), the grant will be subsumed in the DSS unit subsidy rates. The amounts of the grant for all public sector schools for the 2019/20 school year are indicated in the table below: (after upward CCPI adjustment of 3.3%)

Primary Schools

No. of Approved Classes*	Amount of Grant/Year
12 or below	$20,660
13 to 24	$30,990
25 or above	$41,320

* "Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme in Primary
　Schools" will not be taken into consideration in the
　calculation of number of classes.

Secondary Schools

No. of Approved Classes	Amount of Grant/Year
18 or below	$51,650
19 to 24	$61,980
25 or above	$72,310

Special Schools

	Amount of Grant/Year
All special schools^	$30,990

^ A special school with both primary and secondary classes is counted as one school.

The amount of grant will be adjusted in accordance with the movement of the Composite Consumer Price Index each year.

Usage of Grant

3.   Under the principle of school-based management, the incorporated management committees (IMC)/school management committees (SMC) (for Aided, Caput and DSS Schools), and SMC (for Government Schools) should set appropriate goals and formulate strategies based on the actual situation of their schools to make good use of the grant to enhance students' learning effectiveness. Schools should also conduct regular reviews to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of resources according to the goals set.   In formulating a plan on the promotion of reading, schools should discuss with teachers of different subject panels how to make effective use of the grant to promote reading activities and build a good reading atmosphere, so that students can derive pleasure and enjoyment from reading while enhancing further their reading abilities.

4.   Schools can flexibly use the grant for:
- Procuring reading resources, including both printed books and e-books Schools can use the grant to procure different kinds of books, which include Chinese and English printed books and e-books.   With the change of students' reading mode from reading printed books to online reading and reading e-books, schools can flexibly use the grant for procuring e- books and subscriptions to web-based reading schemes to engage students in different kinds of reading activities, including cross-curricular reading activities that cover different subjects and themes.

- Organising learning activities related to the promotion of reading

In addition to launching school-based reading activities and reading award schemes to create a good reading atmosphere and increase students' motivation and engagement in reading, schools can also use the grant for organising diversified and fun activities to promote reading, for example, themed-based reading activities on STEM education, Chinese history and culture, moral education or healthy living. Schools can also use the grant to procure services for organising learning activities to promote reading, including subscriptions to web-based reading schemes, and for hiring services from and collaborate with service providers such as writers and professional storytellers to conduct seminars, storytelling and parent-child reading sessions etc., to promote reading.

5.   Schools may use the grant to arrange different modes of reading activities in accordance with their school contexts. As it is a purpose-specific grant, schools shall use the grant to meet the expenses on the promotion of reading and related activities as mentioned in Paragraph 4.   If found inadequate, the grant can be topped up by the schools with the use of other government funding, including the surplus under the General Domain of the Operating Expenses Block Grant (OEBG)/ Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant (EOEBG) (for aided schools) and fee subsidy (for caput secondary schools).   If there is still unsettled deficit, it has to be met by schools' own fund/non-government fund. Government schools may deploy the surplus of the Expanded Subject and Curriculum Block Grant (ESCBG) to top up the grant, if required.

Funding Disbursement and Accounting Arrangements

6.   The grant has been disbursed to schools with effect from the 2018/19 school year.   For aided and caput schools, the grant is disbursed in September every year.   For government schools, the grant is allocated in the form of budget allocation in two batches in September and April of the school year; separate allocation for the unspent balance (if any) of the preceding financial year will be provided at the beginning of the next financial year.

7.   Schools will be required to observe the established principles and

requirements on the use of public funds as promulgated by the EDB when using the grant. These include, among others, hiring outside services and making purchases according to fair and transparent procedures with reference to the relevant EDB circulars and guidelines as appropriate, and preparation of a separate ledger for proper recording of accounting transactions. Aided and caput schools are required to keep a separate ledger account to record all the incomes and expenditures chargeable to the grant and submit the annual audited accounts to the EDB for examination in accordance with the existing requirements. Transfer of funds out of this grant is not allowed. For government schools, the grant will be provided in the form of budget allocation. Expenditure should be charged to the user code assigned and the expenditure in a financial year could not exceed the allocation in that year. Schools are also required to pay attention to the prevailing ordinances, regulations and circulars related to the procurement of outside services and handling of accounts, etc. Transfer of funds out of this grant is not allowed.

Surplus Retention

8.   Schools are required to optimise the use of the grant for the respective school year. Therefore, schools are, in principle, not expected to retain surplus of this grant. Nevertheless, we understand that some schools may not be able to follow the original plan to use up their funding within the school/financial year due to unforeseen circumstances in organising reading promotion activities. We thus allow schools to retain a reasonable amount of unspent balance in a school/financial year and carry it forward for use in the subsequent school/financial year as detailed in the paragraphs below.

9.   For aided and caput schools, we allow schools to retain an amount of unspent balance up to 12-month provision of the grant. The EDB will claw back any amount in excess of the said cap based on schools' annual audited accounts. Transfer of funds/unspent balance out of this grant is not allowed.

10.   Government schools will basically have the same arrangement as for aided and caput schools, except that they will be accounted for on a

financial year basis and any unspent balance in excess of the cap will lapse at the end of the relevant financial year.

Accountability

11.	In accordance with the "School Development and Accountability Framework", the IMC/SMC of the respective school is accountable for the proper use of the grant for its intended objectives. Public sector and DSS schools receiving the grant are required to plan for the reading promotion activities and incorporate the Plan on the Use of the Promotion of Reading Grant for the school year into the Annual School Plan for endorsement by their IMC/SMC. Schools are also required to briefly introduce the intended objectives and outline the activities to promote reading and how to use the grant in the Plan. Schools should also include the details of the activities held and the financial report in the School Report of the school year concerned for submission and endorsement by their IMC/SMC. Schools are not required to submit the Plan and Report on the Use of the Promotion of Reading Grant to the EDB. However, schools are required to upload the Annual School Plan and School Report (which consist of the Plan and Report on the Use of the Promotion of Reading Grant respectively) endorsed by their IMC/SMC onto the homepage of the school for the sake of enhancing transparency and in accordance with the established practice. Please refer to Annexes 2 and 3 for the templates of the Plan and Report on the Use of the Promotion of Reading Grant respectively.

Points to Note

(The following examples are not exhaustive and are provided for reference only.)

12.	Examples of appropriate use of the grant:

- To purchase printed books and e-books including any appropriate reading resources for students

- To subscribe to web-based reading schemes

- To hire writers and professional storytellers to conduct talks for students or parents to promote reading

- To hire services from external service providers (e.g. tertiary institutions, non-profit making organisations, academic

associations and professional bodies) for organising student activities related to the promotion of reading in schools

- To pay the application fees for activities or competitions related to the promotion of reading

- To subsidise students for their participation in or application for any reading related activities or courses provided by local tertiary institutions, non-profit making organisations, academic associations and professional bodies (e.g. Reading Camp)

13.   Examples of inappropriate use of the grant:

- To hire services from external service providers for organising activities that are irrelevant to the promotion of reading

- To purchase equipment/tools for school administrative purposes

- To purchase computer hardware/software for general purposes

- To purchase mobile computing devices

- To employ teaching/non-teaching staff

- To serve guests with food and beverages

- To subsidise teachers for their participation in local, regional and overseas professional development programmes