

20 August 2020

**Education Bureau Circular No. 13/2020**  
**Composite Information Technology Grant**

[Note: This Circular should be read by –

- (a) Supervisors and Heads of all government, aided (including special schools), caput and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) – for necessary action; and
- (b) Heads of Sections – for information.]

**Summary**

This circular aims to inform all government, aided and caput primary and secondary schools (including special schools) that with effect from the 2020/21 school year, the Extra Recurrent Grant under the Fourth Strategy on IT in Education (ITE4) will be subsumed under the “Composite Information Technology Grant” (CITG).

**Details**

***Background***

2. The Education Bureau (EDB) launched ITE4 in the 2015/16 school year. One of the key measures was to equip all public sector schools with WiFi coverage in all classrooms to facilitate the use of mobile computing devices for e-learning. To this end, the EDB has disbursed an Extra Recurrent Grant for schools to pay for the on-going expenditures in setting up an appropriate WiFi environment for e-learning.

***Subsuming Arrangement***

3. In view of the enhancement of WiFi infrastructure in all public sector

schools has been completed in the 2019/20 school year, the above Extra Recurrent Grant will be subsumed under CITG with effect from the 2020/21 school year. Following the existing practice, the grant levels will continue to be determined by the school's category and the approved operating classes, and adjusted annually in accordance with the movement of the Composite Consumer Price Index. Details of CITG levels are available at the relevant webpage (<https://www.edb.gov.hk/ited/citg>). For DSS schools, the Extra Recurrent Grant will be subsumed under the DSS unit subsidy.

4. In pursuit of the spirit of various block grants, and to allow flexibility to schools in resources planning according to respective school-based IT in education development plans, schools can continue to flexibly deploy their resources as appropriate to meet their operational needs in the following areas

- (a) Purchase of IT-related consumables (e.g. ink cartridge, toner, paper, CD, projector lamps) and other non-inventory IT peripheral items (e.g. earphones, mouse, flash drives and webcams);
- (b) Purchase of digital resource materials for learning and teaching, including annual subscription/renewal fees for licences & software, and other charges for on-line learning resources;
- (c) Internet connectivity and Internet security services, including subscription of WiFi services, purchase of portable WiFi router and mobile data SIM card, annual renewal of anti-virus software and firewalls, subscription/renewal of domain names;
- (d) Employment of technical support personnel/hire of technical support services (TSS) from service providers;
- (e) Extension of opening hours for school's IT facilities;
- (f) Arrangement of maintenance services for school's IT facilities procured by government funds, e.g. maintenance or replacement of mobile computing devices; and
- (g) Upgrading and replacement of school's IT facilities.

### ***Accounting and Monitoring Arrangements***

5. Apart from the above arrangement, other requirements for accounting and monitoring arrangement remain unchanged. In line with the existing

rules, CITG is one of the constituent grants of Operating Expenses Block Grant (OEBG) / Expanded OEBG (EOEBG) (applicable to aided schools) or Expanded Subject and Curriculum Block Grant (ESCBG) (applicable to government schools). Schools may retain up to 12 months' provision under OEBG / EOEBG / ESCBG as surplus. Caput schools may retain up to 12 months' provision of CITG as surplus. Schools are advised to make good resources planning to meet their expenses according to their priorities. For accounting and auditing purposes, please keep a separate ledger account to reflect all incomes and expenditures chargeable to the CITG. Also, with a view to enhancing the accountability and transparency of schools' use of CITG, schools are encouraged to enhance the reporting of the use of CITG to stakeholders (e.g. relate the IT budget with the school development plans in years when there is/are major initiative(s) in e-learning to be implemented and/or there is particular high level of expenditure in the IT area, publish the audited financial statement in their School Reports), monitor its utilisation and make more effective use of the grant to promote the development of IT in education in schools.

6. Schools are reminded to adhere to the related principles of handling schools' finance matters and follow proper procedures for procurement, accounting and financial control, including the EDB Circular No. 4/2013 and the School Administration Guide (for aided schools), or the EDB Internal Circulars No. 2/2019, 3/2019 & 4/2019 and the Stores and Procurement Regulations (for government schools), and any other related updates issued to schools from time to time. Caput schools and DSS schools should follow the guidelines on procurement procedures for aided schools, or their own procurement policies formulated upon the endorsement of their School Management Committees/Incorporated Management Committees.

7. As regards the arrangement for technical support personnel, schools may directly employ technical support personnel as appropriate and all payments relating to the employment of technical support personnel such as salary, contribution to the mandatory provident fund (MPF), long service payment/severance pay and any statutory benefits conferred by the Employment Ordinance are all included in the grant. Schools can flexibly set the qualification requirements and employment package for the required technical support personnel according to their own needs and the prevailing market condition. When conducting the recruitment exercise, schools should

observe the relevant circulars, circular memorandums and guidelines related to human resources management. Alternatively, schools may consider hiring TSS from service providers. Please ensure the procedures carried out are in compliance with relevant guidelines indicated in paragraph 6 above.

### *Enquiry*

8. Relevant reference materials and details of CITG can be found at EDB – IT in Education Section webpages (<https://www.edb.gov.hk/ited>). For enquiries, please contact us at 3698 3606.

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for Permanent Secretary for Education