From : Permanent Secretary for Education  To : Supervisors / Heads of all government and aided primary, secondary and special schools (including caput schools and local schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme)

Ref. : EDB(EID/ITE)/IT/PRO/189

Date : 30 December 2016

## One-off Information Technology Grant for e-Learning in Schools

**Purpose**

This circular memorandum sets out details of the One-off Information Technology Grant (OITG) which aims to enhance support for schools in the practice of e-learning. Schools are invited to participate in the upcoming briefing sessions on the use of OITG.

**Background**

2. The Fourth Strategy on Information Technology in Education (ITE4) has been successfully launched since 2015/16 school year. One of the key measures is to equip all public sector schools with WiFi coverage in all classrooms to facilitate the use of mobile computing devices for e-learning. Each eligible school is provided with funding support of $100,000 on average as one-off grant for acquisition of mobile computing devices and another $70,000 on average as extra recurrent grant for payment of WiFi services and mobile computing devices maintenance fees. As at to-date, some 800 schools have already enhanced their WiFi infrastructure under Batches 1 & 2 of the "WiFi infrastructure enhancement scheme" (WiFi-900 project) under the ITE4, and the "Support Scheme for e-learning in Schools" (WiFi-100 project). The remaining some 200 schools under Batch 3 of the WiFi-900 project will also commence the relevant enhancement works in mid-2017.

3. According to the information collected through various means including school visits and survey, schools are positive in promoting e-learning. Many schools are implementing or exploring various strategies to further realise the benefits of using mobile computing devices in learning and teaching, such as wider adoption of e-learning resources/e-textbooks, promotion of assessment for learning through e-assessment, and implementing the 1:1 student-device ratio (or Bring Your Own Device) policy to facilitate students' personalised learning within and beyond school campus. In this connection, schools need to deploy more resources to support these strategies in the practice of e-learning.

**The One-off Information Technology Grant**

4.        The Education Bureau (EDB) will provide all public sector schools joining the WiFi-100 project and Batches 1 & 2 of the WiFi-900 project with the OITG in January 2017 to implement or explore various e-learning strategies using mobile computing devices.

5.        The amount of OITG to be disbursed will be on average $200,000 per school.   In line with the current practice for disbursement of the Composite Information Technology Grant, this one-off grant will be determined in accordance with the number of approved classes of your School in the 2016/17 school year.   The amount is indicated in the table below.

| Approved No. of Teaching Classes | Amount of OITG |
|---|---|
| 18 or below | $145,050 |
| 19 to 24 | $199,450 |
| 25 to 30 | $253,850 |
| 31 to 36 | $308,250 |
| 37 or above | $362,640 |

6.        For the remaining some 200 schools for Batch 3 of the WiFi-900 project, we will disburse the OITG and the one-off grant under the ITE4 to them in the 2017/18 school year in accordance with their number of approved classes.   Eligible schools will be informed of the details in due course.

**Funding Ambit and Arrangements**

7.        Schools can use OITG to –

    (a)    acquire mobile computing devices for use by students;
    (b)    hire or subscribe additional manpower to enhance technical support for mobile computing devices, and
    (c)    acquire or subscribe e-learning resources, software or platforms for supporting e-learning, e.g. learning management systems.

8.        For aided, Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) and caput schools joining the WiFi-100 project and Batches 1 & 2 of the WiFi-900 project, they are required to keep separate ledger accounts to record all the income and expenditure chargeable to OITG.   The balance can be carried forward to the 2018/19 school year until 31 August 2019.   EDB will clawback any unspent balance of the grant as at 31 August 2019 based on schools' annual audited accounts. In case of deficit, aided schools may deploy the surplus under General Domain of Operating Expenses Block Grant or Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant as appropriate to cover the deficit; while DSS schools may deploy the surplus under government funds to cover the deficit.

9.      For government schools, the unspent balance of the OITG can be carried forward for use until the end of the 2018/19 school year (i.e. 31 August 2019).   Any unspent balance as at 31 August 2019 will lapse.   In case of deficit, government schools may deploy the surplus under Expanded Subject and Curriculum Block Grant to cover the deficit.

10.     Besides, schools will be requested to report their use of the OITG through the ITE4 annual surveys conducted by the EDB to review the effectiveness of this funding in promoting e-learning.

11.     All expenditure related to salaries, leave entitlement and related benefits such as Mandatory Provident Fund and any other statutory benefits such as benefits conferred by the Employment Ordinance of the staff appointed within the funding ambit should be paid out of the grant.   Schools will not be provided or reimbursed with other funding to cover such expenditure.

12.     For procurement of stores and services, schools are required to follow proper procurement, accounting and financial control procedures as set out in EDB Circular No. 4/2013 and the School Administration Guide for aided schools; and Stores and Procurement Regulations and other relevant internal guidelines for government schools.

**Briefing sessions**

13.     We will organise three identical briefing sessions on the use of OITG and other relevant support measures under the ITE4 from 18 to 20 January 2017.   Schools, including those schools joining Batch 3 of the WiFi-900 project, are invited to nominate a maximum of two representatives to attend the sessions and enrol through the Training Calendar System [Course ID: EI0020160431].

**Enquiry**

14.     For enquiries, please contact the IT in Education Section at 3698 3606.

YT LAU
for Permanent Secretary for Education

c.c.     Heads of Sections - for information