

Education Bureau Circular Memorandum No. 210/2017

From: Permanent Secretary for Education To: Supervisors / Heads of all government and aided primary, secondary and special schools (including local schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme) under Batch 3 of WiFi-900 Project

Ref. : EDB(EID/ITE)/F&A/45/7/2 C (1)

Date : 18 December 2017

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

Purpose

This circular memorandum sets out details of the accounting arrangements for the One-off Information Technology Grant (OITG) to be disbursed to all Batch 3 schools under the “WiFi Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme” (WiFi-900 Project).

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 by phases 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 700 schools have already enhanced their WiFi infrastructure under Batches 1 and 2 of the WiFi-900 Project in the 2015/16 and 2016/17 school years respectively, while some 200 schools under Batch 3 will also complete relevant WiFi infrastructure enhancement works within the 2017/18 school year.

3. To enhance support to schools in the practice of e-learning, we have disbursed OITG in January 2017 to some 700 schools under Batches 1 and 2 of the WiFi-900 Project as well as 100 schools which had enhanced their WiFi infrastructure in the 2014/15 school year before the launch of ITE4. Following the same practice for these 800 schools and in tandem with the schedule of WiFi infrastructure enhancement works, we will disburse OITG to all Batch 3 schools within December 2017.

One-off Information Technology Grant

4. 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 2017/18 school year. The amount is indicated in the table below.

No. of Approved 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

Funding Ambit and Arrangements

5. 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.

6. For aided and Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools, 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 2019/20 school year until 31 August 2020. EDB will clawback any unspent balance of the grant as at 31 August 2020 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.

7. For government schools, the unspent balance of the OITG can be carried forward for use until the end of the 2019/20 school year (i.e. 31 August 2020). Any unspent balance as at 31 August 2020 will lapse. In case of deficit, government schools may deploy the surplus under Expanded Subject and Curriculum Block Grant to cover the deficit.

8. Besides, schools will be requested to report their use of the OITG through regular annual surveys conducted by the EDB to review the effectiveness of this funding in promoting

e-learning.

9. 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 approved ambits should be paid out of the grant. Schools will not be provided or reimbursed with other funding to cover such expenditure.

10. 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.

Enquiry

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

Dr W C HO
for Permanent Secretary for
Education

c.c. Heads of Sections - for information