

For discussion  
on 25 January 2013

**Legislative Council Panel on Education**

**2013 Policy Address  
Policy Initiatives of Education Bureau**

**PURPOSE**

The Chief Executive delivered his 2013 Policy Address on 16 January 2013. This paper sets out the major education initiatives in the Policy Address.

**VISION**

2. The aim of education and training is to nurture talents so that the citizens can develop their full potential to create the best life possible for themselves and their families while contributing to the development of Hong Kong. “All-round Education and Lifelong Learning” is the overall goal of education in Hong Kong. We are committed to fostering the moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic development of students through education and training, with a view to cultivating their adaptive, creative and lifelong learning capabilities as well as independent, multi-perspective and critical thinking skills. We believe that everyone has potential, and education and training should be so designed as to enable students with diverse abilities, interests and aptitudes to unleash their full potential and become well-equipped to meet the challenges posed by globalisation and a knowledge-based economy. Education and training should also nurture students’ moral qualities and courage to take up their family and civic responsibilities.

3. The Government has all along been investing heavily in education for the purpose of nurturing human capital, thereby facilitating social mobility and sustaining the development of Hong Kong. Since the Reunification and regardless of economic vicissitudes, education has been the largest spending area of the Government's total expenditure, accounting for about one fifth of the total. In 2012-13, the total expenditure on education is estimated at \$79.1 billion, of which nearly \$60 billion is recurrent expenditure, representing an increase of more than 60 per cent over the recurrent expenditure in 1997-98.

4. In his Policy Address, the Chief Executive pointed out that it is time to consolidate our education policies, and avoid drastic changes to give stakeholders some respite. Our future priority will be to ensure the quality of our education by further improving relevant measures in accordance with existing policies

### **NEW INITIATIVES**

5. The major new initiatives of the Education Bureau (EDB) in the coming year include –

- (a) setting up a committee to explore the feasibility of implementing free kindergarten (KG) education and make recommendations (paragraph 6);
- (b) providing an additional one-off grant for KGs under the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) to carry out minor improvement works and procure furniture and learning resources, etc. with a view to improving the teaching environment and facilities (paragraph 7);

- (c) providing a one-off grant for aided special schools to support students' learning through procuring assistive technology devices, and hiring personnel or service to develop such technology, etc. (paragraph 8);
- (d) stepping up the support for integrated education by raising the ceiling of the Learning Support Grant (LSG) for public sector primary and secondary schools from \$1 million to \$1.5 million per school per annum (paragraph 10);
- (e) refining the Summer Bridging Programme for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students progressing to Primary 1 to Primary 4 by allowing NCS parents to accompany their children in joining the Programme so as to better support NCS students' learning of the Chinese Language (paragraph 14);
- (f) planning for an incentive grant, in collaboration with the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR), with a view to enhancing the professional competencies of Chinese Language teachers in teaching NCS students (paragraph 15); and
- (g) implementing a basket of targeted relief measures to address the temporary decline of Secondary One (S1) student population in the coming few years with a view to preserving the stability and strength of the schools and the teaching force (paragraph 17).

### **Enhancement to Kindergarten Education**

6. Providing practicable 15-year free education and better quality KG education is one of the priorities of the current-term Government.

Since July 2012, the Secretary for Education has had over 20 meetings with the KG sector, including sharing sessions with various stakeholders and visiting KGs of different operating modes and scales, in order to better understand the operation and needs of KGs. In view of the different views and expectations of the stakeholders on further enhancement of KG education and the huge diversity among KGs in various aspects, we need to be prudent when considering how to further improve KG education. This is to ensure that the related measures will not adversely affect the flexibility of the KG sector and its provision of diversified services for parents. In this connection, the EDB will follow up on the Chief Executive's Election Manifesto to set up a committee and task forces shortly to review the various arrangements for KGs in Hong Kong. The committee will continue to communicate with stakeholders in the sector and, drawing reference from overseas KG practices and experiences, explore the feasibility of implementing free KG education in Hong Kong and make recommendations on the enhancement of KG education.

7. In the meantime, we will continue to implement the PEVS. In the 2013/14 school year, the EDB will provide PEVS KGs with an additional one-off grant to carry out minor improvement works and procure furniture, teaching materials and other learning resources, etc. with a view to helping the KGs improve the teaching environment and facilities as well as the teaching and learning effectiveness, thereby further enhancing the quality of KG education.

### **Special Education**

8. The EDB will continue to improve the school premises and facilities of special schools in different ways, including conversion or

extension of school premises, re-provisioning or in situ redevelopment, etc. We will also strengthen teacher training and professional support for special schools to enhance their learning and teaching effectiveness. To further improve the learning effectiveness of students with severe or multiple disabilities in these schools, we will provide a one-off grant for aided special schools to support students' learning through procuring assistive technology devices, hiring personnel or service to develop such technology, etc.

### **Integrated Education**

9. To help ordinary schools cater for students with special educational needs (SEN), the EDB has been providing extra resources, professional support and teacher training. To further enhance the professional capacity of schools and teachers in catering for students with various SEN, the EDB has launched a new round of teacher professional development programmes and set training targets. At the same time, we have been progressively extending the School-based Educational Psychology Service as planned, with the target of covering all public sector primary and secondary schools by the 2016/17 school year. At present, about 530 primary and secondary schools, or 60% of all public sector schools in Hong Kong, are receiving the service. We will also continue to improve the services rendered by the EDB staff to provide schools with more comprehensive school-based professional support. We will, through cross-sector collaboration, continue to develop diversified teaching resources and assist schools in implementing effective support mode to improve the learning effectiveness of the students with SEN.

10. To further step up the support for schools, we will allocate additional resources to improve the funding arrangement of the LSG with effect from the 2013/14 school year. Specifically, we will raise the ceiling of LSG for public sector primary and secondary schools from \$1 million to \$1.5 million per school per annum. Schools may pool together and flexibly deploy the LSG and other school resources for employing additional teachers, teaching assistants or hiring professional services to render appropriate support for the students with SEN.

11. Effective implementation of integrated education requires the support and collaboration of various sectors in the community. The EDB will step up publicity and information dissemination to promote public understanding of the concept and measures of integrated education. Besides, the EDB will review the implementation of integrated education on an ongoing basis and listen to the views of different stakeholders through various channels, including the Legislative Council, the Task Force on Integrated Education in Mainstream Schools, various school councils, non-governmental organisations and parent groups, etc. with a view to further improving the support services.

### **Support for Non-Chinese Speaking Students in Learning Chinese**

12. In recent years, increasing NCS families, notably ethnic minorities, have chosen to settle in Hong Kong for good, send their children to local schools in Hong Kong and strive to integrate into the local community. Their primary challenge is to master Chinese as the medium for learning and daily communication. To facilitate the learning of Chinese by NCS students, we have put in place a series of support measures which include providing schools with the

“Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for NCS Students” which is complemented by diversified learning and teaching materials and teacher professional development programmes, as well as organising after-school extended Chinese learning activities for NCS students through the Chinese Language Learning Support Centre and other support programmes so as to reinforce what students have learnt during lessons.

13. We are committed to ensuring equal opportunities for NCS students. With multiple progression pathways, they may take professional programmes that best suit their aptitudes and interests and, upon completion of the programmes, seek employment or pursue further studies. In this regard, the Vocational Training Council (VTC) has set up one more youth college in the 2012/13 academic year, as proposed in the Policy Address of the previous year, to provide specialised support for NCS students and students with SEN. Apart from adopting English as the teaching medium for various programmes, the youth college offers training on vocational and daily Chinese as well as other support measures such as counselling services and cultural integration activities, etc. Besides, we have expanded the subsidy coverage for NCS students sitting other non-local Chinese Language examinations so that they could obtain, apart from the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination, other internationally recognised Chinese Language qualifications that better suit their Chinese standards and needs for academic advancement and future development.

14. The pre-primary stage is the golden period for children’s language development. Children can learn Chinese more effectively in authentic contexts through activities and daily interactions. In this

regard, active engagement and support of NCS families and ethnic minority communities are crucial. We will step up our collaboration with ethnic minority communities and non-governmental organisations to encourage NCS parents' participation in diversified Chinese activities together with their children with a view to enhancing their exposure to, and use of, Chinese. To strengthen support for NCS students to facilitate a more effective learning of Chinese, we will refine the Summer Bridging Programme for NCS students progressing to Primary 1 to Primary 4 by allowing NCS parents to accompany their children during the Programme. Through parent-school collaboration, NCS students would be better supported in learning Chinese and enhancing their Chinese proficiency.

15. Further, in collaboration with the SCOLAR, we are planning the launch of an incentive grant scheme aimed to enhance the professional competencies of Chinese Language teachers in teaching NCS students. Besides, we will, based on teaching experience and the “Chinese Language Assessment Tools” tailored for NCS students and a longitudinal study, further evaluate the effectiveness of measures to support NCS students' learning of Chinese, with a view to setting appropriate targets for their acquisition of the Chinese Language as well as improving learning and teaching and teachers' professional development.

### **Sustainable Development of Public Sector Secondary Schools**

16. There will be a temporary decline of S1 student population in the coming few years. Having consulted the stakeholders, the EDB is going to implement a basket of targeted relief measures with an aim of

preserving the stability and strength of the schools and the teaching force so as to raise the overall quality of education in the interests of students.

17. On preserving the stability of schools, the minimum requirement on the number of S1 classes in a school has been relaxed from three to two classes. Schools will be allowed to operate two classes with an admission of only 26 students. In addition, schools operating two S1 classes or less can still participate in the Secondary School Places Allocation System with a cap of three S1 classes. On safeguarding the stability of teaching force, the retention period for surplus teachers will be extended from one year to three years. No teacher on permanent establishment will be laid off in the next three school years as a result of the temporary drop in S1 student population. Besides, the EDB will further adopt a district-based and school-based approach to reducing progressively the number of students allocated to each S1 class in the coming three school years to lower the number of S1 classes to be reduced, if any, and in doing so, seek to balance the needs and concerns of school sponsoring bodies, principals, teachers, parents and students.

## **ON-GOING INITIATIVES**

### **Multiple Study Pathways**

18. The Government is committed to providing our young people with flexible and diversified study pathways with multiple entry and exit points. Through promoting the parallel development of the publicly-funded and self-financing sectors, we envisage that in the next two years, over one-third of our young people in the relevant cohort will have the opportunity to pursue degree-level education. If sub-degree

places are counted, nearly 70% of the young people will have access to post-secondary education, thus nurturing talents for the future development of Hong Kong.

19. We will continue to invest heavily in the publicly-funded post-secondary sector. Starting from the 2012/13 academic year, the number of University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded first-year-first-degree places has increased to 15 000 per annum. The number of senior year intake places will also gradually double to 4 000 per annum. Meanwhile, we will continue to support the healthy development of the self-financing post-secondary education sector and enhance the quality of teaching and learning through a basket of measures, including the Land Grant Scheme, the Start-up Loan Scheme, a \$3.5 billion Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund and various student financial assistance schemes.

20. Apart from the traditional academic programmes, vocational education also plays an important role in providing a solid foundation for young people seeking employment in various industries. The VTC of Hong Kong offers about 260 000 vocational education and training places, including over 200 Higher Diploma programmes in a spectrum of disciplines, including applied science, design, engineering, hospitality, child education and community services, business, and information technology. These programmes provide students with professional knowledge as well as general education and training, with emphasis on both theory and practice. On completion of the programmes, students may choose to seek employment or pursue further study.

## **Youth College**

21. The VTC currently runs eight youth colleges offering employment-focused programmes to school leavers at Secondary 3 level or above. Students may choose vocational streams that best suit their abilities and interests. The newly established youth college, which has just come into operation in the 2012/13 academic year, will offer 420 new places. It provides alternative progression pathways for young people, as well as dedicated support for non-Chinese speaking students and those with SEN.

## **International Culinary College**

22. We will seek funding from the Legislative Council this year for the development of the International Culinary College (ICC) under the VTC to provide training facilities and progression pathways for people aspiring to become professional chefs proficient in international cuisines, and attract renowned members of the culinary profession from around the world to Hong Kong. The ICC will help promote the development of related sectors, such as tourism, catering, retail and wine trading in Hong Kong. ICC is expected to commence operation in the 2014/15 academic year and it will provide over 2 000 training places.

## **Further Education outside Hong Kong**

23. Moreover, senior secondary graduates may choose to pursue further education outside Hong Kong. Starting from last year, some higher education institutions in the Mainland have been exempting Hong Kong students from taking the Joint Entrance Examination for Universities in the Mainland and admitting Hong Kong students based on

their results in the HKDSE Examination and the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination. In 2013, 70 institutions will join the scheme, representing seven more than that in 2012.

### **Quality Assurance**

24. The Government attaches great importance to the quality of post-secondary programmes offered by UGC-funded and self-financing post-secondary education institutions. The UGC recommended in its Report on Higher Education Review 2010 that a single quality assurance body for the entire post-secondary sector should be set up. While the Government will explore the possibility of eventually setting up a single quality assurance body, we have been implementing incremental steps to improve the quality assurance mechanism –

- (a) The Government has transformed the Tripartite Liaison Committee (comprising representatives from the EDB, Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) and Joint Quality Review Committee) and formed the Liaison Committee on Quality Assurance by engaging the Quality Assurance Council. The goals of the Committee are to promote sharing of good practices among all the quality assurance bodies and enhance consistency and transparency so as to strengthen accountability; and
- (b) As stated in its response to the UGC's Report on Higher Education Review, the Government considers that periodic external audits and reviews should be conducted on community colleges or

self-financing sub-degree operations under the aegis of UGC-funded institutions so as to enhance quality assurance and ensure consistency and coherence in standards. To this end, the Government stipulates under the Sixth Matching Grant Scheme (MGS) launched in August 2012 that UGC-funded institutions need to undertake to subject their sub-degree operations benefitting from the Sixth MGS to periodic quality audits by the HKCAAVQ in future. UGC-funded institutions participating in the latest round of Start-up Loan Scheme for self-financing institutions launched in October 2012 and those participating in the Quality Enhancement Support Scheme launched under the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund in November 2012 are also required to make a similar undertaking. The EDB, in conjunction with relevant bodies, will study the implementation details.

### **Qualifications Framework**

25. We are striving to develop and promote the Qualifications Framework (QF). Since the launch of the QF in 2008, we have set up 19 Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs), providing learning pathways and encouraging lifelong learning with a view to improving the overall quality of our local workforce. Twelve of these ITACs have drawn up their Specification of Competency Standards (SCSs), and the other ITACs will complete drawing up their SCSs successively so as to specify the competency standards of various levels of their industries for human resources management purposes. In addition to the recent introduction of the Award Titles Scheme and the use of QF credit, we

will further explore the development of the credit accumulation and transfer system and promote cooperation with the QFs of other areas. The Government will actively encourage cooperation between ITACs and education and training providers to offer more relevant training opportunities to young people and in-service personnel so as to integrate education, training, business and employment seamlessly and enable our young people to make early career planning.

### **Talent Development Scholarship and Reaching Out Award**

26. To encourage post-secondary students' all-round development and pursuit of excellence, as well as broaden their horizons and global perspective, we launched the Talent Development Scholarship (TDS) and Reaching Out Award (ROA) in 2012 to give recognition to students pursuing UGC-funded or self-financing post-secondary programmes for their achievements and talents in non-academic areas. The TDS and ROA are expected to benefit about 4 000 students in the first year of implementation, gradually increasing to 10 000 students per annum in the long run.

### **Enhancing the Quality of Education**

27. The first three-year cycle of the New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum and the inaugural HKDSE Examination have been smoothly implemented with international recognition gained. In addition to acquiring fruitful learning experiences, senior secondary graduates are able to stretch their potentials through multiple progression pathways for further studies and career pursuits according to their interests, aptitudes and aspirations. To optimise the implementation of the New Academic

Structure (NAS), the EDB, Curriculum Development Council and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority have jointly launched a review of the NAS. The report on the fine-tuning of the curriculum and assessment will be released in the first quarter of 2013. The EDB will provide support to schools in the implementation of the refined NSS curriculum and assessment, including the provision of curriculum supplements, professional development programmes and other learning and teaching materials. Meanwhile, we would continue to collect feedback from stakeholders regarding the recommendations for the medium/long term so as to further improve the NSS curriculum and assessment for the betterment of student learning.

28. Developing students' creative thinking is one of the learning goals of the school curriculum. In addition to developing students' creativity through different subjects, the EDB organises various annual activities related to design and creativity, such as Competitions and Exhibitions of Visual Arts, Science Project Competition, Mathematics Creative Problem Solving Competition, Youth Science and Technology Innovation Competition, Inventors of Tomorrow Training Programme, Schools Creative Music Showcase, Schools Music Festival, Schools Speech Festival, Schools Drama Festival and Schools Dance Festival. Every year, the EDB develops various kinds of learning and teaching materials, organises a variety of professional development programmes, as well as provides a series of thematic seminars and on-site guided tours for teachers. These activities not only broaden students' horizons but also provide them with opportunities to demonstrate creativity in authentic contexts.

29. In addition, the EDB will continue to provide a diversified range of school-based professional support services for kindergartens, primary and secondary schools to help them take forward education reform initiatives in articulation with their own mission and education aims with a view to enhancing the quality of education effectively.

### **Providing Mainland Exchange Opportunities to Broaden Perspectives**

30. The 2010-11 Policy Address announced that the Government would provide opportunities for students to join at least one sponsored Mainland exchange programme during their primary or secondary schooling. Pursuant to this, we have started to provide 4 500 additional exchange places each year starting from the 2011/12 school year with a view to achieving the target by the 2015/16 school year. The exchange programmes in the Mainland have been in general well-received by schools and parents. Their contents are linked up with those of various school subjects so that students can align experiential learning with curriculum objectives while broadening their horizon. As in the past, the EDB will, based on the needs of the school sector, continue to organise professional development programmes, provide teachers and students with learning and exchange opportunities in the Mainland, and develop learning and teaching resources to facilitate the learning and teaching effectiveness of national education

### **Development of Textbooks and e-Learning Resources**

31. The EDB will continue to implement the recommendations of the Working Group on Textbooks and e-Learning Resources Development (Working Group), which include implementing the

de-bundling of textbooks and teaching/learning materials for pricing, carrying out the three-year Pilot Scheme on e-Learning in Schools from the 2010/11 school year, enriching the content of the Depository of Curriculum-based Learning and Teaching Resources, and launching the “EDB One-stop Portal for Learning and Teaching Resources” specially designed for teachers to save their lesson preparation time as well as to facilitate the sharing of resources to achieve better learning outcomes. The EDB will continue to listen to the opinions of different stakeholders and enrich the learning and teaching resources available on the online portal.

32. The EDB has improved the existing review mechanism for printed textbooks through introducing new vetting criteria, improving the workflow for textbook submission, strengthening the objectivity and impartiality of textbook review, and enhancing the transparency of the “Recommended Textbook List” (RTL) by including comments on textbooks as well as information on the comparisons and changes of textbook prices for schools’ reference and for parents to keep track of the changes in textbook prices at their convenience.

33. The EDB has also taken on board the Working Group’s recommendation and launched the “e-Textbook Market Development Scheme” (EMADS). The EMADS is initiated to open up the textbook market to encourage diversified development of high quality yet reasonably priced e-textbooks so as to provide more choices for users and facilitate a more interactive and diversified mode of learning. Under this Scheme, the Steering Committee on Selection, Quality Assurance and Review for the EMADS has approved a total of 30 e-textbook development applications covering the main subjects of primary and

junior secondary education. Through the “Partner Schools Scheme”, we shall invite schools to try out the e-textbooks and provide feedback to enable the developers to improve the design and quality of e-textbooks and to cater for the diverse capabilities of students. The e-textbooks which have successfully gone through the quality assurance process will be automatically recognized for inclusion into the Recommended e-Textbook List (e-RTL) for use by schools in the 2014/15 school year. Concurrently, the e-textbooks will be sold at the prices stipulated under a “pricing commitment” for two to four years to provide consumers with more choices.

### **Top-up Student Guidance Service Grant for Public Sector Primary Schools**

34. Starting from the 2012/13 school year, the EDB has provided a Top-up Student Guidance Service Grant to all public sector primary schools for enhancing student guidance service. Take a primary school with 24 classes as an example, it is provided with about \$620,000 in the 2012/13 school year, which represents an increase of about 21% from the preceding school year. About 70% of schools in the territory are provided with the Top-up Student Guidance Service Grant at an amount of \$100,000 or above. Schools may utilize this new resource flexibly. Most of them have arranged one or more full-time stationing student guidance personnel to strengthen their preventive measures and support in handling student problems.

### **Pilot Project on Strengthening Schools’ Administration Management**

35. Pursuant to a proposal in last year’s Policy Address, a pilot project has been launched in 30 public sector schools in the 2011/12

school year. Through assisting schools in examining their current operation and practices, it aims to identify practicable modes of operation to strengthen schools' administration management and improve or streamline the relevant structures and procedures, thereby reducing teachers' administrative work. Each participating school is provided with an additional grant of about \$450,000 for the project. Appropriate training is also provided by the EDB. The pilot has been making good progress in general and will be completed by the end of August 2013. To explore and identify more practicable modes of operation, the EDB will launch the second phase of the pilot in mid-2013 with another new batch of 30 public sector schools. The second phase will continue until the end of 2014. We will consider the way forward based on the experiences gained from the pilot project.

### **Implementation of Whole-day Primary Schooling**

36. To enhance basic education, the Government aims at providing whole-day primary schooling for all students. By the 2008/09 school year, the school places provided by whole-day government, aided and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools have already been sufficient to accommodate all primary students. Currently, there remains only one primary school that has yet to work out a plan for conversion to whole-day operation. The EDB will continue to work with the school concerned in devising a plan for conversion into whole-day schooling.

### **Development of International School Sector**

37. The Government is committed to developing a vibrant international school sector to meet the education needs from local and overseas families living in Hong Kong and families coming to Hong

Kong for work or investment. Over the past decade, the number of international school places has increased by nearly 20% from 31 000 in the 2001/02 school year to 37 000 in the 2011/12 school year. The Government has implemented a number of facilitation measures including the allocation of vacant school premises and greenfield sites, provision of interest-free loans for school buildings and nominal rent for the leasing of government land or premises. We have commissioned a study to stock-take the existing provision of international school places and project the future demand and supply. The study has been completed recently, in December 2012. We are studying the findings and recommendations of the study to project the long-term provision and demand of international school places and to review the need for further facilitation measures. We aim to report to the Legislative Council Panel on Education by mid 2013.

Education Bureau  
16 January 2013