

For discussion
on 4 December 2020

Legislative Council Panel on Education
2020 Policy Address
Education Bureau's Policy Initiatives

The Chief Executive delivered the 2020 Policy Address on 25 November 2020. This paper sets out the major education-related initiatives set out in the Policy Address and the Policy Address Supplement.

2. Education is the key to nurturing talent. The role of the Government in education is not merely a provider of resources, but is also a policy maker, administrator and regulator. The Government has indispensable responsibilities: from the education system to school governance, from curriculum design to student assessment, from teachers' quality to students' nurturing. The current-term Government is committed to providing quality education through devoting substantial resources to education, maintaining professional leadership in charting the way forward and listening carefully to voices of the education sector. A total of \$13.5 billion recurrent expenditure has been allocated in the past three years for the implementation of improvement measures, covering education manpower, funding and hardware, to improve the quality of education. The current-term Government has also set up task forces and completed the eight in-depth reviews, and has been implementing their valuable recommendations progressively. The Education Bureau (EDB) will continue to monitor, review and follow up on initiatives implemented, and to provide additional resources as and when necessary, so as to achieve quality education and nurture our next generation.

New Initiatives

A. Enhancing the Quality of Education

3. We will strengthen the Government's role in policy making, implementation and monitoring, with reviews and enhancements in such areas as education policy, teachers' quality and curriculum design. In the coming year, the major tasks include:

- (a) review the implementation of the existing education policies to ensure effective monitoring and accountability in school management,

administration, finance and implementation of rules and regulations. By enhancing communication with school sponsoring bodies and training for school managers, the EDB will specify the powers, responsibilities and requirements of all parties concerned to strengthen school management and administration, as well as enhance the management and quality of the teaching force;

- (b) enhance the quality of teachers by measures covering the entry to the profession, training and management. The EDB will enhance liaison with teacher education institutions putting heavier emphasis on teachers' professional conduct in pre-service training for prospective teachers; and step up training requirements for newly appointed and serving teachers and teachers to be promoted, covering professional roles, values and conduct of teachers; education development at the local, national and international levels; national education and national security education, etc.;
- (c) continue to handle cases involving teachers' misconduct or illegal behavior according to the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) and established practices. Appropriate penalty will be imposed on substantiated cases in a fair and reasonable manner. The EDB will also continue to support schools on stringent selection and enhanced management of staff to guard against appointment of improper persons as teachers;
- (d) the Task Force on Review of School Curriculum has submitted the review report in September 2020. The EDB has announced the main features of the direction of the reform of senior secondary Liberal Studies, and is now studying the other recommendations set out in the report, as well as to consider views from different stakeholders in society so as to decide on follow-up work prudently. Changes relating to the curriculum content and assessment, which include the reform and improvement measures to be implemented in senior secondary Liberal Studies, will be carried out by the EDB in collaboration with the relevant advisory and statutory bodies (such as the Curriculum Development Council and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority);
- (e) promote national security education in schools to cultivate among students a correct understanding of the concepts of national security through relevant subjects and learning activities inside and outside classroom; provide guidelines as well as teacher training and resource materials to schools on school administration and education to facilitate

school personnel and students to understand and comply with the National Security Law; and work with post-secondary institutions to promote national security education at the post-secondary level; and

- (f) launch a public consultation in late-2020 on the proposed legislative amendments to the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320), following the recommendation of the Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education.

B. Primary and Secondary Education

(i) Strengthening national education and implementing national security education

4. Enhancing students' understanding of the history of our country, Chinese culture and development of our country as well as deepening Constitution and Basic Law education in schools form the basis for developing students' sense of national identity and national security. In tandem with the learning and teaching of Chinese History and History subjects, the EDB will provide students with opportunities for going on Mainland study tours which tie in with the curriculum. Primary and secondary students will also be encouraged to learn more about Chinese classic sayings and literature. Students will develop virtues and cultural recognition through learning the essence of Chinese culture. Through diversified activities, the EDB will enable primary and secondary students to gain a comprehensive understanding of the development of our country, the Constitution and the Basic Law, the implementation of "one country, two systems" and the importance of national security; to respect and uphold the symbols of the country such as the national flag and the national anthem; and to cultivate students' positive values of abiding by the law and their sense of national identity.

5. National security education is inseparable from national education. The fundamentals of national security education are to develop in students a sense of belonging to the country, an affection for the Chinese people, a sense of national identity, as well as an awareness of and a sense of responsibility for safeguarding national security. In tandem with the implementation of the National Security Law, the EDB will continue to adopt a "multi-pronged and co-ordinated" approach and support schools in promoting national education and national security education within and beyond the school curriculum through updating the curriculum, developing learning and teaching resources, providing training for teachers, as well as organising student activities and exchange programmes, thereby guiding students to clearly understand the inseparable relationship

between our country and Hong Kong, and the importance of the National Security Law in implementing “one country, two systems” and ensuring the development and stability of Hong Kong. The EDB will provide curriculum documents/guidelines within this school year to enable schools to build on their implementation of the Constitution and Basic Law education to promote national security education holistically through various subjects and learning activities within and beyond lessons at the primary and secondary levels according to students’ cognitive abilities.

(ii) Senior secondary Liberal Studies

6. The controversies over Liberal Studies have never ceased in the society. Having holistically considered the recommendations of the Task Force and in response to the concerns in the society, the EDB has decided to, in accordance with the aims and objectives of the curriculum, simplify the curriculum content, establish a sound foundation of knowledge, refine the teaching materials and assessment arrangement, as well as rename the subject, with a view to creating space for students to learn in a focused way which is in their best interests. The main features are listed below –

- (a) keep the subject compulsory for public assessment;
- (b) mark the public exam result as a pass or a fail to release examination pressure;
- (c) state clear the important learning concepts involved in the curriculum to strengthen the coverage of knowledge, so as to build a solid knowledge base for students;
- (d) reorganise and reduce the curriculum content, including lesson time, to cover about half of the original, so as to free up space for student learning;
- (e) remove “independent Enquiry Studies” to reduce the workload of teachers and students;
- (f) attach importance to cultivating students' positive values and attitudes, sense of national identity, and their learning about national development, the Constitution and the Basic Law education and the rule of law;
- (g) make use of important issues concerning Hong Kong, our country and

the world over to broaden students' international perspectives, their ability to connect the knowledge of different disciplines, and their critical thinking skills for making rational analysis on contemporary topics;

- (h) provide Mainland study opportunities for students to gain a first-hand understanding of our country and its developments; and
- (i) put in place a Recommended Textbook List for the subject.

7. The EDB will, in accordance with the principle of “Led by Professionals”, continue to follow up with the Curriculum Development Council and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority on the details of the relevant changes, including the curriculum content and detailed arrangement for public examinations. The EDB will also communicate with the universities to explore and implement the arrangement to bridge the subject with the universities' admission. The EDB will announce the detailed arrangements to the school sector as soon as practicable after they have been confirmed. We hope that the entire education sector can cooperate to promote the positive development of the subject, so as to implement the changes as soon as possible. Students who are currently studying senior secondary Liberal Studies will continue their original study and assessment arrangements. As for the recommendations in the Task Force's report involving other school curriculums, we will also announce the way forward as soon as practicable.

(iii) e-Learning

8. Under the epidemic, education has to face the "new normal". Schools may need to suspend face-to-face classes from time to time. Based on the development of the “Strategy on Information Technology in Education” over the past two decades, teachers' teaching and student's learning are no longer confined in classrooms. There are more diversified learning and teaching modes, including e-learning. Hardware equipment may be a problem for students with financial needs. In this connection, the Government has already, as a matter of urgency, provided subsidy through the Community Care Fund¹, so that schools could purchase mobile computer devices for primary and secondary students with financial needs to practise e-learning. In the 2020/21 school year, it is estimated that about 100 000 students from some 800 schools would benefit from the Programme, which is three times of the total beneficiaries in the 2018/19 and

¹ The Government has been implementing the 3-year Assistance Programme “Community Care Fund Assistance Programme - Provision of Subsidy to Needy Primary and Secondary Students for Purchasing Mobile Computer Devices to Facilitate the Practice of e-Learning” since the 2018/19 school year to relief the financial burden of low-income families due to the development of e-learning in schools.

2019/20 school years. On the other hand, the EDB also issued a circular this month for schools to apply a one-off top-up grant for purchasing portable WiFi routers and mobile data cards, so as to enhance the support for primary and secondary students with financial needs to practice e-learning at home.

9. Besides, the Government continues to encourage schools to actively apply for the funding of the Quality Education Fund under its priority themes and the Dedicated Funding Programme for Publicly-funded Schools to support e-learning and blended mode of learning and teaching; and to strengthen the assistance to schools and teachers under the new normal. Moreover, the Policy Address this year has proposed that the Government will earmark \$2 billion under the Quality Education Fund to launch a three-year programme to assist schools to continue to implement blended mode of learning and teaching to ensure that students with limited economic means have equal opportunity to enjoy quality education under the new normal. In particular, we will earmark about \$1.3 billion for schools to purchase mobile computer devices for loan to the needy students, and about \$130 million for the provision of portable WiFi routers and mobile data cards for students who are unable to acquire appropriate fixed network services because of their living environment. In addition, we will set aside \$500 million for supporting e-learning initiatives, including in the 2020/21 school year, to collaborate with the Hong Kong Education City Limited to explore and develop a more comprehensive and user-friendly teaching resources sharing platform to optimize the use of learning and teaching resources and encourage teachers to share quality teaching resources.

(iv) Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs

10. The EDB will strengthen the support for aided special schools, and allow flexibility in the appointment of staff to meet the needs of school operation and students. Specifically, from the 2021/22 school year, we will (i) upgrade the ranks of occupational therapists and physiotherapists in special schools; (ii) create a nursing officer rank and schools can choose to appoint nurses with psychiatric training; (iii) provide schools for children with mild intellectual disability with school bus driver posts, and improve the rank of school bus drivers in special schools; and (iv) allow special schools with vacancies in the posts of teacher assistant, cook, school bus driver and watchman to opt for cash grants in order to recruit corresponding temporary auxiliary staff. The aforementioned measures will facilitate appointment and retention of professional and auxiliary staff in special schools.

(v) Provision of New Teaching Facilities

11. The Government will continue to improve the teaching and learning

environment of public sector schools by building new school premises or providing for in-situ expansion. At present, a total of 10 public sector school projects are at the construction stage, whereas another 23 projects are under planning (including two special schools in Kowloon Tong, of which one has boarding facilities).

(vi) Promotion of Applied Learning

12. The Government will further promote Applied Learning as a valued senior secondary elective subject. Various support measures, including providing students with subsidies and more diversified courses, offering Applied Learning courses early at secondary 4, relaxing the subsidy for students taking Applied Learning as the fourth elective subject, and providing Junior Taster Programmes of Applied Learning, etc., will be adopted to broaden students' learning areas and experiences, facilitate their all-round development so that they are better prepared for further studies and work.

C. Post-secondary Education

13. Talent is a key element of innovation and technology (I&T) development. Apart from constantly stepping up efforts in nurturing local talents, Hong Kong must stay competitive in attracting global talents. The Innovation and Technology Bureau and the EDB will launch a Global STEM Professorship Scheme to enhance support for the University Grant Committee (UGC)-funded universities to attract up to 100 internationally renowned professors in STEM-related disciplines and their teams to work in Hong Kong so as to enable our universities to scale new heights in I&T teaching and research activities. The estimated funding implication is \$2 billion. Moreover, we intend to commence a review on sub-degree education in December 2020.

D. Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET)

14. The Government has all along been committed to promoting the development of VPET. We will proactively follow up on the recommendations made by the Task Force on Promotion of VPET to the Government in January 2020, and will work closely with the Steering Committee on Promotion of VPET and Qualifications Framework established in September 2020, with a view to further promoting VPET in an innovative and coordinated manner.

15. The Government launched a pilot scheme in the 2020/21 academic year, under which an external consultant is engaged to provide one-stop professional

service on VPET for teachers of the selected secondary schools, in order to enhance the promotion of VPET in secondary education. The Government will also encourage parent-teacher associations (PTAs) and federations of PTAs to organise more VPET promotion activities to strengthen parent education and facilitate parents' acceptance of their children's decisions to pursue VPET pathways. Moreover, we intend to launch a pilot project on applied degrees in December 2020.

On-going Initiatives

A. Kindergarten (KG) Education

16. Since the implementation of the new KG education policy from the 2017/18 school year, about 90% of the KGs joining the new scheme (Scheme-KG) and offering half-day programmes are free of charge in the four school years. The tuition fees of Scheme-KGs offering whole-day and long whole-day programmes are also at a low level with the additional subsidies provided by the Government. The median tuition fees per installment in the 2020/21 school years is around \$860. Needy families can apply for fee remission and a grant to defray the school-related expenses.

17. Under the new policy, we continue to enhance the quality of KG education in various aspects:

- (a) Professional development of principals and teachers: starting from the 2018/19 school year, all principals and teachers of Scheme-KGs must participate in continuous professional development activities so as to enhance their professional competence.
- (b) Strengthen support for students with developmental needs and non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students: starting from the 2018/19 school year, the EDB sets training targets² to cater for the diverse needs of students in Scheme-KGs, and provides a supply teacher grant to facilitate Scheme-KGs arranging teachers to attend the specified recognised training courses on supporting students with developmental needs and NCS students. Besides, starting from the 2019/20 school year, the EDB provides a grant for Scheme-KGs to enhance appropriate support, thereby assisting NCS students in learning Chinese, fostering a diversified culture and building an inclusive environment.

² To cater for students with developmental needs, each Scheme-KG should have at least one teacher completed the basic course as recognised by EDB by the 2020/21 school year. For supporting NCS students, each Scheme-KG having admitted NCS students (regardless of the number) should have at least one teacher completed the basic course as recognised by EDB by the 2020/21 school year.

- (c) Quality Review (QR): all Scheme-KGs have used the refined performance indicators for QR starting from the 2018/19 school year. Starting from the 2018/19 school year, both the Chinese and English version of the QR reports were uploaded onto the EDB website for public information to enhance the transparency of QR.
- (d) Parent education: we have rolled out a parent education framework³ for KGs, encouraging KGs to draw reference from it and organise school-based parent education programmes. We will continue to offer relevant programmes on a territory-wide basis.
- (e) Teachers' salaries: starting from the 2018/19 school year, we adjust the salary-related subsidies on a school year basis according to the annual civil service pay adjustment. We have also extended the two-year tide-over grant (2017/18 and 2018/19 school years) for three more years up to the 2021/22 school year. In addition, we have undertaken to use the data of the three school years from 2017/18 to 2019/20 as the basis to explore the feasibility of introducing a salary scale for KG teachers. Having collected the data concerned initially, we have started to review the implementation of the new policy and consult the stakeholders starting from mid-2019. Apart from the issues on salary arrangements for KG teachers, we would also review the operation of KGs, including the administrative work, financial management, enhancing support to students with diverse needs, supply of KG premises, development of resource centres, etc.
- (f) Improve school environment: two 2-year Pilot Schemes on Renovation Grant and Relocation Grant are launched in the 2020/21 school year. To help Scheme-KGs improve the school environment and alleviate their financial burden in improving school environment, each successful applicant for Renovation Grant will receive a grant of \$0.5 million. In addition, to encourage Scheme-KGs to move to premises at a more reasonable rent or of a size and environment that better suit their needs, each successful applicant for Relocation Grant will receive a grant of \$1.5 million.
- (g) Enhance school websites: the EDB provides a one-off Website Enhancement Grant to all Scheme-KGs in the 2020/21 school year to encourage them to provide more information in Chinese and English, enrich webpage contents, and enhance the design for easy access to school information.

³ The framework covers three major domains and eight themes, such as “interface between kindergarten and primary education”, “learning through play” and “do not compare children with each other”.

B. Primary and Secondary Education

(i) Enhancing School Facilities

18. EDB has all along put in place various measures to improve the teaching and learning environment and facilities according to individual schools' needs. Since the summer of 2017, we have progressively taken forward improvement works for the 24 primary schools operating in “matchbox-style premises”⁴ with a focus on addressing the common problems arising from the unique design features of such premises. Relevant works have been completed in 2019. In addition, we are also taking forward feasible minor conversion works for such individual schools with a view to improving the flexible use of existing space in their premises.

19. Moreover, the EDB has reserved an additional \$1 billion under the Capital Works Reserve Fund for the implementation of a time-limited minor works programme for some 600 aided schools operating in premises built according to standards prevailing at the time of construction. Minor conversion works, such as converting or altering internal partitions/spaces, will be carried out to enhance schools' flexibility in using existing space of their premises, thereby improving the teaching environment. Individual schools may submit conversion applications to the EDB in 2019 and 2020 in light of the conditions of their premises and school-based needs. Application results for the 2019 works programme were announced in end-March 2020, and the works have commenced since the summer break in 2020. We are assessing the applications for the 2020 works programme and will announce the results in April 2021.

20. We will also continue to review the vacant school premises and reserved school sites under the EDB, and expedite the allocation of suitable premises for reprovisioning purpose through the existing school allocation mechanism. We will also take forward redevelopment/extension projects for schools having regard to individual circumstances, technical feasibility, availability of resources, etc. From 2015 to end September 2020, the EDB has allocated through School Allocation Exercises a total of 20 school sites/school premises for reprovisioning / extension purpose. Among the allocatees, nine were primary schools operating in “matchbox-style premises”. In parallel, we will continue to provide resources for carrying out annual major repairs and emergency repairs works for schools. The estimated non-recurrent subvention for such works is about \$1.56 billion in 2020-21, an increase of around 4% over that of 2019-20.

⁴ When the EDB commenced the said improvement works programme in July 2017, there were 28 primary schools operating in “matchbox-style premises”. Four of the primary schools have been allocated with new or vacant school premises for reprovisioning purpose under the 2014 and 2017 School Allocation Exercises respectively. Therefore, improvement works were taken forward in the remaining 24 schools.

21. Besides, to create a better learning environment, starting from the 2018/19 school year, we have provided a recurrent Air-conditioning Grant for all public sector schools to cover the daily expenses relating to the air-conditioning systems in eligible teaching facilities. The air-conditioning grant is also included in the unit subsidy rates of Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools. Starting from the summer break in 2018, the EDB has progressively taken forward the air-conditioning installation works at the eligible facilities without such provision. All air-conditioning installation works have been completed in 2019-20.

(ii) Stabilising Teaching Force and Enhancing Teachers' Professional Roles

22. The EDB has devoted significant resources in the past few years to implement various initiatives to increase regular teaching posts, stabilise the teaching force and enhance teachers' professional roles. These include increasing the teacher-to-class ratio for public sector schools by 0.1 across the board with effect from the 2017/18 school year, implementing the all-graduate teaching force policy in the 2019/20 school year to enhance teachers' professional roles, allowing secondary schools with surplus teachers arising from the reduction of Secondary One classes from the 2013/14 to 2017/18 school years to apply for extension of the retention period of the surplus teachers to the 2021/22 school year, thus maintaining a stable school environment, and implementing targeted relief measures in primary schools with effect from the 2019/20 school year, which consist of toleration of redundant teachers arising from class reduction due to the decline of Primary One student population up to a maximum of three school years and, starting from Primary One, relaxation of the criteria for approving classes from 25 students to 23 students per class in case of class reduction in headcount while the adjusted basis will be extended progressively to Primary Six together with that cohort of students. On the premise of stabilising the teaching force and facilitating the sustainable development of schools, we will continue to discuss with primary and secondary schools measures to cope with the fluctuation of student-age population.

(iii) Enhancing the Professional Development of Teachers and Principals

23. The Government has provided a non-recurrent funding of \$500 million to support suitable projects under the macro-strategic plan of T-excel@hk developed under the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals (COTAP) and to implement relevant measures to enhance the professional development of teachers and principals starting from the 2018/19 school year. Teachers, principals and students of primary and secondary schools, kindergartens and special schools would all benefit from the initiative.

Since the 2018/19 school year, the EDB has deployed the funding to implement various professional development programmes under the T-excel@hk initiative, for example, Sabbatical Leave Scheme for Professional Development of Teachers and Principals, Professional Study Tour for Teachers, and Scholarship for Teachers, to create space for professional development of teachers and principals, broaden their professional horizons and promote the culture of professional exchange. For recommendations made by the Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers which submitted its report in March 2019, under the steer of COTAP, professional training programmes have been formulated for establishing the professional ladder for teachers. Starting from the 2020/21 school year, EDB has provided structured training for newly-joined teachers and in-service teachers, and enhanced the training requirements for teachers aspiring for promotion. The EDB would deploy the aforementioned non-recurrent funding of \$500 million for the implementation of these training programmes.

24. To create space for teachers to enhance their professional development, broaden their horizons and enable them to grasp the latest trends of education development outside Hong Kong, the Government launched a three-year pilot scheme on a paid non-local study leave scheme for secondary school teachers (the Scheme) in the 2017/18 school year. The third cohort of the Scheme has been postponed to the 2020/21 school year due to COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, about 150 teachers from over 110 secondary schools have joined the Scheme. They have joined respective programmes in Finland, Australia, the United Kingdom and Singapore respectively. The themes include “Interdisciplinary Learning & Entrepreneurship Education”, “Catering for Students with Special Educational Needs”, “STEM Education” and “Assessment Literacy”. The participants have shared their learning outcomes and good practices within their schools and the larger professional community through various channels. Building on the experience gained from the three-year pilot scheme and positive response from the education sector, the EDB will continue to implement the Scheme. Preparation for the new cohort is underway. Further details will be announced in due course.

(iv) Curriculum Development and Relevant Resources

(a) Chinese History and Chinese Culture

25. The EDB has implemented Chinese History as an independent compulsory subject at the junior secondary level since the 2018/19 school year. The revised curriculum of Chinese History at the junior secondary level has also been implemented progressively starting from Secondary One in the 2020/21 school year so that students can learn Chinese history in a holistic and systematic manner. To further promote Chinese history education, the EDB will continue

to adopt diversified strategies, including strengthening teacher training, developing learning and teaching resources, and organising different types of student activities as well as providing Mainland study tours, which tie in with the curriculum of the Chinese History and History subjects. Schools can use the “Life-wide Learning Grant” and the “One-off Grant for the Promotion of Chinese History and Culture” to organise diversified activities related to Chinese history to deepen students’ understanding of Chinese history and culture.

(b) STEM Education

26. In the past few years, we have progressively implemented the recommended strategies set out in the Report on “Promotion of STEM Education – Unleashing Potential in Innovation” issued in late 2016 for promoting STEM education, enhancing the ability of primary and secondary students to integrate and apply knowledge and skills; enabling students to solve problems through reflection and practice; as well as unleashing students’ potential in science and technology. Schools have been progressively implementing STEM education. Building on the existing foundation, we will further enhance various support measures, including ongoing curriculum renewal and launching a series of professional development programmes to meet teachers’ needs, as well as the ongoing provision of a variety of learning and teaching resources for schools, in order to enhance students’ information literacy and skills in using information technology. In addition, we will continue organising large-scale learning activities in collaboration with post-secondary institutions and other relevant organisations to offer quality learning opportunities which further consolidate student learning in STEM-related areas. Regarding the provision of resources, the EDB has been providing the Life-wide Learning Grant to schools starting from the 2019/20 school year. Schools can use this new Grant to enhance school-based STEM education through organising more out-of-classroom experiential learning activities. Besides, schools may apply for the Quality Education Fund, including the “Dedicated Funding Programme for Publicly-funded Schools” to implement school-based STEM education.

(c) Constitution and Basic Law Education

27. Legislated and effected by the Constitution, the Basic Law is a constitutional document of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and closely related to citizens’ daily lives. It is also the cornerstone of “one country, two systems”. Hence, enabling teachers and students to have a correct understanding of the Constitution and the Basic Law is only right and natural and it is the intrinsic duty of schools to implement Constitution and Basic Law education. All along, the EDB has been updating the curricula, providing teacher training, developing learning and teaching resources, organising Mainland

visits for teachers and students, and student activities in support of schools for implementing Constitution and Basic Law education. Since 2015, the EDB has been organising the “Territory-wide Inter-school Basic Law Competition” on an annual basis. Six rounds of competition have been held since then with over 70 000 participation times. The EDB will continue to adopt a “multi-pronged and co-ordinated” approach to support schools in promoting the Constitution and the Basic Law inside and outside classroom, as well as to deepen students’ understanding of “one country, two systems”.

(d) Diversified Life-wide Learning

28. The EDB has provided public sector and DSS schools with the Life-wide Learning Grant (LWL Grant) starting from the 2019/20 school year, with an annual provision of about \$900 million, to support schools to take forward, on the present foundation, life-wide learning with enhanced efforts. Students can gain knowledge, master skills and develop positive values and attitudes through experiential learning, thereby developing their capacity for lifelong learning and achieving the goal of whole-person development. Taking into account the learning goals, curriculum objectives, school-based development needs as well as stages of students’ mental development, schools can make use of the LWL Grant to organise diversified experiential learning activities such as visiting exhibitions, field trips and community service. This will serve not only to arouse learning interest and promote student learning, but also to help students develop positive values and attitudes. We will continue to organise related professional development programmes and study tours to support teachers in promoting life-wide learning.

(e) Promotion of Reading

29. The EDB continues to implement various measures to support schools in promoting reading. In the 2018/19 school year, the “Pilot Scheme on the Promotion of Reading Grant for Kindergartens” was implemented, and a new grant for promoting reading has been disbursed to all public sector primary and secondary schools since then. In the light of the success of the Pilot Scheme, a recurrent grant for the promotion of reading in KGs has been disbursed to all Scheme-KGs starting from the 2019/20 school year. The amount of grant for each primary and secondary school is based on the number of approved classes. For example, the amount of grant for a secondary and a primary school with 24 classes is about \$62,000 and \$31,000 respectively. For KGs, the amount of grant being disbursed is based on the total number of students admitted in K1 to K3 classes. The grant rates are divided into three tiers and are set at about \$10,000, \$15,000 and \$20,000 respectively. In the 2019/20 school year, the EDB launched the “Gift Book Pilot Scheme (2020)” to offer free printed books to all

primary and secondary students in the public sector (including special schools) and DSS schools. Schools are encouraged to organise related reading activities to let students share reading experiences. In addition, we will continue to organise in collaboration with different organisations a variety of activities for promoting reading, and encourage schools to continue to promote reading, to create a more ideal reading atmosphere as well as to further enhance students' reading interest and develop in them a good reading habit.

(v) Exchange Programmes

30. The EDB has introduced various measures for primary and secondary students to participate in exchange programmes so as to broaden their horizon:

- (a) Mainland exchange programmes: the EDB continues to organise Mainland exchange programmes or subsidise those organised by schools so as to provide primary and secondary students with life-wide learning experiences aiming to broaden their horizons, deepen their understanding of the history and culture of our country, appreciate and inherit the distinctive Chinese culture and national spirit as well as strengthen their national identity. Having regard to the development strategies of our country, the EDB will enhance the exchange programmes to enable students to gain first-hand experience of our country's latest development and reflect on the opportunities brought about through visiting the Belt and Road related provinces and cities, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and enterprises in the I&T sector. In the 2020/21 school year, we will continue to provide over 100 000 exchange quotas which are sufficient for every student to join at least one Mainland exchange programme in the respective primary and secondary stages.
- (b) Sister schools: to further promote the professional interflows and multi-faceted collaboration of Hong Kong-Mainland sister schools and encourage more Hong Kong schools to join the Sister School Scheme, with effect from the 2018/19 school year, the EDB has provided recurrent grant and professional support to public sector, DSS primary and secondary schools as well as special schools that have formed sister schools with their counterparts in the Mainland. The amount of grant for the 2020/21 school year is about \$156,000 per school.

(vi) Support to students

31. The EDB continues to provide students with different support measures, so as to facilitate the whole-person and all-round development of students.

- (a) After-school Learning and Support: as regards after-school activities (including learning support) for needy students in primary and secondary schools, we will continue to provide schools and non-governmental organisations with funding to increase these students' opportunity to participate in such activities, and to enhance the effectiveness of these activities through the synergy achieved, so as to facilitate the whole-person and all-round development of students.
- (b) Student Activities Support Fund: the Government set up the \$2.5 billion Student Activities Support Fund in early 2019 to generate investment return for the EDB to provide public sector and DSS schools with the Student Activities Support Grant (SAS Grant) starting from the 2019/20 school year. The SAS Grant provides support for primary and secondary students with financial needs to participate in out-of-classroom learning activities organised/recognised by schools. The amount of the SAS Grant to be disbursed to each participating school is based on the total number of its students receiving the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance or the full grant under the School Textbook Assistance Scheme in the respective school year. In the 2020/21 school year, the provision of the SAS Grant is about \$80 million.
- (c) Provision of Student Grant for Day School Students: the Government announced in August 2019 the provision of a one-off student grant of \$2,500 for each secondary day-school, primary school and kindergarten student in the 2019/20 school year to alleviate parents' financial burden in defraying education expenses. The provision of the student grant of \$2,500 has been regularised starting from the 2020/21 school year. The initiative involves an annual expenditure of about 2.25 billion benefitting about 900 000 students.

(vii) Strengthening Life Planning and Enhancing Business and School Partnership

32. The EDB will continue to strengthen support for schools in implementing life planning education through various measures, including provision of the Career and Life Planning Grant for public sector schools with the option for schools to turn the Career and Life Planning Grant into regular teaching posts, enhancement of on-line resources, conduct of advisory visits, provision of diversified professional development activities for teachers, promotion of district-based development networks, etc.

33. The EDB will also continue to encourage more business entities and

organisations to participate in the “Business-School Partnership Programme” (BSPP) and provide career exploration activities and work experience opportunities for students to help them gain an initial understanding of the workplace. Since the 2014/15 school year, over 380 partners have joined the BSPP, offering more than 5 900 career exploration activities and benefitting more than 1 170 000 student participants. To further mobilise different sectors of the community to participate in work experience programmes and nurture a culture of supporting young people for better life planning, the EDB has launched the Work Experience Movement (WEM) since the 2016/17 school year. Up to now, more than 220 commercial and community organisations have participated in the WEM and offered over 5 800 places of work experience quota for students, covering more than 30 trades and industries.

(viii) Quality Education Fund

34. The Quality Education Fund Steering Committee, in response to the invitation of the Government, has set aside \$3 billion for the implementation of the Dedicated Funding Programme for Publicly-funded Schools (the Programme) for application by public sector secondary and primary schools (including special schools), DSS schools and kindergartens having joined the kindergarten education scheme for launching school-based curriculum and/or student support measures, as well as related school improvement works and/or procurement of supplies. The Programme is to be implemented for four school years starting from 2018/19 and there are two calls for submission of applications by schools every year. Since the launch of the Programme, the Quality Education Fund has received a total of over 1 400 applications with the amount of funding sought over \$1.3 billion. As at November 2020, over 1 200 applications have been processed. Among the applications assessed, over 90% have been granted with funding support with the approved funding amounting to over \$700 million and benefitting more than 600 schools. This initiative has provided schools with more possibilities in enhancing learning and teaching and is well received by the school sector.

(ix) Parent Education

35. As parents play a vital role in the growth and learning of their children, the EDB attaches great importance to parent education. We have been progressively implementing the measures recommended by the Task Force on Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education. Among others, starting from the 2019/20 school year, we have increased the subsidy to PTAs of schools and Federations of PTAs in districts for organising more school-based and community-based parent education programmes, involving additional recurrent funding of about \$30 million. Besides, we have launched the territory-wide

Positive Parent Campaign to promote positive parent education on a continuous basis aiming to raise parents' awareness on the importance of happy and healthy development of children and to strengthen the positive mindset among parents in nurturing their children through a series of activities.

(x) Enhancing the Development of Gifted Education

36. To further enhance the development of gifted education, the Government injected \$800 million into the Gifted Education Fund in 2019 (\$1.6 billion so far) for generating investment income to support the service enhancement of the Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education and to implement the measures proposed by the Advisory Committee on Gifted Education, including encouraging different organisations/ post-secondary institutions to provide quality off-school advanced learning programmes for gifted students. Such programmes have been launched and will continually be offered.

C. Post-Secondary and VPET

(i) Support the development of the post-secondary education sector

37. The Government has introduced various measures to support the development of the post-secondary education sector, strengthen research capacity, and facilitate the diversified development of students:

- (a) the UGC implemented the Targeted Taught Postgraduate Programmes Fellowships Scheme on a pilot basis for five cohorts starting from the 2020/21 academic year. For each cohort, fellowships will be provided to a maximum of 1 000 meritorious local students enrolled in the targeted taught postgraduate programmes, with a view to attracting more meritorious local students to study in priority areas that are beneficial to the development of Hong Kong, and to encouraging universities to offer more innovative and interdisciplinary programmes that are beneficial to the society.
- (b) the Government has injected \$20 billion into the Research Endowment Fund for substantially increasing the funding of the Research Grants Council (RGC). The RGC launched the Research Matching Grant Scheme (MGS) in August 2019 and implemented three regular fellowship schemes in the 2019/20 academic year.
- (c) the three-year Eighth MGS was launched in July 2019, providing a total of \$2.5 billion of matching grants for the ten publicly-funded post-

secondary institutions.

- (d) the Hostel Development Fund (HDF) was established in July 2018 and a one-off grant of \$10.3 billion in total has been disbursed to six universities. Among the 15 hostel projects covered by the HDF, construction works of seven projects have commenced.
- (e) the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme has been regularised since the 2019/20 academic year to subsidise up to 100 outstanding local students per cohort in their pursuit of undergraduate and postgraduate studies at world-renowned universities outside Hong Kong, with a view to nurturing more top talent in various fields to support the development of Hong Kong.

(ii) Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education

38. Following the recommendation of the Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education, the EDB revamped the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education with effect from November 2019 with a strengthened role and functions to offer strategic and policy advice on the development of the self-financing post-secondary education sector, including measures to facilitate, support, and co-ordinate the development of the self-financing sector in its operation, quality, and governance. In addition, the EDB intends to implement the \$1.26 billion Enhancement and Start-up Grant Scheme for Self-financing Post-secondary Education in December 2020 with a view to providing targeted financial support for self-financing post-secondary institutions to develop post-secondary programmes that meet market needs but require high start-up costs, as well as develop their distinct character and niche areas.

(iii) Support for Students Pursuing Self-financing Post-secondary Education

39. We will continue to provide support for students pursuing self-financing post-secondary education programmes through the Non-means-tested Subsidy Scheme for Self-financing Undergraduate Studies in Hong Kong (NMTSS) and the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors (SSSDP). In the 2019/20 academic year, about 16 000 students pursuing full-time locally accredited local and non-local self-financing undergraduate (including top-up degree) programmes in Hong Kong offered by eligible institutions benefited from the NMTSS; and in the same academic year, about 7 900 and 2 500 students pursuing designated full-time locally accredited self-financing undergraduate and sub-degree programmes respectively which are in selected disciplines benefited from the SSSDP.

(iv) Promotion of VPET

40. To further enhance VPET, the Government will continue to implement the Training and Support Scheme through the Vocational Training Council (VTC) to provide 1 200 regularised training places every year, with a view to enabling trainees to join industries which require specialised skills under the “Earn and Learn” model. In addition, the Government will subsidise trainees under the Training and Support Scheme to take part in study and exchange programmes outside Hong Kong, allowing them to attend short-term skills and practical courses as well as visit institutions/enterprises in those places, with a view to facilitating skills exchange and broadening their exposure, for three years from the 2020/21 academic year.

D. Strengthening the Support for Students with Diverse Needs

(i) Supporting NCS Students in Learning Chinese

41. Starting from the 2014/15 school year, the EDB has implemented a series of measures to step up the support for NCS students in learning the Chinese language to facilitate their integration into the community. The support measures include the implementation of the Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework (“Learning Framework”) in primary and secondary schools in alignment with the mainstream Chinese Language curriculum to help NCS students overcome the difficulties in learning Chinese from the perspective of second language learners, and the introduction of Applied Learning Chinese (for NCS students) courses at the senior secondary levels as a subject for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination to provide an additional channel for NCS students to obtain a recognised alternative qualification in Chinese Language with a view to preparing them for further studies and career pursuits. Since the introduction of the “Learning Framework”, the EDB has been soliciting teachers’ views so that refinements can be made to the “Learning Framework”. In January 2019, the EDB revised the “Learning Framework” in light of the views of teachers and uploaded the revised “Learning Framework” onto the EDB webpage for teachers’ reference and use. In parallel, relevant assessment tools and teaching resources have been updated accordingly. In addition, the EDB has been conducting relevant professional development programmes to enhance teachers’ understanding of the “Learning Framework”.

42. To facilitate the implementation of the “Learning Framework” and creation of an inclusive learning environment in schools, starting from the

2014/15 school year, all ordinary schools admitting 10 or more NCS students are provided with an additional funding ranging from \$0.8 million to \$1.5 million per year depending on the number of NCS students admitted. The number of the schools concerned has increased from 173 in the 2014/15 school year to 252 in the 2019/20 school year. During the period from the 2014/15 school year to the 2019/20 school year, ordinary schools admitting less than 10 NCS students may also apply for an additional funding of \$50,000 per year on a need basis for organising diversified modes of after-school support for learning Chinese to consolidate their NCS students' learning in an immersed Chinese language environment. The number of the schools concerned has increased from 58 in the 2014/15 school year to 214 in the 2019/20 school year. Besides, special schools admitting 6 to 9 NCS students and offering an ordinary school curriculum, and special schools admitting 6 or more NCS students but not offering or without any NCS students taking an ordinary school curriculum are provided with an additional funding of \$650,000 per year. The funding model for special schools admitting 10 or more NCS students and with NCS students taking an ordinary school curriculum is the same as that for ordinary schools mentioned above. The number of special schools receiving the additional funding mentioned above remained to be around 25 in the past five school years. As regards special schools admitting less than 6 NCS students, they are also provided with an additional funding of \$50,000 per year on a need basis to offer after-school support programmes in learning Chinese. The number of schools concerned has increased from 8 in the 2014/15 school year to 15 in the 2019/20 school year. Starting from the 2020/21 school year, all schools admitting a relatively small number of NCS students (i.e. ordinary schools admitting less than 10 NCS students and special schools admitting less than 6 NCS students) are provided with a new two-tiered subsidy. The amount of the additional funding has been increased from \$50,000 per year to \$0.15 million or \$0.3 million per year. A dedicated team has also been set up to ensure that the schools concerned make optimal use of the enhanced funding to support their NCS students' learning of the Chinese language. The EDB will keep on monitoring and support for schools admitting NCS students.

43. The EDB also provides learning and teaching resources, teaching materials, and professional support services for schools to help them implement the "Learning Framework". The "Professional Enhancement Grant Scheme for Chinese Teachers (Teaching Chinese as a Second Language)" has also been extended so that more Chinese Language teachers can pursue programmes to enhance their pedagogical knowledge and skills in teaching Chinese to NCS students. We will also continue to provide support measures to primary and secondary schools admitting NCS students to facilitate the implementation of the "Learning Framework". In the three school years from 2019/20 to 2021/22, more resources have been allocated to commissioning tertiary institutions to

provide professional support services for about 200 KGs, primary and secondary schools. The non-recurrent expenditure is about \$45 million in total.

(ii) Students with SEN

44. In addition to the enhanced support for aided special schools to be implemented in the 2021/22 school year set out in paragraph 10 above, the EDB will continue to provide public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools with additional resources, professional support and teacher training to help them implement the Whole School Approach to integrated education (IE), so as to enhance the effectiveness of their support for students with special educational needs (SEN).

45. The EDB has restructured various subvented programmes for IE. Since the 2019/20 school year, the grant rate of the Learning Support Grant (LSG) for tier-3 support has been increased sharply. The LSG has also been extended to all public sector ordinary schools and schools will be provided with regular teaching posts and subsidies according to the needs of the students. Under the enhanced LSG, about 80% of the public sector ordinary schools have been provided with additional regular teaching posts.

46. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, the EDB has provided all public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools with an additional post of special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) to support IE. Besides, in about 80% of the schools admitting a comparatively large number of students with SEN, the SENCO post has already been upgraded to promotion rank.

47. To further support NCS students with SEN to adapt to school life and make smooth transition through different learning stages, the EDB provides the Grant for Supporting NCS Students with SEN to public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools admitting NCS students with SEN from the 2019/20 school year. This enables schools to strengthen the emotional, communication and social support for the students concerned.

48. DSS schools will also benefit from the enhancement measures mentioned in paragraphs 46 and 47 above. Other IE measures will continue to be included in calculation of the DSS unit subsidy.

49. With a view to enhancing the support for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), since the 2020/21 school year, the EDB has been assisting public sector ordinary schools to implement a three-tier intervention model through multi-disciplinary, evidence-based and whole school involvement, in assisting the students with ASD to develop emotional regulation, social communication and

adaptive learning skills. It is anticipated that by the 2023/24 school year, about 400 schools will have become competent to implement this intervention model. Besides, we will also promote collaboration between the schools and non-governmental organisations in conducting small group training on social adaptive skills pitched at tier-2 support. Overall speaking, about 10 000 students with ASD will benefit from these initiatives.

50. Starting from the 2017/18 school year, the LSG for public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools has covered students with mental illness in order to help schools cater for the students' learning, social, emotional and behavioural needs. Besides, we have been providing teachers with "Professional Development Programme for Mental Health", which includes elementary and in-depth training, in order to enhance their capacity to identify and support students with mental health needs. As of the 2019/20 school year, about 730 teachers and 640 designated teachers of public sector ordinary schools completed elementary and in-depth training respectively under the Programme.

51. The Government has launched the "Student Mental Health Support Scheme" since the 2016/17 school year by setting up multidisciplinary teams in schools. The core members of each multi-disciplinary team include a psychiatric nurse, a designated teacher and a school social worker, all of whom work closely with psychiatrists, educational psychologists, clinical psychologists and occupational therapists, etc. to enhance medical-educational-social collaboration among different professionals in providing support services to students with mental health needs at the school-based platform. The Scheme has been extended to cover 150 schools in the 2020/21 school year. The Government will continue making reference to the results of the evaluation study when consider how to provide better support services for students with mental health needs.

52. Since the 2016/17 school year, the School-based Educational Psychology Service (SBEPS) has covered all public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools. From the same school year, the educational psychologist (EP) to school ratio has been progressively enhanced to 1:4 (Enhanced SBEPS) in public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools admitting comparatively large number of students with SEN, in order to support schools in providing more comprehensive and regular follow-up and intervention services to the students concerned, and strengthen preventive and supportive work. We aim at extending the Enhanced SBEPS to cover about 60% of public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools by the 2023/24 school year, while the EP to school ratio in the remaining 40% of schools will be enhanced to 1:6. In the 2020/21 school year, a total of 206 primary and secondary schools are provided with Enhanced SBEPS. In order to meet the manpower needs, local universities provide an additional of

45 EP training places in the 2019-2022 triennium as compared with the previous triennium.

53. The EDB has implemented the Enhanced School-based Speech Therapy Service in the public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools by phase starting from the 2019/20 school year to create school-based speech therapist (SBST) posts for schools. Schools form clusters to employ SBSTs to facilitate schools, teachers and parents in the domains of prevention, intervention and development to support students with speech and language impairment and students with other SEN to develop speech, language, communication and language-related learning abilities. In the 2020/21 school year, more than about 370 schools have implemented the Service. Most of the schools have formed clusters of two schools. A total of about 200 SBSTs are to be employed.

54. To improve the implementation of various measures, we will keep reviewing the IE practices in schools and listening to the views of different stakeholders.

(iii) Students in Special Schools

55. Starting from the 2017/18 school year, the EDB has provided the following aided special schools with additional teaching staff, allied health staff and resources to improve their special education services:

- (a) provision of an Assistant Primary School Master/Mistress (Curriculum Development) to aided special schools that operate one to five approved primary classes;
- (b) provision of an occupational therapist and an occupational therapist assistant to schools for children with mild intellectual disability (ID), moderate ID, visual impairment (VI) and hearing impairment (HI);
- (c) provision of a speech therapist to the school for children with VI and schools for social development; and
- (d) extension of “Additional Support Grant for Enhancing the Support for Boarders with Medical Complexity in Aided Special Schools” to day students and day student-cum-boarders with medical complexity in special schools.

56. Besides, starting from the 2016/17 school year, we have provided additional grant to schools for children with severe ID, schools for children with physical disability (PD) and the school for children with VI cum ID for employing

additional nurses and related staff to strengthen support for 24-hour ventilator-dependent students. This initiative enables the existing nurses of aided special schools to pool resources to cater for other students in need. Starting from the 2018/19 school year, apart from enhancing the provision of school social workers for aided special schools, the EDB has also enhanced the provision of school nurses for schools for children with ID and schools for children with PD, and extend the provision to the school for children with VI and the school for children with HI.

57. Starting from the 2020/21 school year, the EDB has further enhanced the staff establishment of the boarding sections in aided special schools to improve the quality of services, so that more appropriate support is provided for the boarders of these schools. Relevant enhancement measures are as follows:

- (a) upgrading the ranks of warden and assistant warden on the establishment of boarding sections with a capacity of 40 or above, and increasing the number of assistant warden and houseparent-in-charge on the establishment correspondingly to strengthen the collaboration between the management teams of boarding sections and school sections in aided special schools to provide more appropriate life skills training and counselling for boarders;
- (b) further improving Saturday and Sunday manning ratios for boarding sections so that aided special schools offering 7-day boarding service will have extra manpower to take care of their boarders; and
- (c) providing an additional grant for the boarding sections of schools for children with PD, moderate ID, severe ID and VI cum ID to employ personal care workers or hire related services.

Views Sought

58. Members are invited to note and comment on the contents of this paper.

**Education Bureau
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