

For discussion
on 18 October 2021

Legislative Council Panel on Education

2021 Policy Address Education Bureau's Policy Initiatives

The Chief Executive delivered the 2021 Policy Address on 6 October 2021. This paper sets out the major education-related initiatives in the Policy Address and the Policy Address Supplement.

2. The current-term Government attaches great importance to education. Over \$13.5 billion recurrent expenditure has been allocated in the past four years for the implementation of a series of policy measures covering the entire education system. The role of the Government in education is not merely a provider of resources, but is also a policy maker, administrator and regulator. Our vision for education is to nurture our young people into quality citizens with a sense of national identity and social responsibility, an affection for Hong Kong as well as an international perspective. To enhance the quality of education, the current-term Government has set up task forces¹ to review eight areas of education, and is implementing the recommendations of the task forces in partnership with school sponsoring bodies, schools and relevant organisations to enhance the quality of education. Meanwhile, the Education Bureau (EDB) will continuously monitor and follow up on issues involving schools and conduct of teachers, with a view to restoring Hong Kong's educational order.

New Initiatives

3. In the coming year, the EDB will step up efforts in the following areas.

¹ The eight task forces are the Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy, the Task Force on Review of Research Policy and Funding, the Task force on Review of Self-financing Post-Secondary Education, the Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers, the Task Force on Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education, the Task Force on School-based Management Policy, the Task Force on Promotion of Vocational and Professional Education and Training, and the Task Force on Review of School Curriculum.

I. Fully Implement National Education and National Security Education

4. The EDB will continue to adopt a “multi-pronged and co-ordinated” approach to enhance support for schools to implement national education and national security education within and outside the classroom, so as to enable students to understand Chinese culture, Chinese history, national affairs, the Constitution, the Basic Law and the concept of national security, as well as to cultivate students’ identity with Chinese culture and the nation, and strengthen the awareness of teachers and students of their common responsibility to safeguard national security.

Guidelines on School Administration and Education

5. The EDB has provided schools with detailed administration and education guidelines on safeguarding national security and promoting national security education. Schools are required to review current situations, formulate plans and implement relevant measures as soon as possible with a view to maintaining a safe and orderly learning environment in schools and nurturing students to become good law-abiding citizens. In the future, we will monitor and support schools on implementation of the relevant work with due regard to the reports and plans submitted by schools.

Teacher training

6. We will continuously provide holistic and systematic training for all Hong Kong teachers, including the implementation of Constitution, Basic Law and national security education in whole-school curriculum and individual subjects, on-line self-learning courses / platforms, etc. We will also organise Onsite Teacher Workshop (Workshop) for all primary and secondary schools which implement the local curriculum during the 2021/22 and 2022/23 school years. Through talks, discussions and interaction sessions in the Workshop, principals and teachers will deepen their understanding on how to enhance co-ordination and planning within and outside the classroom in facilitating the implementation of national security education. Until now, around 1 000 primary and secondary schools (over 95%) have been enrolled in the Workshop.

Curriculum renewal

7. In the promotion of national security education in schools, the EDB has released the Curriculum Framework of National Security Education in Hong Kong and 15 related national security education subject frameworks in 2021. To further promote Chinese culture, apart from the “Chinese Classic Sayings” campaign in the 2020/21 school year, the EDB has selected 93 Chinese literary

classics as recommended texts for the primary and secondary Chinese Language curricula in the 2021/22 school year to cultivate in students positive values and an affection for the nation. As for the revised Junior Secondary Chinese History curriculum, the implementation of the curriculum has been extended to Secondary 2 in the 2021/22 school year, thereby enabling students to study Chinese history in a holistic and systematic manner through lessons.

Learning and teaching resources

8. We continue to provide schools with a wider variety of learning and teaching resources, including online games and audio picture books, and a newly established web-based resource platform “National Education One-stop Portal” which covers the themes of Constitution, Basic Law and national security education, the national symbols (including the national flag, the national emblem and the national anthem), Chinese history and Chinese culture, museum learning, etc. The Quality Education Fund will actively consider the provision of the subsidy to schools for organising national education activities. We encourage schools to apply.

Multifarious activities

9. We will continue to organise diversified student activities in the 2021/22 school year to promote national education. The activities include the “Territory-wide Primary Schools Quiz Competition on Chinese History and Chinese Culture”, “Territory-wide Junior Secondary Students Quiz Competition on Chinese History”, online quiz competitions for the “National Day” and the “National Security Education Day”. The second phase of student self-learning platform of Chinese History will also be developed. In respect that the coming year will mark the important occasion of the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong’s return to the Motherland, the content of the 8th Territory-wide Inter-school Basic Law Competition will be enriched. When the epidemic situation improves, we will promptly organise Mainland exchange programmes for teachers and students, in alignment with the curriculum (including various subjects, such as Chinese History, Citizenship and Social Development, Economics, Geography).

II. Strengthen Teachers’ Professional Conduct and Training

10. The EDB will strengthen the overall management of teachers’ professional conduct. Specific measures include, starting from the 2022/23 school year, requiring public sector schools to appoint only new teachers who have passed the Basic Law Test; formulating a set of guidelines on teachers’ professional conduct and providing examples to illustrate the penalties on

misconducted teachers to help teachers to be mindful about their words and deeds and law-abiding. These guidelines will also serve as reference for the EDB in reviewing the registration status of teachers. We will seriously handle cases of teachers involving in unlawful acts or misconduct; while teachers with distinguished talents and virtues will be commended. Besides, the EDB will continue to arrange teachers to attend core training with a view to strengthening teacher training on Constitution, Basic Law, national security education, and teachers' professional conduct. We will also help teachers gain first-hand experience about the development of our country and enhance their sense of national identity through study tours to the Mainland. In tandem, we will continue to enhance collaboration with teacher education institutions with a view to further enhancing the standard and quality of pre-service training for prospective teachers. Besides, to capitalise on the manpower resources in the education sector, we propose to amend the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) to extend the retirement age of the newly-joined teaching staff in aided schools from 60 to 65. The amendment bill is expected to be introduced into the Legislative Council for scrutiny in 2022. Public consultation on the proposal had been conducted from June to September 2018 and it is generally supported by the sector.

III. Nurture Media and Information Literacy and Develop Positive Values

11. With the rapid development of information technology, besides mastering the ability to use these new technologies, students should develop media and information literacy so that they would not be easily misled by false or biased messages from different media. The EDB is now updating the learning framework on "Information Literacy Framework for Hong Kong Students", so that schools can strengthen the relevant information literacy learning elements in primary and secondary curricula, and to nurture students' ability and attitude to use information and communication technology effectively and ethically, and strengthen their critical thinking abilities, so that they can select, evaluate and understand information in various forms effectively, use information to solve problems properly, and develop their positive values, attitudes and behaviours. Besides, we will actively collaborate with other government departments and non-government organisations to organise student activities and teacher training courses, and develop learning and teaching resources. Schools can also make good use of the Quality Education Fund to organise school-based activities, training, and develop teaching materials to teach students how to distinguish the authenticity of information and think critically, so as to consolidate values education.

IV. Continuously Refine the Kindergarten Education Scheme

12. We have announced the result of the review on the kindergarten (KG) education scheme and the enhancement measures. Overall speaking, implementation of the Scheme since the 2017/18 school year has been smooth in general, winning extensive support of the sector. It provides highly affordable KG education, enhance the accessibility of students to different modes of services that suit their specific needs, and alleviate the financial burden of parents, while maintaining the flexibility, diversity and vibrancy of the KG sector in responding to the changing needs of the society and parents. We will progressively implement the enhancement measures. They include—

- (a) Streamlining administrative work: explore the feasibility of expanding the coverage of the simplified procedures under fee revision to KGs proposing fee increase not exceeding a specified percentage; streamline the procedures in school allocation exercises;
- (b) Assisting KGs in improving the school environment: extend the Relocation Grant (\$1.5M for each KG) to the 2022/23 school year; provide an additional 200 quotas under the Renovation Grant (\$0.5 million for each KG) in the 2021/22 school year;
- (c) Enhancing teachers' professional development: provide structured learning programmes of a longer duration (e.g. lasting for several weeks) for experienced teachers, senior teachers or those with an aspiration for senior posts from the 2021/22 school year onwards for in-depth study on various education issues, and provide subsidies for supply teachers in this regard; provide a one-off grant for Scheme-KGs in the 2021/22 school year to implement school-based projects to facilitate the professional development of teachers or sustainable development of the school under which successful applicants will receive a subsidy from \$100,000 to \$200,000;
- (d) Promoting parent education: provide an additional one-off subsidy of \$50,000 to \$60,000 to KGs to kick start structured parent education programmes in the 2021/22 school year; and
- (e) Increase subsidy for families in need: seek to raise the fee remission ceiling under the Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme from the 75th percentile to the 100th percentile of the school fees charged by existing Scheme-KGs, so that all parents receiving full fee remission do not need to pay the difference.

V. Support the Development of Post-secondary Teaching and Research

13. We continue to explore different funding sources for research for the higher education sector. The Government proposes to extend the Research Matching Grant Scheme for two years to July 2024, so that the industrial and commercial sectors can continue to make good use of the Scheme to support the research work of the higher education sector.

14. Meanwhile, the Government proposes to relax the over-enrolment of University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded research postgraduate (RPg) programme students from 70% to 100% progressively such that universities may flexibly redeploy resources to nurture more research talents. The Government has also invited the UGC to assess the supply of and demand for UGC-funded RPg places and consider the feasibility of increasing the number of funded places.

15. The UGC will soon submit its recommendations on the next triennial funding cycle for nurturing talents compatible with the future development needs of Hong Kong, including offering more STEM-related programmes to nurture talents in innovation and technology and allowing universities to utilise their allocated places to leverage their own advantages. The UGC will also look into the funding arrangements to foster participation of the universities in the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), such as suitably increasing funding to enable university students to set their sights on opportunities in GBA.

16. To further consolidate the edge of Hong Kong universities in basic research, the Government has agreed in principle to the recommendations of The University of Hong Kong and The Chinese University of Hong Kong to provide the two universities with land for the construction of facilities for research and development (R&D) use, as well as supporting The Hong Kong Polytechnic University in exploring the use of the Hung Hom Bay Campus, which is currently used for self-financing post-secondary operations, for academic and research development. The Government will also invite the MTR Corporation Limited to study the construction of a railway station on the basis of the present site of The Hong Kong Education University (EdUHK) Sports Centre, and the reinstatement of the Sports Centre to a site near EdUHK's main campus.

17. The Government will also explore the extension of the Immigration Arrangement for Non-local Graduates to cover graduates of Hong Kong universities' campuses in the Greater Bay Area Mainland cities so as to further enhance Hong Kong's human capital and competitiveness.

18. As regards the review of self-financing post-secondary education, the Government will amend the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320) to enhance the regulatory framework and improve the governance of self-financing post-secondary education institutions. The amendment bill is expected to be introduced into the Legislative Council for scrutiny in 2022.

VI. Provide Diversified Progression Pathways and Promote Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET)

19. The Diploma Yi Jin programme provides an alternative pathway for secondary six school leavers as well as adult learners to obtain a formal qualification for the purposes of employment and further study. The existing funding will support the programme up to the 2022/23 academic year. The Government will review the Diploma Yi Jin programme subsidy scheme and consider whether to regularise it or not.

20. The Government will further promote VPET through strengthening the collaboration with the industries, including strengthening the participation of industry partners in Applied Learning, and exploring the further incorporation of workplace learning and assessment elements in VPET programmes. To promote the further collaboration with the institutions in the Greater Bay Area in nurturing talent, the Government will also support the Hong Kong Vocational Training Council (VTC) and the Shenzhen Polytechnic to strengthen collaboration in joint VPET programmes, including introducing more new joint programmes.

VII. Use Information Technology to Improve the EDB's Services

21. In line with the “Smart Government” strategy, the EDB will implement comprehensive digitalisation of primary one and secondary one admissions by phases starting from 2023, with a view to providing better quality school places allocation services by enhancing the service efficiency and user-friendliness of the processes of application and announcement of allocation results of primary one and secondary one admissions. Along with the promotion of the “Smart Government” and the popularisation of the “iAM Smart” platform, parents can more easily and conveniently handle the entire admission application processes and receive the allocation result of their children through the e-Platform. Moreover, we will further enhance the functions of the e-services platform for student financial assistance to facilitate online submission of applications and supporting documents; launch a round-the-clock chatbot to enhance enquiry services; and support the smooth conduct of home visits and interviews through mobile platform and handheld devices, so as to enhance the efficiency for handling applications for and enquiries about student financial assistance.

On-going Initiatives

I. KG Education

22. The Government's recurrent subsidy to the KGs has been substantially increased from about \$4 billion before implementation of the kindergarten education scheme to about \$6.7 billion in the 2021-22 financial year under the Scheme. KGs joining the Scheme accounts for around 97% of the eligible KGs. Among them, around 90% of the half-day programmes are free of charge. With additional subsidy from the Government, school fees for whole-day programmes are maintained at a low level. In the 2021/22 school year, the median school fee is \$880 per instalment. Besides, various measures have been implemented progressively to enhance the quality of KG education. These include revising the "Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide"; setting a soft training target for KG teachers to attend at least 60 hours' continuous professional development in a 3-year cycle, and refining the programme frameworks of the teacher education programmes in early childhood education at higher diploma, bachelor, and postgraduate diploma levels. In supporting non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students, KGs admitting NCS students are provided with an additional subsidy which has been refined to a 5-tier mode in the 2019/20 school year to replace the one level mode. In quality assurance, school self-evaluation conducted by KGs and quality review conducted by the EDB are based on Performance Indicators (KG). We have refined this set of performance indicators and invited serving KG principals to serve as external observers to join some quality reviews. On parent education, we have organised series of parent education activities on child development, transition from KG to primary schools, etc., to enhance parents' understanding about these themes. The EDB has also enhanced existing grants or provided additional grants where necessary to timely respond to the concerns of the KG sector. For instance, several rounds of additional subsidies have been provided to support KGs in consideration of the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic². The Gift Book Scheme and Do It Yourself Handicraft and Learning Package Scheme were also launched to support children's learning at home. The EDB has completed review of the Scheme and the enhancement measures as outlined at paragraph 12 above are being progressively implemented.

² To support KGs, the EDB has disbursed subsidies to the KG sector three times, including (a) providing each KG with a grant at the rate of \$10,000 to \$15,000 in March and April 2020 for replenishing epidemic prevention equipment, cleaning the school premises and paying for other expenses related to epidemic prevention; as well as the Support Grant ranging from \$60,000 to \$160,000 per school; (b) providing all KGs with a One-off Grant in November 2020 ranging from \$30,000 to \$80,000 per school; and (c) another One-off Grant provided to all KGs in February 2021 ranging from \$60,000 to \$160,000 per school.

II. Primary and Secondary Education

(i) *School Facilities and Equipment*

23. The EDB has all along put in place various measures to improve schools' learning and teaching environment and facilities, including –

- (a) Construction of New School Premises or In-situ Expansion: over the past four years, a total of 17 public sector school capital works projects have been completed (up to early October 2021), of which 13 projects are for school reprovisioning or in-situ redevelopment/expansion; another 11 school building projects have been commissioned after obtaining funding approval, with expected completion ranging from 2021 to 2024. In light of decline in student population, we will primarily consider reprovisioning use when launching allocation of school premises in the future to improve the conditions of school premises;
- (b) Implementation of a Time-limited Minor Works Programme: an additional \$1 billion has been reserved under the Capital Works Reserve Fund for 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 improve the teaching environment. Approval of the last round of applications has been completed. A total of 2065 works items are approved under the programme. Works are expected to be completed in 2023-24;
- (c) Repair and Upkeep: through the annual major repairs and emergency repairs mechanisms, support is provided to all aided schools (including special schools) in carrying out school premises maintenance and repair works. Apart from repair of defective facilities, improvement of school premises facilities, such as retrofitting of lighting systems, paving of non-slip floor tiles, improvement of ventilation systems and replacement of flooring materials, is also covered. The annual estimate is around \$1.5 billion;
- (d) Installation of Air-conditioning Systems: subsidising the operational expenses of air-conditioning facilities in all public sector schools and DSS schools with effect from the 2018/19 school year. New air-conditioning systems have been installed for eligible facilities in premises of public sector schools without such provision; and

- (e) Installation of Lifts: a dedicated team has been set up to expedite installation of lifts for public sector schools as needed to build barrier-free campuses. The first batch of projects for 12 aided schools will be completed in 2022-23.

(ii) *Teaching Force*

24. The current-term Government 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 one go in the 2019/20 school year; and increasing the manpower of vice-principals and deputy heads with effect from the 2020/21 school year to enhance the school management. Besides, starting from the 2018/19 school year, the Government has provided a non-recurrent funding of \$50 million to support suitable projects under the strategic plan of T-excel@hk developed under the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals. In this connection, the EDB has deployed the funding to implement various professional development programmes, 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. Besides, starting from the 2020/21 school year, the EDB has provided structured training for newly-joined teachers and in-service teachers, enhanced the training requirements for teachers aspiring for promotion and strengthened the contents on teachers' professional roles and conduct, Constitution, Basic Law and national security education. etc. In tandem, the EDB will enhance liaison with teacher education universities appealing to them in putting more emphasis on contents on Constitution, Basic Law and national security education for pre-service training for prospective teachers.

(iii) *Curriculum Development and Related Resources*

25. The six directional recommendations set out in the review report of the Task Force on Review of School Curriculum have been followed up by the EDB progressively, including reinforcing the importance of whole-person development, according higher priority to values education, creating space and catering for learner diversity, further promoting Applied Learning, enhancing the flexibility in university admissions, and strengthening STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education in primary and secondary

schools. The optimising measures for the four senior secondary core subjects (i.e. Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Citizenship and Social Development in lieu of Liberal Studies) have been implemented at Secondary 4 in the 2021/22 school year for creating space and catering for learner diversity. The Standing Committee on Values Education and the Standing Committee on STEM Education have been set up by the Curriculum Development Council to oversee the overall directions for values education and STEM education respectively in primary and secondary schools. The related work was briefly reported to the Panel on Education of the Legislative Council on 19 January 2021 and 3 September 2021 respectively. Meanwhile, the School Nominations Direct Admission Scheme (SNDAS) will be implemented from the 2022/23 academic year onwards to provide opportunities for secondary students who have demonstrated exceptional talents and interests in specific disciplines / areas to be considered for direct admission to local universities, and to enhance flexibility in university admissions. SNDAS is now accepting school nominations. The EDB will continuously review and optimise the school curricula for the benefit of students.

26. The EDB provides more resources to support learning and teaching in schools, including the Promotion of Reading Grant and Life-wide Learning Grant since the 2018/19 and 2019/20 school years, with an annual provision of about \$50 million and about \$900 million respectively. To optimise the use of the Quality Education Fund, \$3 billion was set aside for the implementation of the Dedicated Funding Programme for Publicly-funded Schools for the schools concerned to launch school-based curriculum and/or student support measures. As at September 2021, more than 1 300 applications with a funding amount of over \$1 billion have been approved. Besides, through the Community Care Fund, the Government launched a 3-year assistance programme in the 2018/19 school year to subsidise about 176 000 needy primary and secondary school students to purchase mobile computer devices. The “Top-up Grant for Supporting Online Learning of Financially Needy Students” was provided in November 2020 to subsidise public sector schools to acquire portable wifi routers and mobile data cards for needy students to conduct e-learning. There were about 15 400 student beneficiaries. To support e-learning, \$2 billion is reserved in the Quality Education Fund in 2021 for implementing, *inter alia*, a three year \$1.5 billion programme for loaning mobile computer devices and Internet access facility to needy students through their schools. It is estimated that about 310 000 students would benefit. The remaining \$500 million will be used to support the provision of e-learning ancillary facilities, such as setting up a platform for sharing learning and teaching resources and encouraging teachers to share quality teaching resources. The programme has just been launched in this school year.

(iv) *Exchange Programmes*

27. The EDB has introduced various measures for primary and secondary students to participate in exchange programmes so as to broaden their horizons –

- (a) Mainland Exchange Programmes: the EDB continues to organise Mainland exchange programmes for students or subsidise those organised by schools so as to provide primary and secondary students with life-wide learning experiences to enable them to gain first-hand experience of the developments of our country in various aspects from multiple perspectives, deepen their classroom learning and strengthen their national identity. These programmes cover different provinces and cities in the Mainland and the content of the programmes covers areas, such as culture, history, geography and technology. Having regard to the development strategies of our country, the ongoing renewal of school curriculum, including education on the Constitution, the Basic Law and national security, the EDB will duly enhance the exchange programmes. Since the 2017/18 school year, the EDB has provided about 100 000 exchange quotas annually, which are sufficient for every student to join at least one Mainland exchange programme in the respective primary and secondary stages. In addition, starting from Secondary Four in the 2021/22 school year, the EDB provides Mainland study opportunities for students studying the subject of Citizenship and Social Development. Taking into consideration the development of the COVID-19 epidemic and the arrangement for re-opening of borders, the EDB will resume Mainland exchange programmes for students at an appropriate time
- (b) Sister Schools: to further promote the professional exchange and multi-faceted collaboration of sister schools, as well as to encourage more schools in Hong Kong to join the Sister School Scheme, the EDB has provided recurrent grant and professional support to public sector and DSS primary and secondary schools, and special schools that have formed sister schools with their counterparts in the Mainland starting from the 2018/2019 school year. The grant is around \$157,000 for the 2021/22 school year.

(v) *Support to Students*

28. 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 Direct Subsidy Scheme 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 or 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 related school year. In the 2021/22 school year, the provision of the SAS Grant is about \$84 million.
- (c) Provision of Student Grant for Day School Students: the Government has provided an annual student grant of \$2,500 for each secondary day-school, primary school and kindergarten student starting from the 2019/20 school year, benefitting about 900 000 students, to alleviate parents' financial burden in defraying education expenses. An expenditure of about \$2.25 billion is involved.

(vi) *Life Planning and Business-School Partnership*

29. The EDB will continue to strengthen support for schools in implementing life planning education through various measures, including providing 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, providing diversified professional development activities for teachers, promoting district-based development networks, and mobilising and assisting schools to commence life planning education early at the upper primary and junior secondary levels, etc. Besides, subsequent to the launch of the brand-new Life Planning Information Website (the Website) in the 2019/20 school year, the EDB has further enriched online resources. An online learning system titled "My Life Planning Portfolio" was set up on the Website in August 2021, in which handy tools are provided for students to conduct career aptitude assessments and create

learning portfolios, and teaching resources on life planning are made available for teachers to facilitate students' life planning.

30. 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. Currently, about 400 partners have joined BSPP. Since the 2017/18 school year, more than 1 500 career exploration activities have been offered, benefiting more than 420 000 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 organised the Work Experience Movement (WEM). Currently, more than 220 business entities and community organisations participate in the WEM. Since the 2017/18 school year, over 3 800 places of work experience quota have been offered for students, covering more than 30 trades and industries.

(vii) Parent Education

31. As parents play a vital role in the growth and learning of their children, the EDB all along 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, the EDB has increased the subsidies to Parent-Teacher Associations of schools and Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations of different districts for organising more school-based and community-based parent education programmes or activities, involving an additional recurrent funding of about \$30 million. Besides, we have launched the territory-wide Positive Parent Campaign to promote parent education through extensive and diversified channels, with a view to fostering positive thinking among parents to help children grow up happily. To enable parents to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills for nurturing their children in a more systematic manner, the EDB issued the Curriculum Framework on Parent Education (Kindergarten) in September 2021. Kindergartens and other organisations are encouraged to make reference to the related framework when designing parent education programmes or activities. The EDB will develop the curriculum frameworks on parent education applicable to primary and secondary schools in the next stage.

(viii) Gifted Education

32. To further promote the development of gifted education, the Government injected \$800 million into the Gifted Education Fund in 2019 (\$1.6 billion so far) to generate 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. In the 2019/20 and 2020/21 school years, a total of 17 off-school advanced learning programmes (including STEM education, humanities and social science, corporate management, etc.) was approved and implemented, which involved \$15 million. About 700 students would benefit from the programmes. These programmes will continue to be offered.

III. Post-secondary Education and VPET

(i) *Development of the Post-secondary Education Sector*

33. 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. Relevant support measures are set out in Annex.

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

34. Following the recommendation of the Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education, the EDB conducted a public consultation on the proposed legislative amendments to the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance from December 2020 to March 2021, and is consolidating and considering the views collected. The latest position of the amendment bill is set out in paragraph 18 above. In addition, the EDB will continue to implement the \$1.26 billion Enhancement and Start-up Grant Scheme for Self-financing Post-secondary Education launched in December 2020 to support self-financing post-secondary institutions to develop post-secondary programmes that meet market needs but require high start-up costs.

35. Moreover, the EDB commenced the review on sub-degree education in December 2020. The review covers issues including the more sharply differentiated positioning of the Associate Degree (AD) and Higher Diploma (HD) qualifications, enhancements to the programme structures and curricula of AD and HD, as well as providing more work-based learning/internship opportunities, strengthening industry involvement, and refining the entrance requirements in a flexible manner to for HD programmes. The review is expected to be completed in 2022.

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

36. 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 2020/21 academic year, about 16 300 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 8 200 and 3 300 students pursuing designated full-time locally accredited self-financing undergraduate and sub-degree programmes respectively in selected disciplines benefited from the SSSDP.

(iv) VPET

37. To further enhance VPET, the Government will continue to implement the Training and Support Scheme through the 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 has subsidised trainees under the Training and Support Scheme to take part in study and exchange programmes outside Hong Kong for three years starting from the 2020/21 academic year, 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. The Government also launched a pilot scheme in the 2020/21 academic year to provide one-stop professional service on VPET for teachers of the selected secondary schools, strengthening the promotion of VPET in secondary education.

38. The Government launched the Pilot Project on the Development of Applied Degree Programmes in December 2020, with a view to strengthening the VPET pathway at the degree level. The Government has selected four degree programmes for the Pilot Project, which will be launched in the 2022/23 academic year at the earliest. Generally speaking, the applied degree programmes have an applied focus blending theory and practice, provide substantial internships and work-based learning experience, and have strong industry involvement. Graduates are prepared for employment in relevant disciplines with recognised qualifications from the specific trades/industries. In addition, the related programmes will adopt more flexible admission requirements, taking into account relevant factors apart from academic results.

IV. Support for Students with Diverse Needs

(i) *NCS Students*

39. The EDB has been strengthening support for NCS students over the years. To encourage NCS parents to send their children to local kindergartens for early integration, starting from the 2017/18 school year, the EDB has been providing additional subsidy for kindergartens under the kindergarten education scheme admitting NCS students, and further refined the subsidy to a 5-tiered funding ranging from about \$50,000 to about \$800,000 starting from the 2019/20 school year. In addition, starting from the 2019/20 school year, the EDB has provided tiered subsidies to primary and secondary schools admitting NCS students with special educational needs (SEN) to strengthen the support to these students. To enhance the support for NCS students' learning of Chinese and the creation of an inclusive learning environment in schools, starting from the 2020/21 school year, all primary schools, secondary schools and special schools admitting a relatively small number of NCS students are provided with additional funding, with the amount increased from \$50,000 to about \$0.15 million or \$0.3 million at present. In the 2020/21 school year, about 400 schools were benefitted. At the same time, we have provided a series of parent education programmes for parents of NCS students to help them support their children's learning and gain better understanding of the multiple pathways available to their children.

(ii) *Students with SEN*

40. The current-term Government is committed to catering for students with SEN. The recurrent annual expenditure on integrated education (IE) has increased from about \$1.5 billion to about \$3.6 billion, the recurrent annual expenditure on special education has significantly increased from about \$2.5 billion to about \$3.5 billion. Support measures for ordinary schools include creating an additional Special Educational Needs Coordinator post and some of the posts have been upgraded to a promotion rank; extending the Learning Support Grant to all public sector ordinary schools and providing additional regular teaching posts; and enhancing the School-based Educational Psychology Service and creating school-based speech therapist posts by phases, etc. As regards special schools, the measures include enhancing the establishment for professional staff and staff of the boarding sections, and allowing flexibility in the appointment of auxiliary staff to meet the needs of schools and students. We will keep reviewing the implementation of IE in schools and listening to views of different stakeholders for improvements in implementation of various measures.

Views Sought

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

**Education Bureau
8 October 2021**

Support for the Development of Post-secondary Education Sector

The Government has introduced the following measures to support the development of the post-secondary education sector, strengthen research capacity, and facilitate the diversified development of students –

- (a) the EDB and the Innovation and Technology Bureau jointly launched the Global STEM Professorship Scheme in June this year to attract outstanding innovation and technology (I&T) talents to join local universities, thereby pooling talents for I&T development. The first tranche of 45 STEM Scholars are gradually arriving in Hong Kong;
- (b) the University Grants Committee (UGC) launched since the 2020/21 academic year the Targeted Taught Postgraduate Programmes Fellowships Scheme on a pilot basis for five cohorts with a view to attracting local students to study in priority areas beneficial to the development of Hong Kong and encouraging universities to offer more innovative and interdisciplinary programmes. A total of 1 500 meritorious local students have benefited in the first two cohorts;
- (c) the Research Grants Council (RGC) launched a \$3-billion Research Matching Grants Scheme in August 2019, and has thus far disbursed some \$1.63 billion;
- (d) the current-term Government injected a total of \$23 billion into the Research Endowment Fund to substantially increase funding for the RGC and rationalise restrictions in deploying funds, with some \$4.7 billion disbursed since July 2017; and provided a tuition fee waiver for local students of UGC-funded research postgraduate programmes, with around 5 500 beneficiaries since July 2018. Moreover, the RGC launched three fellowship schemes in the 2019/20 academic year with 140 awardees since August 2019;
- (e) the Eighth Matching Grant Scheme was launched in July 2019. The \$2.5-billion matching grant for the ten publicly-funded post-secondary institutions has been fully disbursed; Matching Grant Scheme was launched in July 2019. The \$2.5-billion matching grant for the ten publicly-funded post-secondary institutions has been fully disbursed;
- (f) the Government earmarked \$16 billion in 2019 for enhancing or refurbishing campus facilities of the universities, in particular for the procurement of R&D facilities and laboratories. Funding for two major works projects has been approved this year;
- (g) the Hostel Development Fund (HDF) was established in July 2018, in which the one-off grant of \$10.3 billion has been disbursed to six universities. Construction works of seven out of the 15 hostel projects covered by HDF have commenced; and
- (h) continue to implement the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme to subsidise up to 100 outstanding Hong Kong students per cohort to pursue 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. So far, 639 students have been awarded the scholarship.