

For discussion
on 7 November 2023

Legislative Council Panel on Education

The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address Education Bureau's Policy Initiatives

The Chief Executive delivered the 2023 Policy Address on 25 October 2023. This paper sets out the major education-related initiatives therein.

Enhancing the Overall Development and Fully Utilising the Strategic Pillars to Realise Grand Visions

2. The theme of the 2023 Policy Address is “A Vibrant Economy for a Caring Community”. We should enhance the overall development and fully utilise the strategic pillars to nurture and attract talents for realising our grand visions. “When education thrives, the country thrives; and strong education makes a powerful country.” Education is of critical importance to the future of our country and fundamental to technological advancement, talent cultivation, innovation and vibrancy. Hong Kong has sound education infrastructure, world-renowned universities, outstanding research talents, as well as diverse and quality basic education. The quality of our teaching and learning is ranked among the top in various international comparative studies. Building on this solid foundation, Hong Kong will better integrate into the overall development of the country and leverage our strengths to contribute to the country’s needs. As Hong Kong advances from stability to prosperity, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government should seize the opportunities brought about by the latest development of the country, make plans for education development from a holistic and long-term perspective, and build on our unique status and advantages under “one country, two systems” to nurture and attract talents.

3. To provide better education for children, the current-term Government strives to enhance the quality of education to better prepare for the future. It is our goal to nurture young people to become virtuous, knowledgeable and responsible lifelong learners with global perspectives, positive values and attitude, love for the country and the city, who are ready for future challenges and opportunities. In 2023-24, we allocated \$104 billion of recurrent expenditure on education to provide quality kindergarten, primary, secondary and special education, diversified post-secondary education, and to enhance supporting infrastructure for education.

4. In the coming year, echoing the strategy of invigorating the country through science and education, we will build on our achievements and consolidate our experiences to proactively take forward the work on various fronts, including developing Hong Kong into an international education hub, promoting Vocational and Professional Education and Training, reinforcing STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) education, promoting patriotic education in schools, enhancing the quality of education services, etc. We will also continue to maintain close liaison and communication with different stakeholders, put in place various measures to contribute to the country and the development of Hong Kong proactively, and at the same time tell good stories of Hong Kong's education.

Major Initiatives

(1) Develop Hong Kong into an International Education Hub and a Cradle of Future Talents

5. Hong Kong's post-secondary education is highly internationalised and diversified, and Hong Kong is acclaimed to be the only city with five universities in the world's top 100. We will develop Hong Kong into an international education hub, implement the Belt and Road (B&R) Initiative, promote people-to-people exchanges, broaden students' international perspective and enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness.

6. We will increase the non-local student quota of publicly-funded post-secondary institutions. Starting from the 2024/25 academic year, the non-local student quota of publicly-funded post-secondary institutions (applicable to taught programmes) will be doubled from 20% to 40% (of the local student places). The institutions may, having regard to their own conditions, progressively attract more students from abroad, B&R countries in particular, as well as from the Mainland, to further their studies in Hong Kong. With high quality teaching and supporting facilities, the institutions can expand their capacity and enhance their quality, thereby developing Hong Kong into an international education hub. At the same time, the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities will continue to take forward a number of hostel projects in order to increase hostel places by about 13 500 in total by 2027 to cater for the needs of students, including those arising from the additional intake.

7. As regards scholarship schemes, in the last academic year, some 2 500 students from B&R countries were recipients of the B&R Scholarship and various scholarship schemes offered by the UGC-funded universities. We will inject \$1 billion into the Government Scholarship Fund (the Fund) to

increase the quota of the B&R Scholarship by half to 150 from the 2024/25 academic year onwards. The relevant proposal is at Annex I. Subject to the Panel on Education's support for the proposal, the Education Bureau (EDB) plans to seek the approval of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council for the injection of \$1 billion into the Fund within the current financial year.

8. Subsequent to last year's decision to gradually increase the UGC-funded research postgraduate places from 5 595 to 7 200 per academic year, the 2023 Policy Address mentions a gradual increase in the quota of the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme by one-third, from 300 to 400 places per academic year in order to attract more outstanding talents to study and conduct research in Hong Kong. In addition, we will continue to implement the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme, which subsidises 100 outstanding local students each year to pursue studies in world-renowned universities outside Hong Kong, with a view to broadening the global perspective of local students.

9. Starting from the 2023/24 academic year, the UGC will inject \$100 million into the Funding Scheme for Mainland and Global Engagement and Student Learning Experience to encourage publicly-funded universities to provide more exchange and learning opportunities outside Hong Kong, and to promote a diversified and inclusive international learning environment.

10. As regards the self-financing post-secondary education sector, there is no restriction on the admission of non-local students to self-financing post-secondary programmes save for students from the Mainland, Macao and Taiwan. The EDB will continue to explore with the Ministry of Education feasible enhancements to the arrangements for Mainland students to study in Hong Kong, with a view to achieving the abovementioned policy objectives. At the same time, to foster the sustainable development of the self-financing sector, the EDB has reserved sites in Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area and Tung Chung New Town Extension for self-financing post-secondary education use. Site formation and relevant works of the aforementioned sites are expected to be completed in 2026 and 2027 respectively. We plan to launch a new round of the Land Grant Scheme (LGS) in 2024 and eligible institutions will be invited to submit development proposals for the captioned sites. To dovetail with the LGS, we also plan to launch a new round of the Start-up Loan Scheme at the same time for interested self-financing post-secondary education institutions to make applications, with a view to supporting the institutions to develop and improve campuses in support of more teaching activities. We will announce the details in due course.

11. We will take forward the development of post-secondary education in the Northern Metropolis and will strive to develop the Northern Metropolis University Town where post-secondary institutions are encouraged to

strengthen co-operation with renowned Mainland and overseas institutions, and create synergy by sharing resources and enhancing collaboration with the industry sector. Apart from the development of post-secondary education, it is an on-going commitment of the Government to support the development of a vibrant international school sector. We will closely monitor the demand for and supply of international school places and reserve sites in the Northern Metropolis for the development of international schools to meet the education needs of non-local families living in Hong Kong and families coming to Hong Kong for work or investment.

(2) Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET)

12. We will continue to adopt the strategy of fostering industry-institution collaboration and diversified development in promoting VPET. Among others, to raise the status of VPET at degree level and provide an alternative pathway to success for young people who aspire to pursue a career in professional skills sectors, we will press ahead with the establishment of universities of applied sciences (UAS). UAS will provide applied degree programmes with an applied focus blending theory and practice, and closely collaborate with professional skills sectors and incorporate substantial internship and work-based learning opportunities in their programmes, which will help students develop applied skills and create impetus for Hong Kong's development. Relevant initiatives include –

- (a) drawing up the criteria for qualifying as UAS, covering aspects such as admission, curriculum, accreditation, career pathways, and industry engagement, in conjunction with the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), and with reference to international experiences, so as to allow self-financing post-secondary institutions which have obtained university titles under the established mechanism and possess the capabilities and experience (such as having launched applied degree programmes) to plan ahead and develop along the abovementioned direction;
- (b) providing financial and related support, including according priority to eligible programmes of UAS for inclusion under the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors (SSSDP) and to eligible applications from UAS when considering applications for support measures such as the Quality Enhancement Support Scheme and Enhancement and Start-up Grant Scheme;
- (c) providing additional subsidies through SSSDP to students enrolling in applied degree programmes under SSSDP. Specifically, we plan

to provide additional annual subsidies of \$5,000 (for non-laboratory-based programmes) and \$8,000 (for laboratory-based programmes) to full-time students enrolling in applied degree programmes under SSSDP that have undergone the relevant accreditation¹, and enhance the relevant mechanism to allow relevant institutions under SSSDP to make a one-off tuition fee adjustment after the completion of accreditation for applied degree programmes², with a view to encouraging institutions to offer more applied degree programmes in relation to disciplines relevant to professional skills and enhancing the enrolment incentive, thereby supporting appropriate self-financing institutions to develop into UAS; and

- (d) setting aside a start-up fund to support prospective post-secondary institutions to form an alliance of UAS for joint promotion, including collaboration with UAS on the Mainland and overseas, initiating collaboration and research about applied education at the post-secondary level, and organising joint promotion activities, in order to enhance the status of VPET in society and among parents and students.

13. In addition, we support the Vocational Training Council (VTC) to establish the Hong Kong Institute of Information Technology to provide dedicated pre-employment and in-service training for the information technology (IT) sector, with a view to meeting the manpower needs of the industry and fostering the development of Hong Kong. In this regard, VTC has established a preparatory committee and will continue to closely collaborate with industry representatives, employers, labour unions and other stakeholders in order to nurture more talents equipped with professional applied skills for the IT sector. Relevant programmes will be launched in the 2024/25 academic year.

14. We will also collaborate with the Mainland authorities to take forward the mutual recognition of sub-degree level qualifications, including the Higher Diploma qualification, and try out such arrangements on a pilot basis. We have, together with the HKCAAVQ, been proactively exploring the matter with the relevant Mainland authorities.

¹ In the 2024/25 academic year, the subsidy amounts for non-applied degree programmes under SSSDP are \$79,770 (for laboratory-based programmes) and \$45,810 (for laboratory-based programmes) respectively.

² Generally speaking, institutions participating in SSSDP should announce the tuition fees before subsidised programmes are open for application in each cohort, and any tuition fee increase should not exceed the relevant Composite Consumer Price Index unless special prior approval by EDB has been granted.

(3) STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) Education

15. We will further step up the promotion of STEAM education in primary and secondary schools through diversified support strategies so as to strengthen students' interest and abilities in science, mathematics, and innovation and technology (I&T), as well as to help students lay a solid foundation for advanced STEAM and I&T learning at the post-secondary level in the future. The EDB continues to take forward the ongoing renewal of school curriculum; optimise learning and teaching; enhance teacher training on I&T and put emphasis on nurturing students with potential in STEAM for cultivating talents.

16. In respect of curriculum, the EDB is going to introduce a subject on science in primary schools with a view to strengthening students' scientific and creative thinking; earmark a total of about \$200 million to provide a one-off grant for publicly-funded primary schools to kick-start the subject, acquire teaching aids, upgrade facilities and equipment, and support teachers for professional development. The curriculum framework of Primary Science will be announced within the 2023/24 school year for implementation starting from the 2025/26 school year. Furthermore, we will enrich science learning at the junior secondary level by launching the STEAM Learning Modules in the 2023/24 school year to facilitate schools in integrating the learning of I&T in class.

17. Mathematics is an important component of STEAM education. We will strengthen Mathematics education at the primary and secondary levels to enhance students' capability in applications of Mathematics through implementing a series of learning and teaching support programmes in line with the curriculum, including a pilot scheme on learning and teaching, in the 2023/24 school year.

18. A professional teaching force is the key to the promotion of STEAM education. We will continue to strengthen STEAM-related professional training programmes to help STEAM co-ordinators and teachers keep abreast of the latest development in I&T, thereby enhancing their professional capacity for implementing the above-mentioned curriculum initiatives in schools to enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching.

19. To step up the identification and nurturing of gifted talents, the EDB will further promote the setting up of school-based student talent pool (including STEAM-related areas) in schools starting from the 2023/24 school year with a view to strengthening the identification and grooming of students with potential. We will also enhance collaboration with the Hong Kong

Academy for Gifted Education to arrange students with exceptional potential to participate in systematic off-school advanced training, and territory-wide, cross-territory, national, and international competitions (e.g. on mathematics, science, technology and aerospace) to develop and showcase their potential to the full.

(4) Patriotic Education

20. All along, different Bureaux and Departments of the current-term HKSAR Government have been actively adopting a “general mobilisation” mode to promote National Education (NE) in all aspects of society. Promoting NE in schools is an important component. President XI Jinping gave a reply letter to students of a secondary school in Hong Kong a few months ago, pointing out that patriotic education is the core of the spirit of the Chinese nation. He encouraged students to combine reading and travelling, gain a deeper understanding of global trends, delve into the history and culture of our country and national affairs, strengthen their affection for and sense of belonging to our country so that they can make contributions to building an even better Hong Kong and advancing national rejuvenation. In this regard, the EDB will take on its mission and continue to step up its efforts to promote NE through “organic integration”, “natural connection”, “diversified strategies”, “mutual coordination”, “learning within and beyond the classroom” and “whole-school participation”, with a view to providing students with diversified, appropriate and meaningful learning experiences and nurturing a new generation of young people with love for our country and Hong Kong, global perspectives and readiness to shoulder great responsibilities. Relevant policies and measures for promoting NE coincide with the content of the “Patriotic Education Law of the People’s Republic of China”. We will continue to actively promote NE in schools, working together with various policy bureaux and departments to build mainstream values characterised by patriotism with love for our country and Hong Kong and in conformity with the principle of “one country, two systems”, so as to cultivate quality talents for our country and society.

21. To help students cultivate the spirit underscored in President XI’s reply letter, the EDB will implement a number of measures starting this school year, including strengthening training for teachers, such as organising Mainland study tours for teachers and on-site enrichment seminars on national security education, as well as providing teaching resources on our country’s development and history on a regular basis. The EDB will also conduct focus inspections on the implementation of NE on a regular basis, with the target of inspecting at least 50 schools every year. The EDB will share experiences and promote the good practices observed in the focus inspections to enhance the quality and effectiveness of NE.

22. The EDB will introduce a subject on humanities in primary schools and announce its curriculum framework in the 2023/24 school year with enriched elements of Chinese culture, our country's history and geography. The subject will be implemented starting from the 2025/26 school year to enhance students' national identity from a young age. We will strengthen training for the Constitution and Basic Law Student Ambassadors and the related learning experiences in Chinese History, organise more Chinese culture experiential learning activities, such as visiting museums and student competitions, and enrich the content of the Values Education Curriculum Framework, emphasising Chinese culture as the backbone of values education, so as to cultivate students' sense of national identity, patriotism and love for family from a young age, and consciously safeguarding national and ethnic unity. In addition, the EDB will continue to lead government schools and work with Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, Po Leung Kuk and school councils to jointly plan and implement the "Love our Home, Treasure our Country 2.0" joint school NE activities in the 2023/24 school year, consolidating resources and forces of different schools to enhance the effectiveness of NE, and allow patriotic sentiments as well as national concepts be rooted in the hearts of students.

(5) Professional Development and Support for Teachers

23. Strengthening teachers takes precedence over strengthening education. A high-quality teaching force is pivotal in fostering high-quality education development. The EDB has all along been fully supporting the professional growth of principals and teachers as well as strengthening the building of morality and ethics of teachers, with a view to establishing a professional and excellent teaching force for Hong Kong for continuous enhancement in education. The EDB launched Mainland study tours in the 2023/24 school year for promoted teachers, and will continue to offer more such places for newly-joined teachers and serving teachers so that they can have more opportunities to visit the Mainland to gain first-hand experience of the development of the country. The EDB will establish the first teacher training and exchange base in collaboration with relevant Mainland education authorities and institution in the 2023/24 school year to organise regular training programmes, exchanges and collaboration projects in the Mainland, and facilitate teachers' learning of the experience and latest practices in applying technology in educational research in the Mainland through visits and exchanges.

24. Besides, we will introduce new awards under the Chief Executive's Award for Teaching Excellence to encourage teachers to embrace innovation in teaching; subsidise all serving and prospective teachers of primary and secondary schools in taking the "National Putonghua Proficiency Test" with the

Language Fund to further encourage teachers to enhance their mastery of Putonghua; and commission non-governmental organisations or tertiary institutions to organise courses on physical and mental health for teachers to help them enhance their work capacity. The EDB will continue to promote the “Guidelines on Teachers’ Professional Conduct” and provide training resources so as to facilitate teachers’ integration of their pursuit of professionalism and commitment to upholding high moral standards as well as assist them to accomplish the mission of cultivating values and nurturing students.

(6) Support for Students with Diverse Needs

Students with Special Educational Needs

25. The Government is committed to helping students with special educational needs overcome their limitations and difficulties, enabling them to attain the learning level in accordance with their abilities, while fostering their development and unleashing their potential. The Government’s expenditure on integrated education has increased from \$1.5 billion in the 2017-18 financial year to \$3.7 billion in the 2022-23 financial year, representing an increase of 147%, while the expenditure on special education has increased from \$2.5 billion in the 2017-18 financial year to \$3.6 billion in the 2022-23 financial year, an increase of 44%. Regarding integrated education, the EDB has almost doubled the number of groups of the Strength-based Programme under the Project on Whole School Approach to Providing Tiered Support for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in the 2022/23 school year, in order to help senior secondary students with Autism Spectrum Disorder unleash their potential and strengthen life planning, benefitting nearly 300 students from about 100 secondary schools. In the 2023/24 school year, we will continue to implement the Programme and introduce new programmes and themes to further enhance life planning. Besides, we will further extend the Enhanced School-based Educational Psychology Service to about 450 public sector ordinary schools, and the policy of creating school-based speech therapist posts in public sector ordinary schools to implement the “Enhanced School-based Speech Therapy Service” has also been fully implemented. As for special schools, starting from the 2024/25 school year, the EDB will enhance the existing staff provision of resource teachers for primary and secondary sections of aided special schools and extend it to schools for social development to facilitate special schools to provide students comorbid with Autism Spectrum Disorder with additional support so as to help them learn effectively, develop their potential and integrate into the society.

Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) Children

26. In the 2022/23 school year, the number of primary and secondary schools, and special schools admitting NCS students is about 680 and about 60 respectively, accounting for about 70% of primary and secondary schools, and about 90% of special schools in the territory. Besides, the number of kindergartens joining the Kindergarten Education Scheme (Scheme-KGs) and admitting NCS students is about 480, accounting for about 60% of the Scheme-KGs in the territory. The EDB provides all-encompassing support for NCS students at the learning stages from pre-primary to secondary education through a series of enhanced support measures, and the expenditure in the 2022/23 school year is about \$590 million in total. We will continue to strengthen support for NCS students to facilitate their mastery of the Chinese Language for integration into the community, including designing diversified learning materials under the Online Chinese Language Self-learning Resources for NCS students to help them extend their learning and consolidate what they have learnt in class; preparing for the offer of after-school Chinese language courses for lower primary NCS students on a trial basis using adapted learning materials for the Youth Chinese Test; expanding the Summer Bridging Programme to include NCS students progressing to Primary 5 and Primary 6 starting from the 2023/24 school year to provide more comprehensive and continuous support for their Chinese learning; and increasing the number of schools that provide school-based life planning services for NCS students to help them set personal goals and plan for the future.

(7) Primary and Secondary Education

Life Planning and Business-School Partnership

27. The EDB has all along been strengthening support for schools in implementing life planning education through different measures, including providing additional resources/manpower and professional support, enhancing professional training, developing online resources, promoting business-school partnership, etc. Furthermore, a thematic corner, titled “The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA)” was added to the Life Planning Information Website in 2023 to provide information on further studies and careers in GBA cities. In the 2022/23 school year, the EDB launched Business-School Partnership Programme (BSPP) 2.0 with more business partners covering more industries, to widen students’ exposure and enhance life planning.

28. To equip senior secondary students early to seize new opportunities for career development, starting from the 2023/24 school year, the EDB will launch the “Greater Bay Area Career Exploration Tours” to allow senior

secondary students to deepen their understanding of the latest development of various industries in the GBA through personal experience and observation, including understanding the talent needs of various industries in the GBA, the development of Hong Kong enterprises in the GBA and the collaboration among enterprises in the two places. Moreover, the EDB will continue to encourage more business entities and organisations to join the BSPP 2.0 so as to provide more and a wider range of career exploration and work experience activities for students to help them gain an initial understanding of the workplace.

Student Mental Health and Positive School Culture

29. The EDB attaches great importance to the mental health of students, proactively working to support schools in adopting the Whole School Approach to promote mental health among students and enhance support for those in need. The EDB will launch “Mental Health Literacy” resource packages suitable for upper primary and junior secondary levels in the 2023/24 school year, and will develop those for lower primary and senior secondary levels. The focus of the resource packages includes means to maintain good mental health, knowledge of mental illnesses and effective treatments, ways to encourage peers to seek help when they have mental health needs, and destigmatisation of help-seeking and people with mental illness, which aims at facilitating teachers and school personnel to promote mental health literacy in class, enhancing students’ awareness and assisting schools in promoting mental health.

30. To promote students’ happy learning and healthy growth, the EDB has all along been encouraging schools to create a safe learning environment together with a caring and harmonious school culture, and to nurture students’ positive values including respect for others as well as inclusion and friendship. The EDB will set up a one-stop hotline and offer online counselling services in the 2023/24 school year to provide students and parents with advice on and support in handling conflicts among peers or school bullying.

Small Class Teaching

31. The objective of small class teaching (SCT) is to enhance students’ learning effectiveness and optimise learning and teaching efficacy. The government has been implementing SCT in public sector primary schools in a pragmatic and flexible manner. At present, about 85% of public sector primary schools in Hong Kong have implemented SCT. The EDB has also arranged 32 schools to start implementing SCT in the 2024/25 school year. By then, over 90% of the public sector primary schools will implement SCT, achieving the target set in the 2022 Policy Address one year in advance. With

the declining school-age population, we believe that more school nets will be better positioned for public sector primary schools to implement SCT. The EDB will continue to review the demand and supply of primary school places in the districts/school nets, and implement SCT in public sector primary schools in an orderly manner when conditions warrant.

(8) Kindergarten (KG) Education

32. The EDB has all along supported the sustainable development of kindergartens (KGs) in various ways, timely reviewed and enhanced the Kindergarten Education Scheme (the Scheme), and introduced various policy initiatives in view of the development and operational needs of the KG sector. For example, in the 2022/23 school year, we provided the “Grant for Promotion of Chinese Art and Culture” to Scheme-KGs to assist them in organising school-based activities which help students learn Chinese culture from an early age, and foster their sense of national identity; “Smart Kindergarten Grant” to assist KGs in digitalising school administration and enhancing work efficiency; the “Grant for Improving Ventilation of School Premises of Kindergartens” to assist KGs in creation of “Healthy Schools”. We have also simplified the procedures for applications to join the Scheme; implemented a special arrangement to uplift the reserve ceiling of unit subsidy for Scheme-KGs to deploy resources more flexibly to meet school-based needs; and doubled the amount of the “Relocation Grant for Kindergartens” to \$3 million for each school and extended the provision by one year to the 2023/24 school year. Earlier on, the EDB also announced that starting from the 2023/24 school year, all Scheme-KGs are provided with additional recurrent subsidies, which include the “Kindergarten Activity Grant” to encourage KGs to organise more experiential learning activities outside the classroom; and “Relief Grant for Appointment of Kindergarten Supply Teachers” for KGs to employ supply teachers to temporarily take up the duties of teachers on sick leave.

33. The EDB will continue to support the sustainable development of KGs. The EDB will launch the “Guangdong-Hong Kong Sister Kindergarten Exchange Programme” in the 2023/24 school year to strengthen connection between the Mainland and Hong Kong in early childhood education, with a focus on fostering teachers’ professional exchanges and collaboration, as well as enhancing the quality of kindergarten education and the friendship between the two places. Besides, starting from the 2024/25 school year, the EDB will regularise the “Relocation Grant for Kindergartens” to encourage more KGs to apply for relocation to government-owned premises. KGs bearing high rental expenses, having dilapidated school environments and facilities, and facing a surplus of KG places in the district, are strongly encouraged to apply for relocation so as to improve the learning and teaching environment of the KGs.

(9) Parent Education

34. Parents are key stakeholders in the school education process, playing crucial roles in supporting students' learning as well as fostering their positive values and whole-person development. The EDB has been running the "Positive Parent Campaign" (the Campaign) since June 2020 to promote the importance of happy and healthy development of children and enhance parents' awareness of positive parenting among the public. We will continue to promote the territory-wide Campaign through extensive and diversified channels, with a view to fostering positive thinking among parents to help children grow up happily, which include organising the Positive Parent Campaign Activity Day in end-2023. Meanwhile, subsequent to the launch of the curriculum frameworks on parent education for kindergartens and primary schools in 2021 and 2022 respectively, we will introduce the Curriculum Framework on Parent Education (Secondary School) and provide a one-off grant of \$200,000 to each publicly-funded secondary school in 2024 to support schools to embark on structured school-based parent education programmes or activities. We will also commission a post-secondary institution and non-governmental organisation to organise parent education courses and develop electronic learning resources for parents of kindergarten and primary school students in accordance with the curriculum frameworks on parent education, in order to help parents foster healthy and happy growth of children since their early childhood.

(10) Macro Strategy

35. The continuous decrease in school-age population is not transient but structural. It is an indisputable fact that the future demand for school places will decline correspondingly. The EDB will continue to closely monitor the changes in student population and conduct ongoing assessment of the demand and supply of school places. To ensure a "soft landing", we maintain close communication with the school sponsoring bodies, and support them to plan ahead and adopt appropriate measures. We would also adopt multi-pronged measures to consolidate resources to address the changes in the demand and supply of school places. The EDB will focus on the effective use of public resources to ensure that education expenditure is spent in a targeted and gainful manner to enhance the quality and efficacy of learning and teaching through initiatives, providing students with higher quality of education. Besides, we would continue to leverage on the excellent foundation of our international, diversified and high-quality education system, along with the broad direction of invigorating the country through science and education, to nurture and attract talents to enhance Hong Kong's overall competitiveness. For example, the Government and the education sector have implemented measures to assist talents admitted through different talent admission schemes and their children

to learn about different categories of local schools as well as their operation and characteristics, so that families coming to Hong Kong could choose the schools suited to their needs. The EDB also assists new arrival children and encourages schools to provide appropriate support so as to help them adapt to the local education system and learning environment soonest possible.

(11) Indicators

36. The Government has set indicators (including key performance indicators) for monitoring the progress and effectiveness of various initiatives for timely improvements. The indicators relating to the abovementioned education initiatives are listed in Annex II.

Views Sought

37. Members are invited to note and comment on the content of this paper.

**Education Bureau
October 2023**

**Proposed Injection into HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund
to Increase Quota of Belt and Road Scholarship**

Background

To promote the development of Hong Kong into an international education hub and to actively nurture local talents and attract talents from outside Hong Kong, the Government has introduced a basket of measures, including the establishment of the \$1 billion HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund (the Fund) in 2008 to attract more outstanding local students to stay in Hong Kong for further studies as well as outstanding non-local students to study in Hong Kong through scholarships. The Legislative Council (LegCo) approved on four subsequent occasions¹ injections into the Fund to increase the number and types of scholarships. At present, there are five scholarships and awards under the Fund, namely the Scholarship for Outstanding Performance, Targeted Scholarship Scheme, Talent Development Scholarship, Reaching Out Award and Endeavour Merit Award, which are awarded to both local and non-local students enrolled in full-time publicly-funded programmes at sub-degree, undergraduate and above levels.

2. The previous four injections into the Fund serve as seed funding to generate investment income for the continuous provision of scholarships on an annual basis. The scholarship schemes under the Fund operate on a merit basis. The following selection criteria, with appropriate adaptations to cater for different groups of students, are adopted:

- (a) high standard of academic performance;
- (b) demonstration of leadership and good communication skills;
- (c) valuable contribution to the institution/society; and/or
- (d) strong commitment to the Hong Kong community.

3. In the 2022/23 academic year (AY), about 5 400 scholarships and awards totalling around \$130 million were awarded under the Fund.

¹ Details of the four injections:

- 2011: \$250 million to support the provision of scholarships to full-time publicly-funded sub-degree students from the 2011/12 academic year onwards.
- 2012: \$1 billion to establish additional scholarships and awards to give recognition to post-secondary students not only of outstanding academic performance but also with achievements and talents in other non-academic fields;
- 2013: \$20 million to set up scholarships and awards for giving recognition to deserving post-secondary students with special education needs; and
- 2018: \$800 million to increase the scholarship quota.

Belt and Road (B&R) Scholarship

4. To strengthen ties and education collaboration with countries and regions along the B&R, the Government has established the B&R Scholarship under the Targeted Scholarship Scheme since the 2016/17 AY. The current annual quota of 100 scholarships covers all students from countries and regions along the B&R pursuing full-time publicly-funded undergraduate and research postgraduate programmes in Hong Kong. Dedicated scholarship quotas are also available to specific countries which have signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) on education co-operation with Hong Kong, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar and Mongolia. Over 430 students from 39 countries along the B&R have received the Scholarship since its launch. There are currently three categories of B&R Scholarship, including:

- (a) B&R Scholarship (Designated Countries) (applicable to students from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar and Mongolia);
- (b) B&R Scholarship (Other Countries) (applicable to students from B&R countries not covered in part (a)); and
- (c) B&R Scholarship (Research Postgraduate) (applicable to research postgraduate from B&R countries).

5. (a) and (b) will be awarded to non-local students pursuing full-time publicly-funded undergraduate studies in Hong Kong, while (c) supports non-local students from B&R countries pursuing full-time publicly-funded research postgraduate programmes in Hong Kong. The Scholarship covers students applying for first-year studies only. It covers awardees' full tuition fees, and is tenable for the normal duration of the programmes concerned. The Scholarship would be renewed annually subject to satisfactory academic performance of the awardees. In the 2023/24 AY, the average amounts of scholarship for awardees of undergraduate and research postgraduate studies, i.e. the tuition fees charged by the universities on non-local students, are about \$161,000 and \$42,100 respectively.

Proposed Injection of \$1 Billion into the Fund

6. To encourage more outstanding students from countries and regions along the B&R to pursue further studies in Hong Kong, the Chief Executive proposed in the 2023 Policy Address the injection of an additional \$1 billion into the Fund, and to use the investment return generated to increase the annual quota of the B&R Scholarship by 50% to 150 starting from the 2024/25 AY.

7. Since its launch, the B&R Scholarship has been well received by

countries and regions along the B&R, their outstanding students and participating local universities. In the past five cohorts (2018/19 to 2022/23 AY), we received nominations from 51 B&R countries (including the five designated countries of the Scholarship), covering Central Asia, South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Africa and Central America. The current annual quota of 100 scholarship places is unable to meet the relevant demand. Coupled with the increase in the non-local student quota of publicly-funded post-secondary institutions to 40% from the 2024/25 AY, it is expected that institutions will admit more students from outside Hong Kong, in particular those from countries and regions along the B&R, and the number of nominations for the B&R Scholarship will increase accordingly. We consider that there is a genuine need to increase the quota of the B&R Scholarship.

8. In addition, the Government has been actively promoting education co-operation with countries and regions along the B&R, including the setting up of dedicated B&R Scholarship quotas for specific countries which have signed MoUs on education co-operation with Hong Kong. With the increase in the number of B&R Scholarship (Designated Countries) places, the number of scholarships available to outstanding students from non-specific B&R countries will correspondingly decrease. There is a genuine need to increase the quota of the B&R Scholarships in order to attract more outstanding students from countries and regions along the B&R to pursue further studies in Hong Kong.

Monitoring Mechanism

9. The Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporated acts as the Trustee of the Fund. The Secretary for Education has established a Steering Committee and an Investment Committee to advise on the overall strategy and policy pertaining to the administration and development of the Fund and to formulate investment policies and appoint fund managers for the Fund respectively. An annual report on the operation of the Fund will be submitted to the Steering Committee for endorsement and published for public information. The audited accounts of the Fund will also be tabled before the Legislative Council annually.

Financial Implications

10. The 50 additional B&R Scholarship quota will be allocated to non-local students enrolled in full-time publicly-funded undergraduate programmes in Hong Kong². Based on the current average annual scholarship amount of \$161,000 per recipient and the normal duration of study of four years, the

² The allocation of the 50 additional scholarship quota will be conducted by the HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund Steering Committee in accordance with the existing mechanism.

additional annual expenditure is estimated to be around \$32 million. The expenditure may increase with future tuition fee adjustments.

11. As at mid-October 2023, the unaudited balance of the Fund is around \$3.16 billion (the principal of the Fund is \$3.07 billion). There is a need to inject \$1 billion into the Fund as the existing investment income of the Fund will be insufficient in meeting the additional estimated expenditure arising from the 50 additional scholarship quota mentioned in paragraph 10 above. The injection will be made by using the existing resources of the Education Bureau. The additional investment income generated from the injection, after deducting reasonable expenses related to the administration of the Fund (e.g. investment management fees and other administrative expenses), will be used for meeting the expenses for the additional scholarship quota in the long run. In the event of market volatility, the Government may need to use a small portion of the principal of the Fund to finance the expenditure under special circumstances.

Way Forward

12. Subject to the Panel on Education's support for the above proposal, the Education Bureau plans to seek the approval of the Finance Committee of the LegCo for the creation of a non-recurrent commitment for effecting the injection of \$1 billion into the Fund within the current financial year.

Indicators

A. New Indicators

1. Press ahead the building of an International Hub for Post-secondary Education

- **Starting from the 2024/25 academic year**, double the non-local student quota of publicly-funded post-secondary institutions to **40%**. The institutions may gradually increase the non-local student intake and attract more students from abroad and the Mainland to further their studies in Hong Kong, thereby expanding the capacity of the institutions and developing Hong Kong into an international post-secondary education hub; and
- **Starting from the 2024/25 academic year**, increase the quota of the B&R Scholarship by 50%, and gradually increase that of the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme by one-third from 300 to **400 places** per academic year, in order to attract more outstanding talents to study and conduct research in Hong Kong.

2. Press ahead with the development of UAS

- Draw up **within 2024** the criteria for qualifying as UAS, covering aspects such as admission, curriculum, accreditation, career pathways, and industry engagement, in conjunction with HKCAAVQ and with reference to international experience;
- Promulgate the details of the financial and related support for UAS, including providing additional subsidies to encourage institutions to offer more applied degree programmes in relation to disciplines involving professional skills and enhance the enrolment incentive **within 2024**; and
- Set up an alliance of UAS **within 2024**.

3. Promote VPET

- Launch **at least four** applied degree programmes **starting from the 2024/25 academic year**.

4. Promotion of STEAM education

- Announce the curriculum framework of the Science subject for primary schools **within the 2023/24 school year** for implementation starting from the 2025/26 school year, with a view to strengthening students' scientific and creative thinking;
- Launch a pilot scheme on mathematical modelling at primary level **within the 2023/24 school year**, and complete all lesson tryouts by the 2024/25 school year;
- Set up school-based student talent pool in at least 75% of publicly-funded primary and secondary schools with an aim to identify and nurture gifted talent **by the end of 2024/25 school year**; and
- Arrange for at least one Mathematics teacher in each publicly-funded secondary school to undergo professional development training on mathematical modelling **by the end of 2025/26 school year**.

5. Patriotic education

- Promote patriotic education on and off campus and **in the 2023/24 school year**:
 - Announce the curriculum framework of Humanities subject for primary schools **within the 2023/24 school year**; conduct textbook reviews, provide 4 000 training places for teachers and teaching resources **in the 2024/25 school year**, and introduce the subject **in the 2025/26 school year**;
 - Conduct focus inspections on the implementation of national

education in at least **50 schools** to enhance the quality and effectiveness of national education;

- Launch the “Love Our Home, Treasure Our Country 2.0” series of inter-school national education activities with expected attendance reaching **15 000**;
- Organise on-site enrichment seminars on national security education for about **2 000** principals and teachers; and
- Organise about **45** Mainland study tours for about **5 000** newly-joined teachers in publicly-funded schools and promoted teachers in public sector schools.

6. Strengthen support for ethnic minorities

- Expand the Summer Bridging Programme on Chinese learning to include non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students progressing to Primary 5 and Primary 6 **starting from the 2023/24 school year**, design more diversified learning materials under the Online Chinese Language Self-learning Resources for NCS students, prepare for the offer of after-school Chinese language courses for lower primary NCS students on a trial basis using adapted learning materials for the Youth Chinese Test, and increase the number of schools that provide school-based life planning services for NCS students to **20** schools.

7. Enhance support for students’ mental health

- Launch “Mental Health Literacy” resource packages suitable for upper primary and junior secondary levels **within the 2023/24 school year**.

B. On-going and Valid Indicators for Specified Tasks Introduced in the 2022 Policy Address

1. Enhance post-secondary education

- Students in UGC-funded universities studying in STEAM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) will reach around 35% **by the 2026/27 academic year**; and
- Students in UGC-funded universities studying in disciplines relevant to “the eight centres” will reach around 60% **by the 2026/27 academic year**.

2. Promotion of STEAM education

- Arrange for STEAM co-ordinators/teachers of at least 75% of publicly-funded schools to undergo core professional training on I&T **within the 2023/24 school year**;
- Organise or participate in quality STEAM activities of reasonable scale at the school, inter-school, territory-wide or international level by all publicly-funded schools **starting from the 2023/24 school year**; and
- Implement enriched coding education and incorporate learning elements of I&T (e.g. AI) in the relevant curricula at the upper primary and junior secondary levels respectively in at least 75% of publicly-funded schools **by the end of 2024/25 school year**.

3. Support for students with special educational needs

- Enhance the existing staff provision of resource teachers for primary and secondary sections of aided special schools and extend it to schools for social development **starting from the 2024/25 school year** to facilitate special schools to provide additional support in learning and development for about **4 000** students comorbid with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

4. Promote Mainland and international exchanges

- Establish the first teacher training and exchange base in collaboration with Mainland authorities and institution **in the 2023/24 school year**, with a view to organising regular professional training, exchanges and collaboration projects;
- Provide a five-year grant for secondary schools **starting from the 2023/24 school year** to organise study tours exploring workplaces in the GBA, with around **100** secondary schools to be subsidised in the first year for organising **100** relevant tours;
- Launch the “Guangdong-Hong Kong Sister Kindergarten Exchange Programme” **starting from the 2023/24 school year**, with **50** kindergartens to be benefitted in the first year;
- Continue to provide more opportunities for students to participate in Mainland study tours with the following targets:
 - Reserve adequate places for all students in publicly-funded schools to participate in at least one subsidised Mainland exchange programme each in their primary and secondary stages under the Mainland Exchange Programme for Junior Secondary and Upper Primary Students and the Mainland Exchange Programme for Secondary School Students;
 - Participate in a Mainland study tour for all students taking the senior secondary Citizenship and Social Development subject; and
- Provide opportunities of learning experience outside Hong Kong for around 50% of local undergraduate students of UGC-funded universities **within the 2025/26 academic year**.