

For discussion
on 31 October 2017

Legislative Council Panel on Education

2017 Policy Address Education Bureau's Policy Initiatives

This paper sets out the major education-related initiatives in the Chief Executive's 2017 Policy Address delivered on 11 October 2017.

2. Talent, in particular our young talent, is the most important element for Hong Kong's development, and education is the key to nurturing them. Government expenditure on education is therefore the most meaningful investment for our future. Our education policy objective is to develop the future generations into citizens who are socially responsible and showing a sense of national identity, possessing an affection for Hong Kong and an international vision. Through learning, young people will be able to explore their potential, cultivate their interests and enhance their strengths so that they are well-equipped for the future and set to contribute to the community.

New Initiatives

A. Review of Various Aspects of the Education System

3. The current-term Government has, upon taking office, immediately increased recurrent expenditure on education by \$3.6 billion per annum commencing the 2017/18 academic year for the implementation of a package of priority measures in the education system (covering kindergarten, primary, secondary and special education as well as post-secondary education), with the aim of addressing some of the problems in the education system. We will continue to conduct reviews on the following issues:

- (i) Enhancing the professional development of teachers, which includes establishing a professional ladder for teachers in recognition of the expertise of the teachers in certain subjects and as encouragement to teachers to acquire specialised skills in teaching Chinese as a second language and students with special educational needs (SEN), and exploring the policy on an all-graduate teaching force;
- (ii) reviewing the existing curricula, inculcating in students a stronger sense of

national identity and an international perspective, providing opportunities for students' all-round development in culture, arts, sports and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), etc. and instigating innovative thinking;

- (iii) reviewing the Territory-wide System Assessment and school-based assessment to seek enhancements in teaching and learning;
- (iv) promoting vocational and professional education and training (VPET) to cater for students' diverse abilities and interests, and fostering closer business-school collaboration to meet the manpower needs of Hong Kong;
- (v) revisiting the role and positioning of self-financing post-secondary institutions;
- (vi) clarifying the Education Bureau's (EDB) relationship with school sponsoring bodies and schools, forging ahead with school-based management, and removing encumbrances for the education sector to provide more room for studies and exchanges on education policies;
- (vii) attaching importance to parent education and strengthening home-school cooperation to discourage the culture of excessive competition so that children can grow up happily and healthily; and
- (viii) strengthening funding support for research and hostel development in the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded sector.

4. For kindergartens (KGs), the new Free Quality KG Education Policy has been implemented starting from this school year. The Government will review the salary arrangements of KG teachers to explore the feasibility of putting in place a salary scale for KG teachers. Based on the data of three school years from 2017/18 to 2019/20, we will assess the implications of a salary scale for KG teachers on the stability of the teaching force, sustainable development of quality services, as well as flexibility and diversity of the KG sector. EDB will further consult the KG sector and stakeholders and chart the way forward.

5. The Government will set up task forces and invite education experts, including professionals who understand the situation of frontline teachers, to conduct the above review. Among others, we have invited UGC to review the existing research support strategy and the level and allocation mechanism of research funding for the higher education sector by establishing a task force to be chaired by member of the Research Grants Council Professor TSUI Lap-chee. Regarding the self-financing sector, we will establish another task force to be

chaired by Professor Anthony CHEUNG Bing-leung to revisit the role and positioning of the self-financing post-secondary institutions and the way forward of sub-degrees. The Government will also strengthen its research efforts to assist teachers and schools in enhancing their professional standards, and to improve teaching methods and strategies continuously. The Chief Executive will host an annual “Chief Executive Summit on Quality Education” in the second quarter of 2018. Stakeholders of the education sector, including frontline teachers, will be invited to the summit to chart the future together.

B. Primary and Secondary Education

(i) Provision of Air-conditioning Systems in Public Sector Schools

6. To create a better learning environment, EDB will provide air-conditioning in the standard teaching facilities (including classrooms and special rooms), student activity centres and assembly halls of public sector schools. Starting from the 2018/19 school year, a recurrent Air-conditioning Grant will be provided for all public sector schools to pay for the related daily expenses.

7. EDB and the Architectural Services Department will take into account the actual situation of individual schools and arrange for the installation of air-conditioning systems in the related facilities as necessary in phases. Given that the conditions of individual schools vary, the corresponding scope and in turn the works programme and costs for individual schools would also differ. The scope of works and related technical arrangements, and in turn the works schedule and estimated costs, can only be confirmed after visiting the schools for detailed review of their situation.

8. Schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) will also benefit from the initiative. The recurrent Air-conditioning Grant will be subsumed in the DSS unit subsidy rates of schools. For DSS schools which would require installation of air-conditioning systems, EDB will provide the required resources.

(ii) Enhancing the Professional Development of Teachers and Principals

9. The Government recommends providing a non-recurrent funding of \$500 million to support suitable projects under the T-excel@hk strategic work plan of the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals and to implement various measures to enhance the professional development of teachers and principals in the coming 10 years starting from the 2018/19 school year, with an annual disbursement of around \$50 million. Teachers and students of primary and secondary schools, KGs and special schools may all benefit from the initiative.

(iii) Provision of Subsidy to Needy Primary and Secondary Students for Purchasing Tablet Computers

10. The Government has started to establish WiFi campus for all public sector schools since the 2015/16 school year to facilitate the use of mobile computing devices by teachers and students for e-learning in class. Relevant works will be basically completed in the 2017/18 school year. Schools have been positive towards this project. A number of schools have implemented “Bring Your Own Device” policy and adopted e-learning resources, textbooks and learning management platforms extensively so that student learning has become more personalised.

11. We understand that the development of e-learning will create burden on students from low-income families. We will invite the Community Care Fund (CCF) to consider providing subsidy to needy primary and secondary students for purchasing tablet computers. Implementation details will be discussed by the CCF Task Force and the Commission on Poverty.

C. Post-secondary Education

(i) Supporting the Academic and Research Development of Higher Education Sector

12. Teaching and research are considered the two principal missions of the higher education sector. Across the world, different jurisdictions rely increasingly on their higher education sector to carry out research, in order to enable industry to flourish, innovate and meet social needs, and thus enhance the long-term competitiveness of the economy. As aforementioned, UGC will establish a task force to holistically review the research policy and funding support strategy, with a view to ensuring quality of research, and that such research can meet the needs of and can translate into edges for Hong Kong at the same time. Depending on the outcome of the review, we will consider in what way resources should be provided to further support the academic and research development of the higher education sector.

13. Universities in Hong Kong have made remarkable academic achievements and are highly reputable around the world. Our universities also shoulder the mission of grooming high-calibre talents for Hong Kong. The Government will provide further support to the researchers and students of local universities in a more proactive manner and enhance Hong Kong’s position as a regional education hub. We also need a wider research talent pool in the development of an innovative and technology-based economy. By injecting \$3

billion into the Research Endowment Fund (REF), we will provide studentships, equivalent to the payable tuition fee¹, for local students admitted to UGC-funded research postgraduate programmes, thereby incentivising more local students to engage in research work and in turn promoting the development of innovation and technology.

14. We will seek funding approval from the Finance Committee for the injection into REF as early as practicable so that investment income could be generated early for provision of the studentship to benefit the students concerned. In view of the lead time for generating investment incomes, the UGC will first deploy its existing resources to provide studentship for local students² (including new and continuing students) admitted to UGC-funded research postgraduate programmes via the universities in the 2018/19 academic year.

(ii) Establishment of Hostel Development Fund (HDF)

15. For years, the Government has not been able to provide sufficient hostel facilities to allow all local undergraduate students enrolled in UGC-funded universities to experience hostel life during their study. This also reduces the incentive for non-local students to study in Hong Kong, making it impossible for us to achieve the policy objective of creating an internationalised campus. If we continue with the arrangement where each and every university hostel project has to go through internal competition for resources before being submitted to the Legislative Council Public Works Sub-committee and Finance Committee for funding, the issue of shortfall in university hostels will unlikely be eased. The Government will therefore adopt a new approach of setting up a \$12 billion HDF for construction of university hostels so as to increase hostel facilities at a faster pace. The funding provided to each hostel project will be calculated on the basis of a unit subsidy rate for a hostel place. As per established practice, the Government will fund up to 75% of the construction cost. The UGC-funded universities have rich experience in hostel development. This new mode of funding will leave room for the universities to exercise creativity in architectural design. That said, to ensure proper use of public money, we will formulate a vetting and monitoring mechanism. We will present details of the HDF proposal to the Education Panel in due course, and then seek funding approval from the Finance Committee.

(iii) Regularisation of the “Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme” (HKSES)

¹ The prevailing tuition fee is \$42,100 per academic year.

² Limited to students who do not require a student visa / entry permit issued by the Immigration Department for studying in Hong Kong.

16. HKSES was launched in November 2014 to support outstanding local students to pursue studies in world renowned universities outside Hong Kong, with a view to grooming a top cadre of talents with global vision, international network and world-class education, thereby contributing to enhancing Hong Kong's competitiveness as Asia's World City in a globalised knowledge economy. Since its launch in 2014, HKSES has been well received by the community. The number of applications has been on the rise. The disciplines that the awardees of HKSES pursue cover a wide spectrum. HKSES has been effective in grooming talents who can contribute to the development of Hong Kong in different areas.

17. We will regularise HKSES from the 2019/20 academic year onwards to continue the effort to subsidise up to 100 outstanding local students per cohort in their pursuit of undergraduate and postgraduate studies in world-renowned universities outside Hong Kong, with a view to nurturing more top talent in various fields to support the development of Hong Kong.

D. Injection into the Qualifications Framework (QF) Fund

18. The Government spares no efforts in developing and implementing the QF. The QF Fund supports various stakeholders to participate in the QF and enhances the promotion and public education of QF, with a view to promoting lifelong learning and meeting the manpower needs of Hong Kong. QF has been implemented for nine years. At present, about 8 000 QF-recognised academic and vocational qualifications are listed in the Qualifications Register. EDB has also conducted comparability studies of QFs with the European Commission and the relevant authorities in New Zealand, Scotland and Ireland. Such international co-operation will enhance the international image and recognition of the Hong Kong QF and promote the mobility of learners with the recognised qualifications.

19. Nevertheless, many people in the community do not have a good understanding of QF. We need to further consolidate and drive the development of QF, enhance recognition of qualifications in different industries and provide quality assured pathways for further studies and career development for youngsters. We will also sustain our efforts in exploring more exchange and collaboration opportunities on QF with the Mainland and other countries/regions. The Government will inject \$1.2 billion into the QF Fund so as to continue implementing the relevant initiatives. We will consult the Panel on Manpower on the proposed injection into the QF Fund.

On-going Initiatives

A. KG Education

20. The Free Quality KG Education Policy has been smoothly implemented from the 2017/18 school year. Under the new policy, the Government provides direct subsidy to eligible local non-profit-making KGs for the provision of quality half-day education services for all eligible children aged between three and six. A large majority of half-day KGs are free. As for whole-day and long whole-day KGs, given that additional subsidy is provided by the Government, the fees are at a low level. Needy families would be provided with fee remission and a grant to defray the school-related expenses.

21. Under the new policy, we improve the quality of KG education in various aspects, including further enhancing learning and teaching in accordance with the revised curriculum guide; encouraging KGs to optimise the enhanced teacher-pupil ratio to enable teachers to have more capacity in developing school-based curriculum, engaging in professional development, catering for students' diversity and strengthening communication with parents; enhancing teachers' professional competence through various means; refining the Quality Assurance Framework; enhancing the governance and transparency of KGs and stepping up monitoring by the Government; strengthening the support to non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students and students with diverse learning needs; and enhancing parent engagement and parent education, etc.

22. Starting from the 2018/19 school year, we will adjust the salary-related subsidies for teaching staff under the Free Quality KG Education Policy on a school year basis according to the annual civil service pay adjustment. We will also extend the two-year tide-over grant (2017/18 and 2018/19 school years) for three more years up to the 2021/22 school year so that KGs joining the Free Quality KG Education Scheme may retain their long serving teachers with higher salaries within the reference salary range promulgated under the Scheme. The Government will also start to study the salary arrangements of KG teachers to explore the feasibility of putting in place a salary scale for KG teachers.

23. The Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) will make use of the Language Fund to provide Chinese and English enhancement programmes for KG teachers, including training on skills in teaching Chinese to NCS students. SCOLAR will invite post-secondary institutions to organise the programmes in the 2017/18 to 2019/20 school years. It is anticipated that about 7 000 KG teachers could be subsidised to take part in the programmes.

B. Primary and Secondary Education

(i) Providing Additional Teaching Staff for Primary and Secondary Schools

24. The teacher-to-class (T/C) ratio for public sector primary and secondary schools (including special schools) has been increased by 0.1 across-the-board starting from the 2017/18 school year to provide additional teaching staff for schools to take forward various education initiatives and enhance the quality of education for the benefit of our students. The relevant initiative has brought about an increase of over 2 000 regular teaching posts in public sector primary and secondary schools in the 2017/18 school year.

25. The additional teaching posts created under the 0.1 increase in T/C ratio are all graduate posts. Schools can deploy the teachers to implement various education initiatives. The additional teaching posts so generated from the increase in T/C ratio will not be counted towards the calculation of the promotion post entitlement in this exercise so as to allow time and space for conducting the review on the professional development of teachers, including the establishment of a professional ladder for teachers, to attract talent to join the teaching profession and ultimately to enhance the quality of our education.

(ii) Increasing the Ratio of Graduate Teacher Posts in Public Sector Primary Schools

26. After increasing the ratio of graduate teacher posts in public sector primary schools from 50% to 55% and 60% in the 2015/16 and 2016/17 school years respectively, we further enhance the ratio to 65% in the 2017/18 school year so as to attract more talent to join the teaching force of primary education and to enhance the quality of teaching. EDB will expedite the implementation of the policy on an all-graduate teaching force.

(iii) Introducing the Paid Non-local Study Leave Scheme

27. To create space for teachers' professional development, the Government will introduce a paid non-local study leave scheme for serving secondary school teachers on a pilot basis. Teachers will broaden their professional perspective and keep abreast of the latest trend in global education developments by taking part in professional development activities, such as specific courses or experiential learning attachment programmes for about one to three months. Through participants' reflection, they will be able to apply what they have learnt in their work upon completion of relevant courses/programmes. The scheme is expected to benefit some 150 teachers during its three-year pilot run. The first batch of programmes scheduled for April to June 2018 includes two different themes, namely "Interdisciplinary Learning & Entrepreneurship Education" and

“Catering for Students with SENs”, which will be held in Finland and Australia respectively.

(iv) Extending the Retention Period of Surplus Teachers

28. To stabilise the teaching force and facilitate the sustainable development of secondary schools amidst the progressive rebound of the overall secondary one student population, the Government will continue to implement relief measures, including allowing aided secondary schools with surplus teachers arising from reduction of secondary one classes from the 2013/14 to 2017/18 school years to apply for extending the retention period of the teachers concerned up to the 2018/19 school year and to liaise with stakeholders to reinstate the number of students per class to that prior to the 2013/14 school year.

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

29. Schools are allowed to opt to turn the Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant and the Career and Life Planning Grant (CLPG) into regular teaching posts from the 2016/17 school year for enhancing the implementation of the senior secondary curriculum and strengthening life planning education and related guidance services. About 320 public sector secondary schools have turned the Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant and/or CLPG into regular teaching posts in the 2016/17 and 2017/18 school years. Schools which opt to turn CLPG into regular teaching posts in the 2016/17 or 2017/18 school year can also apply for a one-off “Transitional CLPG”, at the amount of \$100,000, to address school-based needs and to facilitate the implementation of the tasks in their original school plans. Subject to the implementation progress, we will conduct a review in the 2017/18 school year.

30. Besides providing a recurrent CLPG to all eligible public sector schools, EDB will continue to strengthen the support to schools for the implementation of life planning education through various measures, such as strengthening on-line resources, conducting advisory visits to schools, organising different professional development activities for teachers, increasing the number of structured training places and setting up networks for schools and teachers, etc. EDB has also commissioned non-governmental organisations to run two pilot projects on work experiences for students with specific learning difficulties and NCS students.

31. EDB will continue to encourage more business entities and community organisations to participate in the Business-School Partnership Programme (BSPP) to forge a closer partnership with schools. In the 2016/17 school year, there were over 270 business partners under the BSPP, offering over 1 500 career

exploration activities and more than 260 000 students benefitted from these activities. To further mobilise different sectors of the community to provide work experience programmes and nurture a culture of supporting the young people for better life planning in society at large, EDB has launched the Work Experience Movement (WEM) since the 2016/17 school year. Up to now, more than 200 commercial and community organisations have participated in the WEM and offered over 2 000 places of work experience quota for students, covering more than 30 trades and industries.

(vi) Improving School Facilities

32. Having regard to the circumstances of individual schools, the Government has been implementing various measures over the years to improve the school facilities so as to enhance the teaching and learning environment of schools. Measures include the completed School Improvement Programme, the existing reprovisioning and redevelopment programmes, as well as the annual major repairs mechanism. We understand that the community is concerned about school facilities at old school premises. In accordance with the consensus reached among EDB, the Education Panel and the sector, the Government has formulated an improvement works programme earlier this year to address the problem arising from the typical architectural design of the so-called “matchbox-style school premises”. EDB and our consultants have subsequently engaged individual schools in in-depth discussions regarding possible improvement works items and related arrangements. Improvement works has commenced during this summer break. In addition, our consultants will also seek to identify, from the technical perspective, potential scope for campus expansion and other flexible uses of space within existing school premises to alleviate the impact on the teaching and learning environment because of inadequate space at these school premises. In parallel, EDB will continue to actively identify suitable sites and vacant school premises for reprovisioning existing schools and expedite the allocation through the established open and fair competitive school allocation mechanism. Among the 28 primary schools currently operating at “matchbox-style school premises”, together with the two schools allocated with vacant school premises for reprovisioning purpose through the School Allocation Exercise launched this March, a total of four schools will be reprovisioned in due course.

(vii) Curriculum Development

a. Chinese History and Chinese Culture

33. EDB completed the first stage of consultation for the revision of junior secondary Chinese History subject curriculum in October 2016. Teachers surveyed generally agreed that there was a need to review the existing curriculum

which has been implemented for 20 years. They also agreed in general with the recommendations, such as the principles and aims of revision, the adoption of the principle of “putting equal emphasis on ancient and modern times” in designing the curriculum, and appropriate incorporation of cultural characteristics and Hong Kong’s development. On the basis of positive response by the education sector, the Committee responsible for revising the curriculum has further refined the curriculum. The second stage of the consultation will be conducted soon to collect teachers’ views so as to ascertain the content of the curriculum. In addition, to enable students to have a systematic Chinese history education, EDB will include Chinese History as a compulsory independent subject for the junior secondary level in the 2018/19 school year. At present, over 90% of schools have already put in place Chinese History as a compulsory independent subject. For the remaining schools which adopt other curriculum modes to promote Chinese history education, EDB will liaise with schools and provide support. Unless they have clear evidence of teaching effectiveness or very exceptional circumstances, they should change to adopting an independent subject mode for Chinese History as far as possible.

34. To promote Chinese history and Chinese culture, and to enhance students’ interest, EDB will continue to enhance teacher training, develop teaching and learning resources, and enrich Mainland exchange programmes and learning activities for teachers and students. EDB has provided a one-off grant of \$100,000 and \$150,000 respectively to each public sector and DSS primary and secondary school (including special school), to help teachers enhance the teaching of General Studies in primary schools, Chinese Literature in secondary schools, as well as Chinese Language and Chinese history in both primary and secondary schools, and students of secondary and primary schools to admire and inherit the spirit of excellence and the civilisation of the Chinese people.

b. Language Education

35. As regards language education at the primary and secondary levels, SCOLAR has endorsed implementing the following two programmes through the use of the Language Fund:

- a. a time-limited grant for primary schools to enrich the language environment on campus and refine the school-based English Language curriculum. The grant will enhance support for English learning in primary schools with sustainable impacts, in particular for the transition from kindergarten to junior primary, as well as to cater for both more able and less able students; and
- b. a vocational English programme for senior secondary students who are

interested in pursuing vocational and professional education and training or are prepared to work, so as to enhance their English proficiency and provide them with relevant recognition for further studies and employment. The related vocational English courses will be offered by three post-secondary institutions and recognised under the QF. Successful completion of the courses will entitle students to an English qualification for admission to the Higher Diploma and Associate Degree programmes offered by the conferring institution, and prepare them for work.

c. STEM Education

36. Regarding STEM education, apart from having disbursed one-off grants to public sector primary and secondary schools in the 2015/16 and 2016/17 school years respectively, EDB has updated the curricula of the Science, Technology and Mathematics Education Key Learning Areas, with a view to enhancing the ability of students in integration and application of knowledge and skills and nurturing their creativity, collaboration and problem-solving capability. In addition, the supplementary document on “Computational Thinking – Coding Education” will be completed soon for use by schools. For the professional development of teachers, starting from the current school year, EDB will arrange a series of intensive training programmes for the leadership tier and middle managers of all primary and secondary schools to enhance their capacity in planning and implementing school-based STEM-related activities. The STEM Education Centre newly set up in the Arts and Technology Education Centre at Lok Fu, Kowloon, will commence operation shortly to provide training and relevant teaching support to primary and secondary school teachers. To provide more opportunities for students to apply what they have learnt and to enable the sharing of experiences among peers, we will collaborate with tertiary institutions and other relevant organisations to arrange more large-scale quality activities for students, e.g. education fairs related to science and technology.

d. Basic Law Education

37. EDB further promotes students’ learning of the Basic Law and the concept of “One Country, Two Systems” through continuous development of learning and teaching resources, organisation of Basic Law education-related learning activities, updating of related curricula, provision of teacher training and exchange programmes with Mainland teachers and students. A 15-hour module on “Constitution and the Basic Law” has been developed and teaching resources have been updated for schools’ use from mid-2017.

38. To facilitate the better planning of Basic Law education in schools,

EDB has continuously organised professional training courses for principals and teachers since the 2016/2017 school year. The General Studies Curriculum Guide for Primary Schools (Primary 1 to Primary 6) released in July this year clearly stipulates the related compulsory core learning elements of Basic Law education. The Secondary Education Curriculum Guide updated in 2017 also provides schools with suggestions on implementing Basic Law education, so as to help schools review the implementation of Basic Law education for further enhancement of the school planning of Basic Law education.

e. Information Technology (IT) in Education

39. The Fourth Strategy on IT in Education has been fully implemented since the 2015/16 school year with good progress in all measures. Among these measures, the establishment of WiFi campus for some 1 000 public sector and DSS schools will be basically completed in the 2017/18 school year. We have disbursed an extra one-off IT grant of \$200,000 on average per school in 2017 to enhance support in the practice of e-learning. Other measures such as setting up of Centre of Excellence schools for sharing good practices in e-learning, reviewing of school curriculum, provision of training for school heads and teachers and enhancing the supply of e-learning resources have also been successfully rolled out. According to feedback obtained by EDB through various channels, schools in general acknowledged that e-learning has strengthened the learning motivation and self-directed learning ability of students.

40. To meet the needs of schools, starting from the 2017/18 school year, we provide an additional recurrent cash grant of \$25,000 per month to all public sector primary and secondary schools (including special schools) for strengthening the IT staffing support to practise e-learning and take forward various education initiatives which will harness IT.

f. Supporting the “Belt and Road” (B&R) Initiative

41. In alignment with the direction for the ongoing curriculum renewal, EDB will strengthen students’ understanding of the background and meaning of the history, religion and culture of the countries/regions along B&R through the relevant subjects (e.g. Chinese History, History, Arts and Religious Studies) and learning activities. Students’ understanding of the vision and action plans for promoting the B&R Initiative, its importance to the future development of Hong Kong, the opportunities created, as well as their understanding of the current international political structure and financial and economic development will also be enhanced through subjects such as Liberal Studies, Geography, Economics as well as Life and Society. Apart from Chinese and English, students are encouraged to learn the languages of the countries/regions along B&R to enhance

their ability to communicate with people in these countries/regions.

42. EDB will also encourage schools to organise related student activities and competitions such as project learning competitions to provide opportunities for students to explore and understand further the history of B&R, and the strategies and actions adopted by the Mainland government for promotion of the B&R Initiative, as well as providing students with Mainland Exchange Programmes along the Silk Road. The B&R Initiative has been included in the contents under the Priority Themes of the Quality Education Fund to subsidise relevant activities to broaden students' horizons.

(viii) Enhancing the Opportunities for Primary and Secondary Students to Join Mainland Exchange Programmes

43. In alignment with the curriculum renewal, the prospects for pursuing further studies or career in the Mainland and the development initiatives of our country, EDB will continue to adopt a variety of strategies to further enhance the quality and quantity of Mainland exchange programmes to enable students to consolidate their classroom learning, understand the history and culture of our country and the indivisible relationship between Hong Kong and our country, as well as to appreciate and inherit the distinctive Chinese culture and national spirit. Having regard to the strategic developments of our country, EDB will enrich the Mainland exchange programmes to enable more teachers and students to have first-hand experience of our country's latest developments through on-site visits to provinces and cities along B&R, to the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Bay Area and to enterprises of the innovation and technology sector, and reflect on the opportunities and challenges brought about by these developments for Hong Kong and our country, then the contributions to be made. About 60 000 students were subsidised to participate in the Mainland exchange programmes in the 2016/17 school year. In the 2017/18 school year, exchange quotas will be further increased to above 100 000, which is sufficient for every student to join at least one Mainland exchange programme in the respective primary and secondary stages.

(ix) Promoting Interflows between Sister Schools in Hong Kong and the Mainland

44. EDB has implemented a three-year pilot scheme with effect from the 2015/16 school year through which a fixed grant of \$120,000 per annum and professional support are provided to local public sector and DSS schools (including special schools) that have formed sister schools with their counterparts in the Mainland. Schools show good response to the pilot scheme. The number of sister schools has increased by about 280 after the implementation of

the pilot scheme and the number of Hong Kong schools that have sister school(s) in the Mainland is over 620. We will review the progress and effectiveness of the pilot scheme in the current school year.

C. Post-secondary Education

(i) Non-means-tested Subsidy for Self-financing Undergraduate Studies

45. Starting from the 2017/18 academic year, the Government provides a non-means-tested annual subsidy of \$30,000 for eligible students pursuing full-time locally-accredited local and non-local self-financing undergraduate (including top-up degree) programmes (save for those enrolled in places already supported under the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors (SSSDP)) offered by eligible institutions in Hong Kong; and a non-means-tested annual subsidy of \$5,000 for eligible students pursuing eligible undergraduate (including top-up degree) programmes in the Mainland. The Government announced a list of eligible programmes and relevant application arrangements in August 2017. We will maintain constant communication with participating institutions regarding the implementation arrangements.

(ii) SSSDP

46. Since the 2015/16 academic year, the Government has launched SSSDP on a pilot basis for three cohorts to subsidise about 1 000 students per cohort to undertake designated self-financing undergraduate programmes for nurturing talent that meets Hong Kong's social and economic needs. The Government will regularise SSSDP starting from the 2018/19 academic year and increase the number of subsidised places to about 3 000 per cohort. Current students of the designated programmes will also receive the subsidy from that academic year. It is expected that about 13 000 students will benefit from the scheme each academic year. The 37 designated programmes under the scheme in the 2018/19 academic year fall under 10 industries with keen manpower demand, namely healthcare, architecture and engineering, testing and certification, creative industries, computer science, financial technology, insurance, logistics, tourism and hospitality, and sports and recreation. SSSDP adopts a two-tier unit subsidy arrangement in which an annual subsidy of up to \$40,000 is provided to programmes which are not laboratory-based while an annual subsidy of up to \$70,000 is provided to laboratory-based programmes. We will continue with our annual liaison with other policy bureaux in making appropriate adjustments to the disciplines with keen manpower demand and the number of subsidised programmes and places in accordance with Hong Kong's social and economic development as well as industry sectors' needs.

(iii) Implementation of Matching Grant Scheme (MGS)

47. The Government has launched six rounds of MGS since 2003 to help the higher education sector diversify its funding sources. To further enhance the quality of self-financing post-secondary education sector, and to help institutions tap more funding sources and foster a philanthropic culture, the Government launched the seventh MGS in August 2017 for a period of two years for application by eligible self-financing local degree-awarding institutions (i.e. The Open University of Hong Kong, the Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong under the Vocational Training Council (VTC) and all approved post-secondary colleges registered under the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320)). We have reserved \$500 million for matching purpose.

(iv) Increasing the Number of Subsidised Senior Year Undergraduate Intake Places

48. From the 2015/16 academic year and in the triennium that follows, the intake of senior year undergraduate places in UGC-funded institutions will progressively increase by a total of 1 000 places, i.e. from 4 000 to 5 000 per annum. In other words, 5 000 meritorious sub-degree graduates will be able to articulate to subsidised degree programmes each year by the 2018/19 academic year.

(v) Promoting Innovation and Technology Industry

49. The Government requests the universities to conduct more research projects that meet the needs of the development of Hong Kong and are impactful and translational, so as to tie in with the work to promote the development of industries and re-industrialisation. In this regard, the Government requested in early 2017 UGC to complete the review on the allocation of research grants within one year and expand the assessment criteria to include research impact and effectiveness of knowledge and technology transfer.

50. As requested by the Government, all the universities refined and implemented their three-year knowledge and technology transfer plans expeditiously within six months and strengthen the role of their Knowledge Transfer Offices in co-ordinating and commercialising the research output. UGC consulted the Innovation and Technology Bureau (ITB) when carrying out these tasks. ITB welcomes the effort of the universities in enhancing technology transfer for addressing the development needs of the innovation and technology industries in Hong Kong. UGC will continue to keep in view the implementation progress and take this into account as one of the assessment criteria for funding allocation in future.

D. VPET

(i) Promotion of VPET

51. VPET plays a pivotal role in broadening the learning opportunities for school leavers and in-service personnel, as well as nurturing the requisite human capital in support of Hong Kong's development. The Government is committed to promoting VPET, and encourages young people to choose their own pathways for further studies and join different industries in accordance with their abilities and interests.

52. The Government has all along stressed the importance of VPET in the sustainable social and economic development of Hong Kong. We have been actively implementing the recommendations of the Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education including the rebranding of vocational education as VPET, the launch of relevant promotion and publicity activities, and the provision of grant subsidies for secondary schools to cover Applied Learning course fees. Nonetheless, stakeholders in general still consider VPET inferior to traditional academic education. This bias is not conducive to the development of VPET and the relevant industries. We will strengthen our promotion efforts by widening our use of social media and online platforms to promote VPET to youngsters and parents. EDB will develop and maintain a VPET portal as a one-stop platform that provides information on VPET and related industries. EDB will also assist education and training institutions, employers and trade associations to organise seminars and visits for senior secondary students and parents. Besides, the Government will set up a Working Group on Promotion of VPET to review how VPET can be better promoted to cater for students' diverse abilities and interests; and how to foster closer business-school collaboration to meet the manpower needs of Hong Kong.

(ii) Campus Development of VTC

53. Having regard to VTC's need for campus development, the Government has identified a site at Cha Kwo Ling in Kowloon East for VTC to develop a campus with adequate capacity and state-of-the-art facilities. The relevant planning work is being carried out. Besides, the Government supports VTC in principle to construct the Aviation and Marine Engineering Centre on the site of the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (Tsing Yi), so as to further upgrade the training facilities for VPET. With a view to enhancing the professional image and quality of VPET, we will continue to support VTC's strategic development plan for its campuses to gradually upgrade the teaching facilities for VPET and enhance the learning environment for students.

E. Strengthening the Support for Students with Diverse Needs

(i) Ethnic Minority Students Learning Chinese

54. Starting from the 2014/15 school year, EDB has implemented measures to step up support for NCS students (notably ethnic minority students) in learning the Chinese language systematically to facilitate their integration into the community. Support measures include the implementation of the “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework” (“Learning Framework”), which is developed from the perspective of second language learners and aims to help NCS students overcome the difficulties in learning Chinese with a view to enabling them to bridge over to mainstream Chinese Language classes. EDB has also provided the Applied Learning Chinese (for NCS Students) at the senior secondary levels to enable NCS students to have an additional channel to acquire an alternative Chinese qualification, which would be useful for their further studies and career pursuits.

55. To facilitate the implementation of the “Learning Framework” and creation of an inclusive learning environment in schools, starting from the 2014/15 school year, EDB has increased the additional funding to schools to about \$200 million per year. All schools admitting 10 or more NCS students are provided with an additional funding ranging from \$0.8 million to \$1.5 million, while schools admitting less than 10 NCS students may also have an additional funding on a need basis for organising diversified modes of after-school support for learning Chinese to consolidate their NCS students’ learning of the language in an immersed Chinese language environment. A dedicated team has also been set up to ensure the schools concerned to make optimal use of the enhanced funding to support their NCS students’ learning of the Chinese language. EDB also provides teaching materials, professional development programmes and school-based professional support services to help schools implement the “Learning Framework”.

56. Based on the research framework drawn up in light of advice from research and language experts, EDB continues to collect and analyse data to evaluate the effectiveness of the support measures for NCS students (including the “Learning Framework”) and refine them as appropriate.

57. EDB has extended the “Professional Enhancement Grant Scheme for Chinese Teachers (Teaching Chinese as a Second Language)” to encourage more Chinese Language teachers to pursue programmes on enhancing their pedagogical knowledge and skills in teaching Chinese to NCS students.

58. With the development of the B&R Initiative, we envisage that NCS students (notably ethnic minority students) having mastery of the Chinese language complemented by their native languages would enhance social integration and harmony and also constitute a pool of talents to the Hong Kong society.

(ii) Students with SEN

59. To help public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools to implement the Whole School Approach to integrated education, EDB has been providing schools with additional resources, professional support and teacher training.

60. Starting from the 2017/18 school year, EDB has regularised CCF's Pilot Project on Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs), by phases in three years, to provide each public sector ordinary primary and secondary school with an additional post in the teaching staff establishment to facilitate the assignment of a designated teacher in schools as SENCO to support integrated education.

61. From the 2017/18 to 2018/19 school years, we will also develop in public sector ordinary schools an evidence-based model with strategies and related teaching and learning resources for supporting the learning and development of senior secondary students with autism having average to high average intelligence. EDB will evaluate the efficacy of the different strategies and compile a support manual cum resource package for the reference of schools in Hong Kong, as well as promote the application of the strategies and experiences to schools.

62. Starting from the 2017/18 school year, the Learning Support Grant for public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools will also cover students with mental illness in order to help schools cater for the students' learning, social, emotional and behavioural needs. Besides, we will organise "Professional Development Programme for Mental Health" for teachers in order to enhance their capacity to identify and support students with mental health needs. EDB will offer subsidy for supply teachers to schools.

63. The Government has launched a "Student Mental Health Support Pilot Scheme" for two school years since the 2016/17 school year by setting up multi-disciplinary teams in 17 schools. The core members of each multi-disciplinary team include a psychiatric nurse, a designated teacher and a school social worker, working closely with psychiatric doctors, educational psychologists, clinical psychologists, occupational therapists, etc. to enhance medical-educational-social collaboration among different professionals in order to provide support services

to students with mental health needs at the school setting. The Government will make reference to the outcome of the evaluation study to consider how to provide appropriate support services to students with mental health needs.

64. From the 2016/17 school year, School-based Educational Psychology Service has covered all public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools. From the same school year, the ratio of educational psychologist to school has gradually been improved to 1:4 for schools with a great number of students with SEN, in order to enable the schools to provide more comprehensive and regular follow-up and intervention services to the students, and to strengthen preventive and developmental work.

65. To improve the implementation of various measures, we will review the implementation of integrated education and listen to the views of different stakeholders on an on-going basis, and introduce improvement measures when necessary and practicable.

(iii) Students in Special Schools

66. Starting from the 2017/18 school year, EDB provides the ensuing special schools with additional teaching staff, allied health staff and resources to improve the special education services:

- a. provision of an Assistant Primary School Master/Mistress (Curriculum Development) to special schools that operate less than 6 approved primary classes;
- b. provision of an Occupational Therapist and an Occupational Therapist Assistant to special schools for children with mild intellectual disability (ID), moderate ID, visual impairment (VI) and hearing impairment;
- c. provision of a speech therapist to the special school for children with VI and schools for social development which serve children with moderate to severe emotional and behavioural difficulties; and
- d. extension of “Additional Support Grant for Enhancing the Support for Boarders with Medical Complexity in Aided Special Schools” to day students and day students cum boarders with medical complexity in special schools.

67. Besides, we provide additional grant to schools for children with severe ID, schools for children with physical disability and school for children with VI

cum ID for employing additional nurses and related staff to strengthen support for 24-hour ventilator-dependent students. The new initiative enables the existing nurses of special schools to pool resource together in catering for other students in need.

(iv) Gifted Students

68. To nurture talents and enhance the international competitiveness of Hong Kong, the Gifted Education (GE) Fund of \$800 million has been set up for generating investment income to further support the development of GE in Hong Kong. EDB has also set up the Advisory Committee on GE to advise the Secretary for Education on the future development of GE, etc.

69. With support from the GE Fund, the Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education will continue to provide professional development for GE in a systematic manner, as well as strengthen strategically collaboration with various universities and professional bodies in designing appropriate programmes for gifted students. Meanwhile, EDB will continue to implement school-based GE programmes including providing professional development for principals and teachers of primary and secondary schools, and establishing school networks for sharing of practical experience to cater for the gifted/more able students in schools.

(v) Needy students

70. The Government will continue to implement various student financial assistance programmes to ensure that no student in Hong Kong will be denied access to education due to a lack of means.

71. CCF has launched pilot programmes starting from the 2014/15 school year to provide a hostel subsidy for needy undergraduate students (up to \$9,040 in the 2017/18 school year) and disburse additional academic expenses grant for students pursuing eligible self-financing post-secondary programmes (up to \$2,250 in addition in the 2017/18 school year, raising the maximum amount of grant to \$7,830). The Commission on Poverty has agreed to extend the pilot programmes to 2018/19 school year.

72. CCF has also launched a pilot programme, starting from the 2015/16 school year, to enhance the academic expenses grant for eligible post-secondary students with SEN. Each eligible student can receive an additional academic expenses grant up to \$8,550 in the 2017/18 school year. We will consider the way forward having regard to the outcome of the project.

73. 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.

Education Bureau
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