

**Progress Report on the Motion on
“Prerequisites for the Next Secretary for Education” at the
Legislative Council Meeting of 14 December 2016**

At the Legislative Council meeting of 14 December 2016, the following motion was passed:

“That, education is the foundation of social development and the key to the nurturing of talents, therefore the Government must regard education with seriousness and complement education through formulating sound policies; in this connection, this Council urges that the next Secretary for Education must have strong commitment, be willing to heed views of stakeholders in education and members of the public, have a sense of mission for education, be conversant with education policies, and be willing to seriously examine the inadequacies of the education system and make improvements, so that our next generation can receive a more well-rounded education of better quality.”

2. The above motion involves appointment of principal officials of the fifth term of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government. Article 48(5) of the Basic Law of the HKSAR stipulates that the Chief Executive (CE) of the HKSAR shall nominate and report to the Central People’s Government for appointment of principal officials, including Directors of Bureaux. As such, the appointment of the Secretary for Education of the fifth term of the HKSAR Government should be handled by the CE of the fifth term of the HKSAR Government in accordance with Article 48(5) of the Basic Law.

3. Having said that, we would like to set out the policies and measures of the Education Bureau (EDB) to provide objective information for reference. The Secretary for Education, in the motion debate held on 15 December 2016, introduced in details the latest developments of education in Hong Kong and various areas of work of EDB. A number of education-related new initiatives were also announced in the 2017 Policy Address delivered on 18 January 2017. We attach herewith a summary of the relevant initiatives (Annex) for ease of reference.

Education Bureau
April 2017

2017 Policy Address Education Bureau's Policy Initiatives

New Initiatives

Kindergarten Education

- Starting from the 2017/18 school year, the Government will implement the free quality kindergarten education policy. The Government's recurrent expenditure on pre-primary education is estimated to increase from about \$4 billion in 2016-17 to about \$6.7 billion in the 2017/18 school year. It is estimated that about 70% to 80% of the subsidised half-day kindergarten places will be free. As for whole-day kindergarten services, the school fees will also be maintained at a low level given that the Government will provide an additional grant for whole-day and long whole-day kindergartens to alleviate the financial burden of school fees on parents. A grant will also be provided for kindergarten students from needy families to cover their school-related expenses.
- The Government will provide all kindergartens joining the scheme with a one-off start-up grant in the 2016/17 school year (The grant will be capped at \$300,000 for each kindergarten, with \$200,000 disbursed on a per school basis and \$800 disbursed on a per capita basis.).
- We shall organise an Education Forum for principals and teachers of Guangdong, Shenzhen, Hong Kong and Macao to enhance their professional capacity through diversified modes such as theme-based seminars and experience sharing. This will enhance the quality of kindergarten education and strengthen the collaboration and exchange in kindergarten education among Hong Kong, the Mainland and Macao.
- We will also invite the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) to consider, through the use of the Language Fund, launching Chinese and English enhancement programmes aiming at enhancing kindergarten teachers' Chinese and English literacy and pedagogy (including training on skills in teaching Chinese to non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students).

Primary and Secondary Education

- EDB has arranged our consultants to visit the 26 “matchbox-style school premises” for formulation of improvement measures. The Government will

allocate additional resources to take forward the aforementioned improvement scheme.

- To create space for teachers' professional development, the Government will implement a paid non-local study leave scheme on a pilot basis for serving secondary school teachers by taking part in professional development activities, such as specific courses or experiential learning attachment programmes lasting for about one to three months. The scheme is expected to benefit some 150 teachers during its three-year pilot run.
- To further sustain the development of secondary schools affected by the temporary decline in secondary school student population and stabilise the teaching force, following last year's initiative to allow aided secondary schools to apply to extend the retention period of surplus teachers arising from reduction of S1 classes in the 2013/14 and 2014/15 school years up to the 2017/18 school year, aided secondary schools with surplus teachers arising from reduction of S1 classes in the 2016/17 school year are also allowed to apply to extend the retention period of the teachers concerned up to the 2017/18 school year.
- The Government launched a two-year pilot scheme named "Student Mental Health Support Scheme" in the 2016/17 school year to set up a multi-disciplinary platform to assist schools in supporting students with mental health needs by enhancing communication and collaboration among healthcare, education and social welfare professionals.
- Starting from the 2017/18 school year, the Learning Support Grant that we provide for public sector ordinary secondary and primary schools will cover students with mental illness, hence helping schools to enhance their support in addressing these students' learning, social, emotional and behavioural needs.
- 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 school students with autism having average to high average intelligence.
- We will provide additional grant to schools for children with severe intellectual disability, schools for children with physical disability and schools for children with visual impairment cum intellectual disability for employing additional nurses and related staff to strengthen the care for students who are 24-hour dependent on ventilator.
- EDB, in collaboration with the Home Affairs Bureau, will encourage public sector schools to further open up their school premises and review the present situation of promoting sports development in schools with a view to encouraging students to develop a habit of taking part in sports activities.

- To promote Chinese history and culture, EDB will strengthen teachers' professional development and provide a one-off grant of \$100,000 and \$150,000 respectively to each public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) primary and secondary school (including special schools), totaling about \$125 million, to help teachers enhance the teaching of General Studies in primary schools as well as Chinese Language, Chinese History and Chinese Literature in primary and secondary schools, so as to enable students to admire and inherit the spirit of excellence and the civilisation of the Chinese people.
- In respect of language education in primary and secondary schools, we will invite SCOLAR to consider supporting two initiatives by the Language Fund:
 - (a) to provide a time-limited grant to enhance and sustain the support for English learning in primary schools with a view to enriching the language environment on campus and refining the school-based English Language curriculum, catering in particular for the transition from kindergarten to junior primary as well as learner diversity with equal emphasis on more able and less able students; and
 - (b) to provide a vocational English programme for senior secondary students who aspire to pursue VPET and training or who are prepared to work, with a view to enhancing their English proficiency and enabling them to obtain relevant qualifications from recognised courses for further studies and employment. It is proposed that these courses be provided by post-secondary institutions on a self-financed basis and recognised under the Qualifications Framework. Successful completion of the course will entitle students to certificates and an English qualification for admission to the Higher Diploma and Associate Degree programmes offered by the same institution, and help them lay a good foundation for future employment.

Post-secondary Education

- Since the 2015/16 academic year, the Government has launched a three-cohort Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors (SSSDP) on a pilot basis to subsidise 1 000 students per cohort to undertake designated self-financing undergraduate programmes. The Government decides to regularise SSSDP, making it a recurrent initiative from the 2018/19 academic year onwards and increasing the number of subsidised places from about 1 000 to about 3 000 per cohort. Current students of the designated programmes will also receive the subsidy from the 2018/19 academic year onwards. It is expected that about 13 000 students will benefit from the scheme in each academic year.

- We will launch the seventh Matching Grant Scheme (MGS) for application by qualified local self-financing degree-awarding institutions with a view to further enhancing the education quality of the self-financing post-secondary education sector by helping such institutions tap more funding sources and fostering a philanthropic culture. The duration of the seventh MGS will be two years, commencing from the third quarter of 2017. As the new round of MGS only covers local self-financing degree-awarding institutions, we will reserve \$500 million for the matching purpose which will lapse after two years.
- We will continuously support the newly-established Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao University Alliance (GHMUA) in synergising and deepening the co-operation among higher education institutions in the three places in areas such as teaching, research and technology transfer, and student exchange; and actively support universities in Hong Kong to strengthen cooperation with leading institutions in other Mainland cities such as Beijing and Shanghai.
- The Government will request 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 will request the University Grants Committee (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.
- The Government will also request, through UGC, all the universities to refine 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.
- 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. 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) to further upgrade the training facilities for VPET.
- The Government will play an active role in the setting up of the country's Qualifications Framework (QF) to share our experience in the implementation of QF in Hong Kong and provide advice where needed. We will also continue to explore opportunities for co-operation with other countries or places in the development of QF.

Other Initiatives

- This year, we will provide a one-off grant of \$200,000 to each public sector and DSS secondary school to facilitate the implementation of school-based STEM education.
- EDB will, through different means such as ongoing development of learning and teaching resources, renewal of relevant curricula, organisation of Basic Law education related learning activities and professional development as well as exchange programmes with teachers and students from the Mainland, further promote the learning of the Basic Law and understanding of “One Country, Two Systems”.
- The Fourth Strategy on Information Technology in Education has been fully implemented since its launch in the 2015/16 school year. To enhance support to schools in the practice of e-learning, we will disburse an extra one-off Information Technology grant at an average amount of \$200,000 per school this year.
- EDB will also encourage schools to organise related student activities and competitions to provide opportunities for students to explore and understand further the history of Belt and Road (B&R), and the strategies and actions adopted by the Mainland government for promotion of the B&R Initiative, as well as providing 5 600 student places in Mainland Exchange Programmes along the Silk Road this year. The B&R initiative has been made a priority theme under the Quality Education Fund for the current school year to subsidise students to take part in related activities so as to broaden their horizons.
- To nurture talents and enhance the international competitiveness of Hong Kong, an allocation of \$800 million was approved by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council in June 2016 for setting up the Gifted Education Fund.
- To enhance the implementation of the senior secondary curriculum, and strengthen life planning education and related guidance services, schools may turn the Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant as well as the Career and Life Planning Grant (CLPG) into regular teaching posts from the 2016/17 school year onwards. Schools which opt to turn the grant into regular teaching posts in the 2016/17 or 2017/18 school year can also apply for a one-off “Transitional Career and Life Planning Grant”, at the amount of \$100,000, to address school-based needs and to facilitate the implementation of the tasks in their original school plans.
- To attract more talents to join the teaching force of primary education so as to enhance the quality of teaching, we have increased 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 and the ratio will be

further enhanced to 65% in the 2017/18 school year.

- In alignment with the curriculum, EDB will continue to adopt a variety of strategies to further enhance the quality and quantity of Mainland exchange programmes. Subsidy quotas will be further increased to more than 90 000 in the 2016/17 school year with a view to enabling every student to join at least one Mainland exchange programme in both the primary and secondary stages.
- 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 200 and the number of Hong Kong schools that have sister school(s) in the Mainland is over 540.
- In the 2015/16 school year, more than 140 business entities and community organisations joined the Business-School Partnership Programme. Over 950 activities were organised and over 275 000 students benefitted from the activities. EDB has launched the Work Experience Movement in the 2016/17 school year. Up to now, more than 200 commercial and community organisations have participated in the Movement to offer career exploration opportunities for students.
- 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.
- We will continue to implement the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme to support up to 100 outstanding local students per cohort to pursue studies in world renowned universities outside Hong Kong in 2017/18 academic year, priority will be given to programmes that are conducive to building up Hong Kong's long-term competitiveness, in particular the disciplines related to innovation and technology.
- To support more financially needy Hong Kong students for pursuing undergraduate studies in the Mainland, the Government has advanced the review of the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme (MUSSS). The designated Mainland institutions to be covered under MUSSS 2017/18 will include 90 Mainland institutions participating in the Admission Scheme in the 2017/18 academic year and 66 Mainland institutions under "Project 985" and/or "Project 211" not having participated in the Admission Scheme. It is envisaged that the expanded MUSSS will benefit the bulk of needy Hong

Kong students pursuing undergraduate studies in the Mainland.

- We announced the launch of Hong Kong Scholarship for B&R Students (Indonesia) in December 2015. Also, by making use of private donations, we will launch the B&R Scholarships for students from Malaysia and Thailand in the 2017/18 academic year so as to further strengthen the ties and educational exchange between Hong Kong and economies along the B&R routes. We will also strengthen people-to-people bonds and support for B&R students through organising cultural exchange activities.
- Apart from encouraging more outstanding students from countries and regions along B&R to pursue studies in Hong Kong, the Scheme for Subsidy on Exchange for Post-secondary Students was introduced since January 2015 to provide local students enrolling in full-time locally accredited sub-degree or undergraduate programmes with means-tested subsidy up to \$15,000 per student. Starting from July 2016, the Scheme has been extended to cover exchange activities of shorter duration with the ceiling of subsidy raised to \$60,000 per student. Besides, to capitalise on the new opportunities created by the B&R initiative, the Scheme for Subsidy on Exchange to B&R Regions for post-secondary Students was introduced to local students to go on exchanges in the B&R regions starting from July 2016. Each eligible student can apply for subsidies under the scheme twice capped at around \$50,000 in total.
- EDB, based on the research framework formulated, continues to collect and analyse data to evaluate the effectiveness of the series of measures implemented since the 2014/15 school year to step up support for NCS students (notably ethnic minority students) to learn the Chinese language, and will refine the support measures as appropriate. To facilitate schools' implementation of the Learning Framework and creation of an inclusive learning environment, 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.
- EDB is now reviewing the "Professional Enhancement Grant Scheme for Chinese Teachers (Teaching Chinese as a Second Language)" under the Language Fund so as to continue to encourage more Chinese language teachers.
- 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.
- Under the new free quality kindergarten education policy, apart from

continuing to provide fee remission under the Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme, the Government will also provide a school-related expense grant for needy families to defray expenditure incurred from learning or education of their children. Before the implementation of the new policy in the 2017/18 school year, Community Care Fund (CCF) has provided a one-off grant, up to \$3,770, for kindergarten students from needy families in the 2016/17 school year to cover their school-related expenses, benefitting about 40 000 students.

- CCF launched two three-year pilot programmes starting from the 2014/15 school year. The first one is the provision of a hostel subsidy for needy undergraduate students (up to \$8,790 in the 2016/17 school year). The other is to increase the academic expenses grant for students pursuing eligible self-financing post-secondary programmes (up to \$2,190 in the 2016/17 school year). Also, CCF launched a three-year 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 will receive an additional academic expenses grant up to \$8,320 in the 2016/17 school year.
- We will continue to support students in need in participating in after-school activities including after-school support on learning through school and NGOs.
- Since the 2016/17 school year, the School-based Educational Psychology Service has covered all public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools. From the same school year onwards, for the public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools with a large enrolment of students with SEN, the ratio of educational psychologist to schools will be progressively improved to 1:4.
- Funded by CCF, EDB has launched a three-year pilot project on Special Educational Needs Coordinators in the 2015/16 school year, under which a cash grant is provided for public sector ordinary secondary and primary schools with relatively more students with SEN and financial needs so that the schools could strengthen the teaching team and arrange a designated teacher as the SEN coordinator. A total of 124 schools participates in the pilot project, with about 9 700 students with SEN being the beneficiaries in the 2015/16 school year.