

## LCQ8: Industrial accidents of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Main Bridge

Following is a question by the Hon Chu Hoi-dick and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (May 9):

Question:

The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Authority (the HZMB Authority), jointly established by the governments of Hong Kong, the Guangdong Province and Macao, is responsible for the construction and operation of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the information provided by the HZMB Authority, as quoted by the Transport and Housing Bureau, indicates that since the commencement of the part in Mainland waters of the construction works of the HZMB Main Bridge project, a total of nine fatal industrial accidents resulting in nine deaths in total have happened so far, whether the Government knows the following details of each of such accidents (set out in a table):

- (i) the date and time of the accident,
- (ii) the location of the accident,
- (iii) the name and post title of the deceased,
- (iv) the gender and age of the deceased,
- (v) the sequence of events leading to the accident,
- (vi) the progress and outcome of the investigation into the cause of the accident, and
- (vii) the amount of the employee's compensation and the disbursement progress;

(2) whether it knows the number of serious work injury accidents since the commencement of the part in Mainland waters of the construction works of the HZMB Main Bridge project, and the resultant number of injuries, as well as the details of each of such accidents; and

(3) given that the Zhuhai Housing, Urban-Rural Planning and Development Bureau indicated in a gazette issued in October 2016 that an accident of collapse of structure and drowning of workers had happened in the HZMB Zhuhai boundary crossing facilities (BCF) project in August of the same year causing one death, whether the Government knows (i) if this deceased person was not counted towards the nine deaths mentioned in (1), and (ii) the respective numbers of industrial accidents as well as the resultant deaths and serious work injuries since the commencement of the construction works of the HZMB Zhuhai BCF and Macao BCF projects, and the details of each of such accidents?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Chu Hoi-dick's question is as follows:

The entire Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) project consists of two parts: (i) the HZMB Main Bridge (i.e. a 22.9 km-long bridge and a 6.7 km-long subsea tunnel) situated in Mainland waters which is being taken forward by the HZMB Authority; and (ii) the link roads and boundary crossing facilities under the respective responsibility of the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao.

The HZMB Authority is directly responsible for the construction and management of the HZMB Main Bridge. In the event of industrial accidents or cases of work injuries, the contractors concerned are required to report to the HZMB Authority and the relevant local government department(s) in a timely manner. According to the information provided by the HZMB Authority, since the commencement of construction of the HZMB Main Bridge, there were nine fatal accidents relating to the Main Bridge causing the death of nine workers. The details of the cases are at Annex. Apart from the nine fatal cases mentioned above, the HZMB Authority indicated that they had not received reports of other work injuries.

As regards the accident at the HZMB Zhuhai boundary crossing facilities project in August 2016 referred to in the question, the HZMB Authority indicated that the accident did not occur within the area of the HZMB Main Bridge project and therefore it was not included in the above nine accidents.

Based on the territoriality principle, the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao should be responsible for the link roads and boundary crossing facilities within their own boundaries; we do not have the information on industrial accidents that occurred in the sites of either the Zhuhai or Macao boundary crossing facilities project.

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## **Public invited to enjoy Cheung Chau Climbing Carnival (with photos)**

The Cheung Chau Climbing Carnival will be held at the soccer pitch of Pak Tai Temple Playground, Cheung Chau, this Sunday afternoon (May 13). Members of the public are invited to join and experience the exciting atmosphere of bun scrambling.

Interested members of the public who are at least 1 metre in height can participate in the bun tower climbing activity by making an on-site application. They can then climb the 14-metre-tall bun tower set up for the Bun Scrambling Competition to experience the fun of climbing.

Bun Tower Climbing Relays involving 20 teams from local tertiary institutions, government departments, public utilities and commercial and industrial organisations will also be staged, during which the fastest teams to finish the races will be the winners.

Members of the China Hong Kong Mountaineering and Climbing Union will be invited to brief visitors on climbing skills and safety aspects of bun tower climbing to let them learn more about the technical and safety aspects concerned.

Moreover, the public can make wishes at the Wishing Bun Tower at the venue. Other activities will include an exhibition of winning works from students' colouring and drawing competitions as well as variety shows, game stalls and handicrafts to enhance the fun of the carnival for families and friends.

The Climbing Carnival, one of the highlights of the 2018 Bun Carnival, will be held from noon to 6pm on Sunday at the soccer pitch of Pak Tai Temple Playground, Cheung Chau.

Jointly organised by the Hong Kong Cheung Chau Bun Festival Committee and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), the 2018 Bun Carnival is presented with the support of the Cheung Chau Wai Chiu County Association Limited, the Cheung Chau Rural Committee, the Islands District Office, the China Hong Kong Mountaineering and Climbing Union and the Islands District Council.

For enquiries, please contact the Islands District Leisure Services Office of the LCSD on 2852 3220, or visit [the department's website](#).



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## Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, May 9, 2018 is 99.4 (up 0.3 against yesterday's index).

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## LCQ15: Decline in population of school-aged Primary One students

Following is a question by Dr Hon Chiang Lai-wan and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (May 9):

Question:

According to the latest projected figures of the Education Bureau, the population of school-aged Primary One (P1) students will decline by 10 000 from 65 700 in the 2018-2019 school year to 55 700 in the 2020-2021 school year. Some members of the education sector are worried that primary schools may by then face another exercise of "reduction of classes and closure of schools", which will affect the teaching posts of more than 800 primary school teachers on contract terms. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will, in the light of the actual situation in each district, allow individual schools to exercise a certain degree of flexibility regarding the minimum student intake for allocation of classes, and encourage the injection of diversity into the modes of school operation; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it will make the best use of the situation by implementing small class teaching across the board in primary schools during the decline in the population of school-aged P1 students with a view to enhancing teaching quality; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will provide the affected teachers with professional training in relation to Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM) education and integrated education, so as to assist them in mastering the necessary skills to dovetail with the education manpower demand in future; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

According to the current projections of school-aged P1 students, the Education Bureau (EDB) anticipates that the overall demand for P1 places will reach its peak in the 2018/19 school year, begin to drop starting from the 2019/20 school year and then rebound slightly and temporarily for a few years from the 2021/22 school year onwards. Since the P1 student population has been increasing in recent years, the overall student population in public sector primary schools will generally remain stable despite the drop in P1 student population starting from the 2019/20 school year as the number of

students in other levels will remain large. Moreover, the EDB has implemented the flexible measures to meet the transient increase in demand for P1 places in recent years in accordance with the consensus reached with the school sector. These measures will be progressively withdrawn in view of the decline in the actual demand. This will relieve the pressure on class reduction arising from the diminishing demand for P1 places. There may be a decrease in the number of classes and teaching posts in individual schools in the next few years as a result of declining P1 student population. Yet, there will not be a substantial and immediate reduction in the overall number of classes and teaching posts in public sector primary schools as anticipated.

For schools which have adopted a "partly-enlarged class structure" in response to the increase in demand for P1 places in the past few years, there may be surplus teachers because of class reduction upon the graduation of the respective cohort of students. In this connection, the EDB is proactively considering targeted relief measures to help schools tackle this problem and stabilise the teaching force. To address the impact of the diminishing demand for P1 places from the 2019/20 school year and afterwards, the EDB met with representatives of the Subsidised Primary Schools Council and Hong Kong Aided Primary School Heads Association on January 17 this year to explain the future demographic change in respect of primary school student population and gauge their views on the issue, including the concerns and suggestions of schools in various districts, for formulation of corresponding measures. School heads present agreed that the progressive withdrawal of the temporary flexible measures to increase the supply of P1 places could effectively mitigate the impact of the decline in P1 student population. They also generally agreed with the preliminary suggestion for addressing the problem of surplus teachers arising from the "partly-enlarged class structure", which allows schools to retain surplus teachers for a short period of time to stabilise the teaching force. The EDB will continue to liaise with the school sector to keep in view the situation for the formulation of appropriate strategies.

My reply to the questions raised by Dr Hon Chiang Lai-wan is as follows:

(1) To optimise the use of public resources, the EDB has established the criteria for operation of classes since the implementation of the Primary One Admission System. In accordance with the principle of fairness, the criteria are applicable to all schools participating in the system. The EDB has, where circumstances permit, implemented small class teaching in public sector primary schools in phases starting from P1 in the 2009/10 school year. Since the allocation of P1 places is basically based on 25 students per class for schools implementing small class teaching (30 students per class for other schools), the threshold for operation of a P1 class has been lowered to 16 students. The number of P1 classes in each school net each school year is determined taking into account the anticipated demand for P1 places, the number of classrooms available, the class structure and parental choices, etc. Under the existing mechanism, a school having an intake of less than 16 students in a P1 class may not be allowed to operate a P1 class if there are still unfilled P1 places in other schools of the same school net. In such cases, the EDB will consider special factors, such as whether the school is

located in a remote area where there is no appropriate alternative school, to determine whether there is a need to operate a P1 class. On the other hand, the EDB conducts student headcount every September to verify the actual student enrolment of aided schools so as to determine the number of approved classes of the schools. If the number of classes has to be reduced because of decreasing student intake, then 25 students per class will be adopted as the basis for determining the number of approved classes. In other words, a school is allowed to operate two classes if it has an actual intake of 26 students.

Besides, the Government has all along encouraged diversity in school operation which goes beyond class sizes. Currently, among the public sector schools (including government and aided schools), most are aided schools managed by sponsoring bodies of various backgrounds (generally religious or charitable organisations), according to their missions. These schools are well-managed and have their unique characteristics. In addition to the public sector schools, there are Direct Subsidy Scheme schools, and private schools which offer local or non-local curricula to cater for the different needs of students and provide parents with more choices.

(2) Small class teaching is a teaching strategy. During the consultations in the past, most stakeholders considered it not desirable to rigidly implement small class teaching for all schools across-the-board. The EDB will continue to be pragmatic and flexible with the implementation of small class teaching, taking into account the expectations of schools, parents and students, the availability of classrooms to meet the demand for school places in individual districts, as well as the development needs of schools. At present, the EDB anticipates that the overall demand for P1 places will reach its peak in the 2018/19 school year and then progressively decline to a stable level. Depending on the supply and demand of school places in individual districts, and whether the schools have fulfilled the conditions for implementing small class teaching, the EDB will contact the schools concerned in due course.

(3) All along, the EDB has been organising a wide variety of professional development programmes and activities of different themes in response to various education policies, curriculum development and the needs of teachers and students. Serving teachers are encouraged to participate in these programmes and activities based on both their individual and school development needs. This would not only broaden teachers' professional knowledge but also professionally equip them to meet their needs. For example, the EDB regularly organises professional development programmes for teachers, including seminars and workshops, etc., in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics education (STEM education)/ Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics education (STEAM education) and integrated education (IE), to enhance their professional knowledge and teaching skills in these two areas. Moreover, the EDB has also commissioned teacher education universities to organise relevant training programmes. An example is the Certificate in Professional Development Programme on Curriculum Design, Pedagogy and Assessment for STEM Education in Primary Schools offered by the Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK). This programme covers not only the basic knowledge and pedagogy of STEM education,

but also the latest developments of STEAM education. For IE, apart from the commissioned Certificate in Professional Development Programme for Teachers (Catering for Diverse Learning Needs), EdUHK also offers structured training courses pitched at Basic, Advanced and Thematic levels to enhance the professional capacity of teachers in the implementation of IE.

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## **LCQ16: Non-local students being admitted to funded universities through taking the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination**

Following is a question by the Hon Ip Kin-yuen and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (May 9):

Question:

In this year's Budget, the Financial Secretary proposed that the Government pay the examination fees for candidates sitting for the 2019 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE). The measure applies to candidates who are enrolled in the 2018-2019 school year in registered schools approved for participation in the 2019 HKDSE and apply to sit for the 2019 HKDSE through their schools. On the other hand, it has been reported that some Mainland students have applied for admission and have been admitted to the eight universities funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC) (funded universities) through the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS) by means of taking HKDSE in Hong Kong. Separately, under the prevailing policies, funded universities may admit non-local students to UGC-funded programmes only by way of over-enrolment of up to 20 per cent of the total approved student number. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether registered schools approved for participation in the 2019 HKDSE include tutorial schools registered in Hong Kong; if so, whether non-local students taking the HKDSE programmes offered by such tutorial schools are eligible to sit for the 2019 HKDSE for free;

(2) of the number and percentage of non-local students among HKDSE candidates in each of the past five years, and the average number of subjects the examination on which such non-local students applied to sit for (with a breakdown by the place of origin of such students);

(3) whether, under the prevailing policies, non-local students may apply for admission to funded universities through JUPAS on the basis of their HKDSE



results; if so, whether the authorities know the number of non-local students who applied for admission to funded universities by such means and were admitted in each of the past five years (with a breakdown by the place of origin of such students and the name of the funded universities);

(4) whether it knows if the funded universities concerned have used the subsidised places available for local students to admit the non-local students mentioned in (3); if so, whether such universities have correspondingly increased the number of places for application for admission by local students; if not, how UGC ensures that the admission opportunities for local students will not be reduced as a result; and

(5) as some parents have relayed to me that although funded universities may admit non-local students only by way of over-enrolment of up to 20 per cent of the total approved student number, those students will still compete with local students for the limited places of the same programme, resulting in a lower chance for local students to be admitted to certain popular programmes, whether the authorities know if the various funded universities have at present set a ceiling on the percentage of non-local students in the total student number to be admitted to various programmes; whether the authorities will review the relevant arrangements with UGC?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the questions raised by the Hon Ip Kin-yuen is as follows:

(1) The participation of schools in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) is subject to the prior approval of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA). At the time of application for participation, the school should provide evidence that it is a registered school and is running courses and operating classes in accordance with the Education Bureau registration requirements; and that the school agrees to comply with the examination regulations. The HKDSE Participating School List (as at December 15, 2017) is available on the HKEAA website:

[www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/HKDSE/admin/participating\\_schools/generalsch.html](http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/HKDSE/admin/participating_schools/generalsch.html). The participating schools are not classified into categories by the HKEAA.

The measure for the Government to pay the examination fees for candidates sitting for the 2019 HKDSE is applicable to school candidates. Under normal circumstances, visitors from other places to Hong Kong would not be admitted to schools and become school candidates. The implementation details are elaborated in the ensuing paragraph.

Only bona fide Secondary 6 students in the school year 2018/2019 of registered schools approved for participation in the 2019 HKDSE (participating schools) may be entered as school candidates in the 2019 HKDSE. The students must be studying at the registered address of the schools. At present, schools have to refer to the relevant Education Bureau Circular to check whether the person is permitted by the Director of



Immigration to reside in Hong Kong when offering a school place to a person who is not a resident of Hong Kong. The registration entries of all students who are presented for the HKDSE by the participating schools must be approved by the school principals and submitted through the schools. Unless clearance is obtained from the Director of Immigration, visitors from other places to Hong Kong would not be admitted to any school in Hong Kong and hence he would not be able to enter for the HKDSE as a school candidate or be eligible for the measure of Government's payment of examination fees for candidates sitting for the 2019 HKDSE.

(2) According to the information provided by the HKEAA, when enrolling for the HKDSE, candidates need to provide their relevant personal data on the Hong Kong Identity Card (HKIC) or valid identification document for making relevant examination arrangements and identity verification. The HKEAA will not collect and handle any personal data irrelevant to examination administration, including the place of origin of students. Hence, the HKEAA does not have related statistics on the number of non-local candidates of the HKDSE. Referring to the statistics of identification document used by candidates, only a very small number of candidates do not use HKIC to enter for the HKDSE every year. The number of candidates who did not use HKIC to enter for the HKDSE from 2014 to 2018, the percentage among all candidates and the average number of subjects entered by them are as follows:

| Year of examination | No. of candidates not using HKIC to enter for the HKDSE (percentage among all candidates) | Average no. of subjects entered |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2018                | 184 (0.3 per cent)                                                                        | 5.5                             |
| 2017                | 55 (0.09 per cent)                                                                        | 5.0                             |
| 2016                | 42 (0.06 per cent)                                                                        | 4.2                             |
| 2015                | 41 (0.06 per cent)                                                                        | 3.7                             |
| 2014                | 44 (0.06 per cent)                                                                        | 3.3                             |

(3) to (5) Currently, the Government, through eight UGC-funded universities, provides 15 000 first-year-first-degree intake places annually. All these intake places must be used for admitting local students. In accordance with the prevailing policy, UGC-funded universities could only admit non-local students to UGC-funded programmes by way of over-enrollment of up to 20 percent of the approved student number, irrespective of the academic qualifications or results of any given examination used by non-local students for their applications. This 20 percent should all be outside the UGC-funded places. As such, non-local students would not compete with local students for UGC-funded places. In addition, to ensure public money would not be used to cross-subsidise non-local students, non-local students have to pay tuition fees at a higher level as compared to local students. At present, non-local students are paying about three to four times the tuition fees paid by local students.

Established in 1990, the Joint University Programmes Admissions System

(JUPAS) aims at handling centrally applications for admission to university programmes by students holding specific public examination results (currently the HKDSE). It is noteworthy that JUPAS is a system for processing admission applications centrally. The decision for admission is made by respective universities having regard to the admission criteria of different programmes.

According to the information provided by the JUPAS Office and UGC-funded universities, the number of non-local students who applied for admission to UGC-funded universities through the JUPAS route with HKDSE results and the number of such students admitted by the universities in the past five years are set out at Annex.

UGC-funded universities have put in place appropriate measure to ensure local students' opportunity for admission is not affected by JUPAS application submitted by non-local students. In brief, applications of non-local JUPAS applicants will be considered together with applications made by other non-local students through the non-JUPAS route. If a non-local JUPAS applicant is admitted, he/she will not take up any UGC-funded intake places that were for admission of local students and offered through JUPAS. Hence, non-local students will not compete with local students for UGC-funded intake places.

As a matter of fact, UGC-funded universities consider applications for admission, irrespective of whether they are made by local or non-local students, in accordance with the principle of fairness and merit-based selection. Each university administers its own admission policy and criteria as well as approved intake places to identify candidates that best fit the faculty's admission requirements. As in the past, the ranking of a JUPAS applicant in the offer list of a particular programme is not determined solely by HKDSE results. Other factors that are taken into consideration include performance in interviews/tests, banding of programme choices, the number of applicants of a given programme at a given year and other information provided in the online application forms.