

SED's opening remarks at LegCo Finance Committee special meeting

Following is the opening remarks (English translation) by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, at the special meeting of the Legislative Council Finance Committee today (April 9):

Chairman,

The total expenditure on education in 2020-21 is \$112.3 billion. Of this, the recurrent education expenditure increases by 7.8 per cent to \$99.6 billion, accounting for over one-fifth of the total government recurrent expenditure and taking up the largest share among all policy areas. The recurrent expenditure on education has, over 10 years (i.e. from 2011-12 to 2020-21 financial year), increased by 79 per cent with an average growth rate of 6.7 per cent per annum. This demonstrates the Government's long-term commitment to invest in education.

The current term Government has devoted substantial resources to education and implemented a series of measures in the past two years. Every aspect of the education sector can benefit from these measures. In 2020-21, we will consolidate the effects of these measures and, at the same time, keep allocating new resources to education as well as for nurturing talents and take forward the following new measures announced in the Policy Address and Budget.

For primary and secondary education, we will enhance the manpower arrangement for vice-principals in public sector schools; improve the demarcation arrangements for headship rankings as well as the manpower at the middle management level in public sector secondary schools; upgrade the Primary School Curriculum Leader post in public sector primary schools of a smaller scale. We will also enhance the staff establishment of the boarding section of aided special schools in order to provide better services for the boarders of these schools. The measures include upgrading the ranks of warden and assistant warden of boarding sections with a capacity of 40 or above, and increasing the number of assistant wardens and houseparents-in-charge; improving the Saturday and Sunday manning ratios; and providing an additional grant to the boarding sections of schools for children with physical disability, moderate intellectual disability (ID), severe ID and visual impairment cum ID to employ personal care workers or hire related services.

Starting from the 2020/21 school year, we will adjust the additional funding model for schools admitting non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students with an annual adjustment mechanism to enhance the support for NCS students in learning Chinese and create an inclusive learning environment in schools. We will provide all public sector primary and secondary schools, Direct Subsidy Scheme primary and secondary schools, and special schools, which admit a relatively small number of NCS students, with enhanced additional funding

under a new two-tiered arrangement. In addition, for five years starting from the 2020/21 school year, we will provide specific parent education programmes for parents of NCS students.

Furthermore, we will enhance the support for students with autism spectrum disorders by assisting public sector ordinary schools to deploy a tiered intervention model by phases. We will also regularise the student grant for secondary day-school, primary school and kindergarten students starting from the 2020/21 school year, and pay the examination fees for school candidates sitting for the 2021 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination.

In addition, we plan to launch the "Enhancement and Start-up Grant Scheme for Self-financing Post-secondary Education" to provide financial support for self-financing institutions in offering designated sub-degree or undergraduate programmes that meet market needs but require high start-up costs. We will also implement in the 2020/21 academic year a pilot scheme for five cohorts to provide fellowships for local students admitted to designated taught postgraduate programmes that meet Hong Kong's development needs.

As regards Vocational and Professional Education, we will implement a pilot programme for three years starting from the 2020/21 academic year to provide subsidies for trainees under the Training and Support Scheme of the Vocational Training Council to take part in study and exchange programmes outside Hong Kong.

Chairman, my colleagues and I will be happy to answer further questions from Members. Thank you.