

# EDB announces application details of Quality Education Fund e-Learning Funding Programme – Provision of Mobile Computer Devices and Internet Services Support

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (May 17) issued a circular memorandum to all public sector primary and secondary schools and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools informing them of the details of the Quality Education Fund e-Learning Funding Programme – Provision of Mobile Computer Devices and Internet Services Support (Funding Programme). Participating schools can apply for funding to purchase mobile computer devices for loan to needy students, and to provide Internet services support for students who are unable to acquire appropriate Internet services due to constraints of their living environment, so that all students can have equal opportunities in accessing e-learning. The EDB also announced the extension of the programme period of the Dedicated Funding Programme for Publicly-funded Schools (DFP).

A spokesman for the EDB said, "Under the epidemic, the blended mode of learning, i.e. face-to-face classes, e-learning at home and other modes of learning, already has become the new normal in teaching and learning. To further support schools in implementing the blended mode of learning and teaching under the new normal, the 2020 Policy Address proposed that funding would be set aside in the Quality Education Fund (QEF) to implement a three-year programme. The Funding Programme proposal is supported by the QEF Steering Committee, and will be implemented starting from the 2021/22 school year. The funding set aside for providing mobile computer devices and Internet services support is about \$1.5 billion, benefiting about 310 000 students."

The spokesman pointed out that the Government has all along kept in view and implemented different measures to support grass-roots students' e-learning such as providing Internet access subsidies to eligible families to support needy students for conducting e-learning at home, and implementing a three-year assistance programme through the Community Care Fund (CCF) to subsidise needy primary and secondary students for purchasing mobile computer devices since the 2018/19 school year. Upon the outbreak of COVID-19, students have needed to conduct e-learning at home before the full resumption of face-to-face classes. The EDB has strengthened its support for grass-roots students. On the one hand, flexible arrangements have been made to the CCF Assistance Programme, and all public sector primary and secondary schools and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools implementing e-learning have been encouraged to join the programme. In the 2020/21 school year, about 870 schools are participating in the programme, and about 140 000 students are expected to benefit from it, which is four times the total number of student

beneficiaries in the past two school years. On the other hand, to strengthen support for needy primary and secondary students who are unable to acquire appropriate Internet services due to constraints of their living environment, the EDB provided schools in need with a one-off top-up grant from late 2020 to early 2021 for them to purchase portable Wi-Fi routers and mobile data cards, benefiting over 15 400 students.

The above-mentioned CCF Assistance Programme will end by August this year. To facilitate the funding disbursement from the QEF to schools for benefiting students as early as possible, the EDB streamlined the administrative arrangements for schools with reference to the application procedures of the aforementioned CCF Assistance Programme. The EDB has also extended the ambit of beneficiaries. In addition to students who are receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance or are beneficiaries of the School Textbook Assistance Scheme, a quota is also provided for schools to identify students with genuine financial needs according to school-based criteria so that those students can also benefit.

During the three-year implementation period, schools can apply for the Basic Funding for each eligible student once to purchase a mobile computer device (with a three-year warranty and a mobile device management system installed) and basic accessories (e.g. a protective cover, a stylus pen and a headset) for loan to the student. The maximum amount provided for each student is \$4,700. Schools can also apply for the Additional Funding to purchase portable Wi-Fi routers and mobile data cards for loan to financially needy students who are unable to acquire appropriate Internet services due to the constraints in their living environment. The maximum amount provided for each student beneficiary over the three-year implementation period is \$1,700.

In addition, the QEF has implemented the four-year DFP starting from the 2018/19 school year for application of funding by public sector primary and secondary schools (including special schools), DSS schools and kindergartens joining the Kindergarten Education Scheme to launch school-based curriculum development and/or student support measures. The DFP was originally scheduled to end in the 2021/22 school year. As the epidemic may have affected schools' participation in the DFP, the QEF has decided to extend the implementation period of the DFP for two years until the 2023/24 school year to allow more time for schools to make holistic planning and optimise the use of the additional resources under the DFP (the total indicative value of projects at about \$500,000 for a kindergarten and that at about \$2 million for a school from the primary and secondary school (including special school) sectors). The prevailing application procedures and requirements will remain unchanged.

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**[May 2021 issue of "Hong Kong Monthly](#)**

# [Digest of Statistics" now available](#)

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) published today (May 17) the May 2021 issue of the "Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics" (HKMDS).

Apart from providing up-to-date statistics, this issue also contains two feature articles entitled "Hong Kong's International Investment Position, 2011 to 2020" and "The Profile of the Unemployed Population in Hong Kong in 2020".

"Hong Kong's International Investment Position, 2011 to 2020"

International Investment Position (IIP) is a balance sheet showing the stock of external financial assets and liabilities of an economy at a particular time point. Being a highly externally oriented economy, Hong Kong is very actively engaged in activities involving cross-territory investment. Analysis of Hong Kong's IIP is therefore particularly useful for assessing the financial soundness of the economy.

This feature article describes salient features of Hong Kong's IIP for the period 2011 to 2020.

For enquiries about this feature article, please contact the Balance of Payments Branch (1), C&SD (Tel: 3903 6990; email: [bop@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:bop@censtatd.gov.hk)).

"The Profile of the Unemployed Population in Hong Kong in 2020"

The labour market of Hong Kong deteriorated sharply in 2020. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased from 4.2% in the first quarter to 6.6% in the fourth quarter of 2020, the highest in 16 years. The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) rose from 162 200 to 245 800 over the same period. This feature article provides an analysis of the unemployed population in 2020 from various perspectives. It aims to give readers a better understanding of the unemployed population in Hong Kong.

For enquiries about this feature article, please contact the Household Statistics Analysis Section, C&SD (Tel: 2887 5208; email: [ghs@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:ghs@censtatd.gov.hk)).

Published in bilingual form, the HKMDS is a compact volume of official statistics containing about 140 tables. It collects up-to-date statistical series on various aspects of the social and economic situation of Hong Kong. Topics include population; labour; external trade; National Income and Balance of Payments; prices; business performance; energy; housing and property; government accounts, finance and insurance; and transport, communications and tourism. For selected key statistical items, over 20 charts depicting the annual trend in the past decade and quarterly or monthly trend in the recent two years are also available. Users can download the Digest at the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1010002&scode=460](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1010002&scode=460)).

Enquiries about the contents of the Digest can be directed to the Statistical Information Dissemination Section (1) of the C&SD (Tel: 2582 4738; email: [gen-enquiry@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:gen-enquiry@censtatd.gov.hk)).

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## **Effective Exchange Rate Index**

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, May 17, 2021 is 100.8 (same as last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, May 15, 2021 was 100.8 (same as last Friday's index).

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## **Target date of inaugural flights under HK-Singapore Air Travel Bubble deferred**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) announced today (May 17) that in view of the recent COVID-19 epidemic situation in Singapore, the Governments of the HKSAR and Singapore have decided to defer the target date of the inaugural flights under the bilateral Air Travel Bubble (ATB) scheduled for May 26.

A Government spokesman said that the two governments will continue to closely monitor the epidemic situation in both places, including the effectiveness of the enhanced anti-epidemic measures introduced by the Singapore Government, which have taken effect from yesterday (May 16) and would last till June 13. During this period, both sides will continue to maintain communication, exchange relevant data and statistics, and review developments closely before deciding on the way forward with the inaugural flights under the ATB. A further announcement will be made on or before June 13.

The spokesman stressed that both governments remain strongly committed to launching the ATB with a view to resuming air travel between the two regional aviation hubs and international cities in a gradual and orderly manner under a set of stringent public health control protocols.

Travellers who have already made bookings on designated flights during the period may wish to contact their airlines and adjust the itineraries according to their own circumstances.

For details of the ATB, please refer to the designated website:  
[www.tourism.gov.hk/travelbubble](http://www.tourism.gov.hk/travelbubble).

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## **Tuen Mun Hospital announces a sentinel event**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Tuen Mun Hospital (TMH) announced a sentinel event today (May 17):

A 54-year-old male patient admitted to the clinical oncology ward was found unconscious with a quilt and plastic bag covering his head by a nurse during the drug dispensing round at around 5am today. A resuscitation was attempted immediately by the staff and the patient's family was informed. The patient was certified dead at 7.45am. The hospital has already reported the case to the Police and will refer the case to the Coroner for follow-up.

TMH is deeply saddened by the incident and has expressed condolences, and offered necessary assistance to the family members. The incident has also been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office via the Advance Incident Reporting System. A root cause analysis investigation will be conducted to look into the incident and the report will be submitted in eight weeks.