

Sha Tin District Council
Minutes of the 6th Meeting of
the Education and Welfare Committee in 2017

Date : 31 October 2017 (Tuesday)
Time : 2:30 pm
Venue : Sha Tin District Council Conference Room
 4/F, Sha Tin Government Offices

<u>Present</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Time of joining the meeting</u>	<u>Time of leaving the meeting</u>
Ms LAM Chung-yan (Chairman)	DC Member	2:30 pm	3:28 pm
Mr WONG Fu-sang, Tiger (Vice-Chairman)	"	2:30 pm	3:28 pm
Mr HO Hau-cheung, SBS, MH	DC Chairman	2:30 pm	3:28 pm
Mr PANG Cheung-wai, Thomas, SBS, JP	DC Vice-Chairman	2:30 pm	3:28 pm
Mr CHAN Billy Shiu-yeung	DC Member	2:30 pm	3:28 pm
Ms CHAN Man-kuen	"	2:40 pm	3:28 pm
Mr CHING Cheung-ying, MH	"	2:38 pm	3:28 pm
Mr CHIU Chu-pong, Sunny	"	2:30 pm	3:28 pm
Mr CHIU Man-leong	"	2:30 pm	3:28 pm
Mr HUI Yui-yu, Rick	"	2:30 pm	3:28 pm
Mr LAI Tsz-yan	"	2:56 pm	3:28 pm
Mr LEUNG Ka-fai, Victor	"	2:30 pm	3:28 pm
Mr LI Sai-hung	"	2:30 pm	3:28 pm
Mr LI Sai-wing	"	2:58 pm	3:28 pm
Mr LI Wing-shing, Wilson	"	3:19 pm	3:28 pm
Mr MOK Kam-kwai, BBS	"	2:38 pm	3:28 pm
Mr NG Kam-hung	"	2:30 pm	3:28 pm
Ms PONG Scarlett Oi-lan, BBS, JP	"	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr PUN Kwok-shan, MH	"	2:30 pm	3:09 pm
Mr SIU Hin-hong	"	2:42 pm	3:28 pm
Mr TONG Hok-leung	"	2:30 pm	3:28 pm
Ms TSANG So-lai	"	2:56 pm	3:28 pm
Ms TUNG Kin-lei	"	2:30 pm	3:28 pm
Mr WAI Hing-cheung	"	2:30 pm	3:28 pm
Mr WONG Hok-lai	"	2:45 pm	3:13 pm
Mr WONG Ka-wing, MH	"	2:30 pm	3:28 pm
Ms WONG Ping-fan, Iris	"	2:30 pm	3:12 pm
Mr WONG Yue-hon	"	2:30 pm	3:28 pm
Mr YAU Man-chun	"	2:39 pm	3:02 pm
Mr YIU Ka-chun	"	2:40 pm	3:28 pm
Ms YUE Shin-man	"	2:30 pm	3:28 pm
Mr YUNG Ming-chau, Michael	"	2:30 pm	3:28 pm
Mr MOK Man-lok, Mannix (Secretary)	Executive Officer (District Council) 1 / Sha Tin District Office		

In Attendance

Mr CHAN Ping-ching, Roy	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Shatin) 1 / Social Welfare Department
Ms CHIU Lo-man	Senior School Development Officer (Sha Tin) 4 / Education Bureau
Ms LAU Yuk-yee, Lydia	Housing Manager (Tai Po, North and Sha Tin) 1 / Housing Department
Ms CHENG Ka-po, Theresa	Chief Liaison Officer / Sha Tin District Office
Ms LO Wai-man, Mimi	Acting Senior Liaison Officer (East) / Sha Tin District Office
Mr YUEN Chun-kit, Derek	Senior Executive Officer (District Council) / Sha Tin District Office

Absent

Mr CHAN Nok-hang	<u>Title</u> DC Member	(Application for leave of absence received)
Mr LEE Chi-wing, Alvin	”	(”)
Mr MAK Yun-pui	”	(”)
Mr YIP Wing	”	(”)
Mr CHAN Kwok-keung, James	”	(No application for leave of absence received)
Mr TING Tsz-yuen	”	(”)

Action

The Chairman welcomed members and representatives of government departments to the 6th meeting of the Education and Welfare Committee (EWC) for the year. She welcomed Ms CHIU Lo-man, Senior School Development Officer (Sha Tin) 4 of the Education Bureau (EDB), who attended the meeting for the first time and in place of Mrs YU CHOW Kai-ching, Alice.

Application for Leave of Absence

2. The Chairman said that the Secretariat had received applications for leave of absence in writing from the following members:

Mr CHAN Nok-hang	Sickness
Mr YIP Wing	”
Mr Alvin LEE	Official commitment
Mr MAK Yun-pui	”

3. Members unanimously approved the applications for leave of absence submitted by the members above.

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 5 September 2017
(EWC Minutes 5/2017)

4. Members unanimously confirmed the above minutes.

Matters Arising

Responses of the Relevant Government Departments to Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

(Paper No. EW 39/2017)

5. The views of Mr Michael YUNG were summarised below:

- (a) in respect of the projection and planning of school places, he remembered that a question was raised on this matter at a meeting of the Development and Housing Committee (DHC) and information was requested to be supplemented after the meeting. He enquired whether the EDB was preparing such information; and
- (b) the traffic assessment report originally submitted when the English Schools Foundation (ESF) borrowed the school premises set out clearly that they were required to implement a zero vehicle policy strictly in the former school premises of HK & KLN CCPA Ma Chung Sum Secondary School (the former Ma Chung Sum school premises) and the former school premises of Shatin Tsung Tsin Secondary School (the former Tsung Tsin school premises) in order to avoid serious impact on the traffic in the vicinity. Originally, the EWC reached common understanding on the borrowing of school premises by ESF based on its undertaking. Nevertheless, now after the zero vehicle policy was implemented to the fullest extent at Sha Tin College and Renaissance College, it was found that the policy failed to handle the traffic problem properly. People were concerned that if the zero vehicle policy was not implemented effectively, the traffic in the vicinity would be further affected after Island School was relocated to the former Ma Chung Sum school premises and the former Tsung Tsin school premises in the future. Now that the EDB assisted ESF in borrowing the vacant school premises at that time, it had the responsibility to follow up and account for the matter.

6. Mr Thomas PANG said that in respect of the borrowing of school premises by ESF, matters such as the lending of libraries had been discussed repeatedly at past meetings. One of the items was the zero vehicle policy. The vacant school premises lent were still being decorated and not yet used. Whereas, the school on Sui Wo Road had been implementing the zero vehicle policy for two months since the beginning of this school term, but the result was not satisfactory. There were still many vehicles, causing traffic jams. The result of the policy which ESF originally undertook was not obvious. He was concerned that the same problem would occur after Island School was relocated to the premises. He hoped that the EDB could follow up this matter and account to Sha Tin District Council (STDC) after the meeting.

7. Ms CHIU Lo-man gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) she said that regarding the member's question on the figure of school places in Ma On Shan area, the EDB had submitted relevant information to the DHC as one of the "responses of the relevant government departments to matters arising from the previous meeting"; and

- (b) both the EDB and ESF were aware of members' concern about the arrangement for the temporary school premises, including measures to mitigate the traffic problem and the arrangement of opening of libraries. The EDB would work with ESF to follow up closely and report to members on the implementation of each measure and the outcome in a timely manner. She said that the renovation works of the borrowed school premises had commenced in July, and the EDB had not received any related complaint or enquiry so far.

8. The Chairman asked the EDB to submit written responses to members' concerns after the meeting.

9. Members noted the above paper.

Discussion Items

2017-2018 Revised Work Plans and Funding Applications of Working Groups under the Committee
(Paper No. EW 40/2017)

10. Members unanimously endorsed the above paper.

Motion

Motion by Ms WONG Ping-fan, Iris on Requesting the Government to Provide More Support to Students to Relieve Parents' Pressure
(Paper No. EW 41/2017)

11. Ms Iris WONG said that her political party conducted a questionnaire survey throughout Hong Kong after the summer vacation to find out the financial burden resulting from children's expenses on families after the new school term began. According to the survey this year, children's expenses after the new school term began posed significant financial pressure on families. Therefore, she put forward this motion after consolidating residents' views.

12. The views of Mr Michael YUNG were summarised below:

- (a) Item 3 of the motion suggested introducing education tax allowance for the middle-class. He pointed out that currently there was child allowance in place, and he enquired how to define a middle-class family and whether she hoped to introduce a tax allowance for application by persons who had not received any textbook assistance;
- (b) Item 4 of the motion requested the EDB to publish an abridged edition of textbooks to reduce the cost of textbooks, and include the prices of textbooks into the review criteria for the Recommended Textbook List. Nevertheless, as the selection of textbooks by schools was a school-based policy, he enquired whether the cost of the publisher would rise as a result of the publication of an abridged edition. In that case, the publisher would transfer the cost to consumers and result in higher prices of textbooks, and no one would select such textbooks

as a result; and

- (c) Item 3 of the motion mentioned subsidies for textbooks, school uniforms and school buses, while Item 5 requested lowering the eligibility requirements for the application for the School Textbook Assistance Scheme, the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme, the Subsidy Scheme for Internet Access Charges, etc. He enquired whether middle-class families would receive double subsidies as a result.

13. The views of Mr WAI Hing-cheung were summarised below:

- (a) he enquired why the motion aimed at helping middle-class families only. He enquired whether the motion would result in repetition because currently there had been child allowance in place; and
- (b) be it a middle-class family or not, according to the motion, if a child was not a school age child, the family was not eligible to receive such subsidies. The tax regime of Hong Kong was relatively simple, and he did not wish to complicate a simple thing. Therefore, he suggested simply increasing the tax allowance.

14. Mr WONG Yue-hon opined that increasing child allowance directly could simplify the process and benefit families directly.

15. The views of Mr Billy CHAN were summarised below:

- (a) Item 2 of the motion suggested providing “subsidies to needy school children for their participation in extra-curricular activities” on an on-going basis to ensure children of low-income families to have the opportunity to participate in various experience-based learning activities. He enquired how to define extra-curricular activities; and
- (b) Item 4 of the motion requested the EDB to select some subjects for a pilot run. He opined that it was difficult to attract publishers to publish abridged edition of textbooks because it was unlikely for them to gain profit.

16. Mr PUN Kwok-shan said that the word “must” in Item 5 of the motion should be changed to “need”.

17. Ms Iris WONG gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) in respect of educational welfare, she hoped that reviews and suggestions should be made in multiple aspects, so as to reduce the burden on families;
- (b) in respect of Item 2 on “subsidies to needy school children for their participation in extra-curricular activities”, the Community Care Fund (CCF) currently offered such subsidies for application. She opined that the subsidies should be provided out of the general expenses of the EDB instead of the CCF;

- (c) she did not intentionally aim at middle-class families alone, but just focused on increasing allowances in relation to education; and
- (d) she said that in respect of the motion, she mainly hoped to obtain endorsement by all members in terms of the overall direction. She opined that after the endorsement by members, the EDB would discuss with members if any challenge was encountered in the implementation in the future.

18. Ms Iris WONG revised her motion as follows:

“During the summer vacation each year, parents have to make preparation for the children in school before the new school term begins, including the purchase of textbooks and school uniforms. Expenses of more than \$3,000 will be incurred for each child, posing significant financial pressure on many families. In order to reduce the financial burden on parents, the Education and Welfare Committee of the Sha Tin District Council urges the Government to provide more assistance, including:

1. to extend the School Textbook Assistance Scheme to kindergarten, in order to help families with financial needs;
2. to provide “subsidies to needy school children for their participation in extra-curricular activities” on an on-going basis to ensure that children of low-income families will have the opportunity to participate in various experience-based learning activities;
3. to increase child allowance to reduce the burden on parents;
4. to require the EDB to select some subjects for a pilot run and publish abridged edition of textbooks to reduce the cost of textbooks, and include the prices of textbooks into the review criteria for the Recommended Textbook List; and
5. to fully review and lower the eligibility requirements for the application for the School Textbook Assistance Scheme, the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme, the Subsidy Scheme for Internet Access Charges, etc., and increase subsidies depending on the actual needs of individual families.”

Mr WONG Ka-wing seconded the motion.

19. Members unanimously endorsed the motion in paragraph 18.

Questions

Question to be Raised by Mr WONG Fu-sang, Tiger on Projection of Intake of Primary One Students in Sha Tin District
(Paper No. EW 42/2017)

20. The views of Mr Tiger WONG were summarised below:

- (a) he learnt that the EDB had not projected the intake of Primary One students

each year. According to data of the EDB, the number of students in the upper classes of kindergarten had been increasing every year, and the intake of Primary One students had also been increasing all the time. He enquired the EDB why it did not make an internal projection. With many new estates to be completed in Sha Tin in the future, the population would increase. He enquired the EDB whether it would project the intake of Primary One students in 2018/19 and 2019/20 in the future; and

- (b) he opined that the EDB needed to communicate more closely with the Housing Department to find out the number of estates to be completed in the future and the distribution of population before projecting school places.

21. The views of Mr WONG Yue-hon were summarised below:

- (a) the paper set out the projection for 2017. The population of Sha Tin varied significantly, with new estates completed in different areas. The current problem was that some school nets had to borrow school places from neighbouring school nets due to insufficient places. He enquired the EDB whether it would review the allocation of school places again, in particular, the school places in Sha Tin District and Tai Wai area. If the school net had had to borrow school places every time, it would be difficult for parents to choose schools for their children. Going to schools in another school net would affect students' rest;
- (b) the EDB emphasised that children should enrol for schools in the area where they resided, but now some school nets had to borrow school places from other school nets, and students had to enrol for schools in another area. This arrangement was not in line with expectation;
- (c) in respect of school nets which were able to lend school places currently, he enquired whether these schools would face the crisis of closure if the number of school children decreased in the future. He enquired whether the views of the STDC could be ignored as long as the Primary One Admission Committee conducted a review each year; and
- (d) in respect of the school premises of Free Methodist Mei Lam Primary School, students living in Shui Chuen O Estate had difficulty in going to this school due to inappropriate traffic arrangements.

22. The views of Mr Michael YUNG were summarised below:

- (a) according to the data which the EDB provided when answering question (i), the number of students in the upper classes of kindergarten in Sha Tin District reflected the status in mid-September, while the survey for 2017/18 was still in progress. It was now 31 October 2017, but there were no updated data yet. He enquired whether data collation was so complicated, why the data were not available till 2018 and how the allocation of school places could be planned appropriately like this;

- (b) he requested that in the matters arising at the next meeting, the number of students in the upper classes of kindergarten in School Nets 88, 89 and 91 and the number of school children enrolling in schools using the addresses in these school nets should be provided. Without such objective data, it could not be known whether there was the need to borrow school places from other school nets;
- (c) the EDB often said that there were sufficient school places, but actually school places had to be borrowed from other school nets. On the other hand, with new estates completed one after another in Sha Tin District, he enquired the EDB where it could borrow school places from if the school places in Sha Tin were insufficient;
- (d) new buildings would be constructed one after another in Ma On Shan. However, the school premises in Ma On Shan, including the former premises of Sik Sik Yuen in Yiu On Estate and a Year 2000 school premises in Sunshine City, had been provided to Hong Kong College of Technology. He enquired the EDB whether it had not anticipated the development of Ma On Shan, and how school children could be admitted to schools near their residence;
- (e) when responding to the question about school places, the EDB repeated those few measures including increasing school places in relevant school nets, borrowing school places from other school nets and reviewing intake of students when appropriate. Whereas, the problem was that if the number of students at school was reviewed when appropriate, why there was the need to borrow school places;
- (f) on one hand, the EDB emphasised that children should enrol in schools near their residence. On the other hand, it indicated that school children could enrol in schools in other areas by attending interviews at the Discretionary Places stage. Certainly, school children could attend interviews of schools in other areas in order to enrol in better schools, but more importantly, they would not know the school places of which area they would be allocated if they chose to enrol in schools near their residence. The EDB had not yet reply how it would cope with this situation given effect of the Year of the Dragon going forward in 2018/19; and
- (g) as the EDB had mentioned the temporary school premises of Free Methodist Mei Lam Primary School, he enquired what the progress was, how many sponsoring bodies applied for operation, how when the EDB would announce the result, and how much time the school could use to enrol students.

23. Ms CHIU Lo-man gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) in respect of the projection of school places, the EDB would carry out planning with reference to the number of school age children prepared based on the population projections released by the Census and Statistics Department and the population projection by District Councils released by the Planning Department, the latest status of admission reflected by the number of students in the lower

classes, the latest changes in the population (e.g., fluctuation in the number of newly arrived Mainland children) and the latest changes in cross-border school children;

- (b) in respect of the information of school places and number of students in 2017/18 school year, the EDB had commenced survey in mid-September. Upon verification and consolidation, such statistic data would be reported to members;
- (c) the Discretionary Places procedure of the Primary One Admission System had commenced in September. Parents could apply to any government primary school or aided primary school without being subject to geographical restrictions. The result would be announced on 27 November. School children who had not received discretionary places would enter the Central Allocation stage. The number of students who had not received any discretionary places and needed to participate in the Central Allocation would not be known until the completion of the registration of Discretionary Places from the end of November to the beginning of December. The EDB would collate data as soon as possible and provide EWC with such figure in a timely manner;
- (d) the Primary One Admission Committee would review the operation of the allocation of places for Primary One each year, and would provide the EDB with suggestions on improvement when necessary;
- (e) in respect of the demand for school places, the EDB had made projections. It was anticipated that the overall demand for school places of public sector primary schools would reach the peak temporarily in 2018/19 school year before falling back. The EDB had made overall planning as early as possible. In respect of the allocation of places for Primary One for 2018 (admission to Primary One in 2018/19 school year), in addition to the flexible arrangements similar to those in 2017, such as borrowing school places from other school nets in the same district and temporary “additional allocation”, schools had been provided with additional resources to ensure the efficiency of teaching. In addition to the establishment of a total of approximately over 20 temporary classrooms in individual schools, more school places would be provided at the former premises of Free Methodist Mei Lam Primary School in Tai Wai;
- (f) on 9 August this year, the EDB had announced the commencement of the third allocation of school premises in 2017. A new school premises proposed to be constructed at Shui Chuen O Estate would be allocated to establish a new aided primary school. The new school had to use the former premises of Free Methodist Mei Lam Primary School before the new school premises were completed, and would commence operation in 2018/19, so as to meet the demand for public school places in Sha Tin District. During the period the school operated at the vacant school premises ahead of schedule, it was part of School Net 91. In other words, at the Central Allocation stage, only applicant school children with residential addresses falling within School Net 91 could choose this school in Part B of the selection form;

- (g) the EDB had been discussing with the schools in Sha Tin District. The schools were aware that other estates of smaller sizes than Shui Chuen O Estate would be completed one after another in the next few years, but the time and circumstance of intake could not be fully anticipated in the long-term planning. All schools in Sha Tin District agreed to increase school places in Primary One flexibly to deal with slot-in applications;
- (h) the EDB would monitor the future development in the area closely. According to the existing mechanism, the Government had reserved a land parcel in Fo Tan, Sha Tin for primary schools, so as to cater for the population and related public housing development in the area, meet the demand of the community for educational service and support relevant policies. In accordance with established mechanism and procedures, the EDB was considering factors which affect the demand for school places, including the future development of the relevant area, the projection of population of school age children, the actual number of students in each class currently, the latest changes in the population, existing educational policies and other factors, with a view to commencing the construction of the school in a timely manner; and
- (i) the EDB was actively driving the preliminary work for the construction project of a primary school with 30 classrooms at Shui Chuen O Estate, Sha Tin. Among these, the Architectural Services Department had engaged an engineering consultancy firm to carry out the work including the design of school premises, preparation of construction cost budget and preparation of tender documents. The EDB had also applied to the District Lands Office, Sha Tin for government land allocation arrangement according to the established mechanism. In August 2017, the EDB commenced the third school allocation exercise for 2017 to allocate the school premises proposed to be constructed at Shui Chuen O Estate for the purpose of establishing a new aided primary school. The result of allocation would be announced at the end of 2017.

24. The Chairman said that members showed concern about the data of the intake and applications for Primary One students, and the number of students in the upper classes of kindergarten in School Nets 88, 89 and 91. She hoped that the EDB could provide such data at the next meeting for members' reference. In respect of the new school at Shui Chuen O Estate, she hoped that the EDB could consult the STDC when appropriate.

Information Papers

Number of Newly Arrived Mainland Children Admitted to Public Sector Primary and Secondary Schools in Sha Tin District Provided by the Education Bureau
(Paper No. EW 43/2017)

25. Members noted the above paper.

Financial Position and Activity Progress of Expenditure Head 5 (Education and Welfare)
(Paper No. EW 44/2017)

26. Members noted the above paper.

Other Items

27. The Chairman said that the Working Group on Education and Youth Affairs under the EWC would hold the “Small-scale Regional Activities Carnival” at Wo Che Estate from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm on 5 November (Sunday). The Working Group on Family and Women Affairs would hold a graduation ceremony for the women and elderly care programme called “Showing Talent and Care” at Ma On Shan Plaza at 2:00 pm on 10 December (Sunday). Members who were interested in the above activities could contact the Secretariat for enquiries.

Date of Next Meeting

28. The next meeting was scheduled to be held at 2:30 pm on 2 January 2018 (Tuesday).

29. The meeting was adjourned at 3:28 pm.

Sha Tin District Council Secretariat
STDC 13/15/35

December 2017