

Sha Tin District Council
Minutes of the Special Meeting of
the Education and Welfare Committee in 2020

Date : 22 April 2020 (Wednesday)
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>
Mr MAK Yun-pui, Chris (Chairman)	DC Member	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Mr LO Tak-ming (Vice-Chairman)	"	2:40 pm	4:34 pm
Mr CHING Cheung-ying, MH	DC Chairman	2:30 pm	3:36 pm
Mr WONG Hok-lai, George	DC Vice-Chairman	2:37 pm	4:16 pm
Mr CHAN Billy Shiu-yeung	DC Member	3:01 pm	4:34 pm
Mr CHAN Nok-hang	"	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Mr CHAN Pui-ming	"	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Mr CHAN Wan-tung	"	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Mr CHENG Chung-hang	"	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Mr CHEUNG Hing-wa	"	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Mr CHIU Chu-pong	"	2:30 pm	4:12 pm
Mr CHOW Hiu-laam, Felix	"	2:34 pm	4:34 pm
Mr CHUNG Lai-him, Johnny	"	2:38 pm	4:34 pm
Mr HUI Lap-san	"	2:38 pm	4:27 pm
Mr HUI Yui-yu	"	2:47 pm	4:34 pm
Mr LAI Tsz-yan	"	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Dr LAM Kong-kwan	"	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Mr LI Chi-wang, Raymond	"	2:30 pm	3:30 pm
Mr LI Sai-hung	"	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Mr LI Wing-shing, Wilson	"	2:42 pm	3:53 pm
Mr LIAO Pak-hong, Ricardo	"	2:30 pm	3:36 pm
Mr LO Yuet-chau	"	2:30 pm	4:32 pm
Mr LUI Kai-wing	"	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Mr MAK Tsz-kin	"	2:46 pm	4:34 pm
Mr NG Kam-hung	"	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Mr SHAM Tsz-kit, Jimmy	"	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Mr SHEK William	"	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Mr SIN Cheuk-nam	"	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Mr TSANG Kit	"	3:16 pm	4:34 pm
Mr WAI Hing-cheung	"	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Mr WONG Ho-fung	"	2:59 pm	4:34 pm
Ms WONG Man-huen	"	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Mr YAU Man-chun	"	2:48 pm	4:17 pm
Mr YUNG Ming-chau, Michael	"	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Ms YU Wai-ting, Amy (Secretary)	Executive Officer (District Council) 1, Sha Tin District Office		

In Attendance

Ms TSANG Hing-kwan, Natalie
Ms CHIANG Lam

Mr WONG Tsz-hei, Christopher

Ms NG Suk-min

Ms CHENG Siu-ling, Katy

Title

Senior Transport Officer/Shia Tin, Transport Department
Senior School Development Officer (Sha Tin) 5,
Education Bureau

Senior School Development Officer (Sha Tin) 2,
Education Bureau

Senior Liaison Officer (East), Sha Tin District Office
Chief Liaison Officer, Sha Tin District Office

Absent

Mr CHENG Tsuk-man

Ms LUK Tsz-tung

Mr MOK Kam-kwai, BBS

Ms NG Ting-lam

Mr TING Tsz-yuen

Mr YIP Wing

Mr YEUNG Sze-kin

Title

DC Member (Application for leave of absence received)

” (”)

” (”)

” (”)

” (”)

” (”)

” (No application for leave of absence received)

Action**Welcome Message**

The Chairman welcomed all members and representatives of government departments to the 1st special meeting of the Education and Welfare Committee of this year.

Applications for Leave of Absence

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

Mr YIP Wing	Sickness
Ms LUK Tsz-tung	”
Mr MOK Kam-kwai	Official commitment
Mr CHENG Tsuk-man	”
Mr TING Tsz-yuen	”
Ms NG Ting-lam	”

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

Discussion Item**Anti-epidemic Measures and Traffic Arrangements for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination**

4. The Chairman opined that as the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSEE) would commence on 24 April this year, many members wished to convene a special meeting regarding the anti-epidemic measures and transport arrangements for the HKDSEE.

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

- (a) bus companies applied for reducing service frequency due to the epidemic and reduced patronage. They even reduced service frequency before the assessment of the Transport Department (TD). He asked the TD what criteria it used to approve the application for service adjustment;
- (b) he quoted the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank CHAN, as saying that bus patronage rate should not exceed 70%. He asked if the percentage accounted for standees and enquired about the actions that the TD would take upon receipt of complaints about bus companies reducing service frequency without consulting the TD;
- (c) he asked how the schools requested by the Education Bureau (EDB) to be used as examination centres would implement anti-epidemic measures. To his knowledge, many students would be sitting for examinations in classrooms besides school halls. He asked if there would be enough invigilators; and
- (d) he asked how the EDB could trace confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus, if any, among candidates after the examination. Also, whether the delay of the HKDSEE would shorten the amount of time for marking papers and affect the quality of marking.

6. The views of Mr Felix CHOW were summarised below:

- (a) he had noticed that the services of a number of bus routes in the district had become less frequent and encountered a lost trip problem. He cited Bus Route No. 88K that served the Fo Tan area as an example. Online information showed that the service was maintained at every 12 to 15 minutes, but in fact it was operated from the terminus every 25 minutes. He asked if the TD would ask bus companies to increase service frequency to at least every 12 minutes during the period of the HKDSEE. Also, he asked the TD about the assessment criteria of reducing bus services and the penalty for bus companies that did not comply with the regulations; and
- (b) he asked the EDB if protective equipment would be provided for invigilators. Also, in order to prevent the spread of the epidemic, whether the EDB would issue relevant guidelines to examination centres and make special arrangements regarding candidates' use of toilets.

7. The views of Mr Raymond LI were summarised below:

- (a) he did not support the Government's decision to hold the HKDSEE before the epidemic subsided and opined that it was essential for the Government to improve transport arrangements and ensure the safety of candidates and invigilators;
- (b) candidates would be required to have their temperature checked before entering examination centres. He asked if this would delay examinations; and

- (c) he asked if normal bus services would resume during the period of the HKDSEE. He cited Bus Route No. 83S that operated between Wong Nai Tau and Sha Tin Town Centre as an example, and said that the Wo Che-bound special service at 7:20 am was not shown on the information display. He asked if the bus company had cancelled it.
8. The views of Mr CHAN Pui-ming were summarised below:
- (a) the services of a number of bus routes in the district had been cut and bus companies even called for the public to take the MTR; however, the services of the Ma On Shan Line were reduced to every 10 minutes. He hoped the TD would demand that bus companies provide services according to the normal timetable during the period of the HKDSEE; and
 - (b) the Hong Kong Polytechnic University said earlier that masks would be provided for invigilators and candidates. He asked if this information was accurate. Also, seats inside examination centres should be 1.8 metres apart and he wished to know if the distance could be increased.
9. The views of Mr Jimmy SHAM were summarised below:
- (a) the Government had just announced the extension of the “prohibition on group gathering” for 14 days; however, the HKDSEE would proceed as planned. He asked if the Government had failed to take candidates’ safety into consideration, whether examination centres would provide masks for candidates that forgot to wear a mask, and how many masks would be available at each examination centre; and
 - (b) he asked how the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) would handle cases where the body temperature of candidates was slightly higher than normal and how it would help candidates who were home confinees to take the examinations. Also, as examinations were not exempted from the “prohibition on group gathering”, a gathering of 4 persons would mean contravening the regulation. He asked how the EDB would provide assistance if the police lost control and accused students waiting outside examination centres of contravening the regulation, and whether the Government would include examinations in the exemptions from the regulation.
10. The views of Mr WAI Hing-cheung were summarised below:
- (a) this year’s HKDSEE candidates were under immense pressure. Besides traffic conditions, they also had to worry about the risk of infection during the examination period. He asked how the Government could help them;
 - (b) he continued to point out that this year’s traffic conditions were different from last year’s because the services of a number of bus routes had been reduced to run every 30 minutes. If buses were full, candidates would be more likely to be late. He asked what special arrangements the EDB would make if a number of candidates were late;

- (c) he asked whether the TD had communicated with bus companies and demanded that they normalise bus services, or even increase service frequency, during the period of the HKDSEE; and
- (d) he wished to learn about the anti-epidemic measures that the EDB required examination centres to implement and the measures to shorten the candidates' wait for using toilets, so as to avoid the gathering of crowds.

11. Mr Ricardo LIAO said that the number of invigilators and support staff required increased significantly because the HKEAA would use classrooms as examination venues to minimise the risk of spreading the novel coronavirus. He asked the EDB about the number of additional staff members hired. Also, he pointed out that a number of candidates had to cross districts to sit for the examination but the lost trip problem was serious for many bus routes operating between Sha Tin and urban areas, and he asked the TD about traffic arrangements.

12. The views of Mr CHAN Wan-tung were summarised below:

- (a) he opined that the quality of the protective equipment that the EDB sent to schools previously was unsatisfactory, and he asked how the EDB would ensure the quality;
- (b) he asked how the invigilators at examination centres would handle the situation if candidates were found to be sick during the examination and showed symptoms such as coughing and vomiting. Also, he asked how the EDB would respond if the COVID-19 epidemic worsened during the period of the HKDSEE; and
- (c) bus compartments were enclosed spaces. He asked whether the Government demanded that bus companies thoroughly clean and disinfect them.

13. The views of Mr LO Yuet-chau were summarised below:

- (a) bus companies had been cutting many services recently. Upon investigation, he found that although the information online stated that the service frequency of Bus Route No. 89S was reduced from every 7 to 15 minutes to 10 to 15 minutes, the actual frequency was every 20 minutes. He continued to point out that the demand for bus services would definitely increase substantially when the HKDSEE commenced this Friday. He asked the TD how it would ensure smooth traffic to help candidates arrive at examination centres on time; and
- (b) he asked whether the EDB would close examination centres and whether it had any backup plans if confirmed cases were present there. He opined that it would be unfair if the EDB cancelled the HKDSEE because of the epidemic and assessed students based on their school performance.

14. Mr George WONG asked if the TD demanded that bus companies promise to resume normal operations of bus services during the period of the HKDSEE. Also, he asked what arrangements the EDB would make if a dozen candidates were found to have irregular temperature, and how this year's candidates in custody or in prison could sit for the examinations.

15. The views of Mr Wilson LI were summarised below:

- (a) he said that a number of candidates might arrive early at examination centres and crowds waiting to enter the schools would gather outside. Also, many candidates conveyed that the masks provided by the EDB were too thin. He asked if the anti-epidemic measures of the EDB were sufficient;
- (b) he asked about the number of EDB invigilators and the number of additional staff members hired for this year's HKDSEE; and
- (c) he asked the TD whether transport services would be fully resumed for the commencement of the HKDSEE.

16. The views of Mr Johnny CHUNG were summarised below:

- (a) he asked what sort of emotional support the EDB would provide for this year's HKDSEE candidates and whether school social workers would provide assistance for students in need during class suspension; and
- (b) he said he would propose a provisional motion to urge the resumption of normal public transport services and to request the activation of the Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre (ETCC) on the day the HKDSEE commenced.

17. The views of Mr MAK Tsz-kin were summarised below:

- (a) candidates were required to have their temperature checked and submit the health declaration form before entering examination centres, which could lead to the gathering of crowds and increased risks of virus transmission. He asked if this would contravene the "prohibition on group gathering" regulation;
- (b) he wished to know the anti-epidemic measures to be implemented at SEN centres and whether candidates were seated further apart than those at regular examination centres; and
- (c) he asked how the EDB would make arrangements for private candidates who could not be assessed by school performance, if the EDB decided to cancel the HKDSEE or the examinations of certain subjects.

18. Mr WONG Ho-fung asked how the EDB would handle groups of candidates arriving late.

19. The views of Ms WONG Man-huen were summarised below:

- (a) he asked whether the Government would call for employers to allow employees flexible working hours during the period of the HKDSEE;
- (b) the EDB stipulated that candidates with a body temperature above 38 degrees Celsius would not be allowed to enter examination centres. He asked if the manpower arranged was sufficient;

- (c) he asked whether candidates gathering outside examination centres would contravene the “prohibition on group gathering” regulation; and
- (d) if the authorities cancelled the HKDSEE, how the HKEAA would assess the performance of private candidates.

20. The views of Mr NG Kam-hung were summarised below:

- (a) he asked how the HKEAA would assess the performance of candidates in subjects whose examinations were cancelled, if the HKDSEE was to be halted due to the epidemic;
- (b) he asked whether the staff members at the examination centres would provide assistance for candidates whose masks got damaged halfway through an examination;
- (c) to his knowledge, over 700 classrooms would be used for examination besides school halls. He opined that it would be unfair to candidates sitting for examinations in school halls as they were under greater psychological pressure; and
- (d) the HKEAA had to recruit a lot more invigilators due to the anti-epidemic measures for this year’s HKDSEE. He asked if the newly-recruited would be less qualified.

21. The views of Mr HUI Yui-yu were summarised below:

- (a) he asked if close contacts of those under compulsory quarantine could sit for the HKDSEE;
- (b) he asked whether the EDB would request examination centres to open early for candidates to wait inside so as to avoid gathering of crowds at school gates;
- (c) he asked, if candidates with an irregular body temperature insisted on sitting for the examination, whether the authorities would arrange for them to do so in special classrooms;
- (d) he asked about the number of masks that the authorities provided for examination centres and the distance between candidate seats; and
- (e) he asked, if there were confirmed cases of COVID-19 among candidates after the examination, how the Government could trace such cases and whether the candidates who sat for the same examinations would be considered close contacts.

22. Mr CHENG Chung-hang questioned if the EDB would ask candidates to arrive at different time slots by batch, as it took time to take the temperature of candidates entering examination centres.

23. Mr TSANG Kit suggested that the Government cancel the Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities during the period of the HKDSEE and opined that this could solve the traffic issue.

24. The Chairman said he had received a provisional motion from Mr Johnny CHUNG and asked if members agreed to address it. He said that members unanimously agreed.

25. Mr Johnny CHUNG proposed the provisional motion as follows:

“Background:

Since the outbreak of the epidemic, the frequency and services of all public transport have been adjusted in response to the reduced patronage, and the services of certain bus routes have been reduced from every 20 minutes to every 30 minutes. Therefore, it is worrying that the transport services in the Sha Tin District may not be able to cater for the demand of candidates after the commencement of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSEE).

Motion:

The Committee requests all public transport service providers to resume normal operations, including the special trips provided at peak hours on school days, throughout the HKDSEE period. It also requests the Transport Department to activate the Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre on examination days to closely monitor the traffic and public transport services, so as to ensure that candidates and invigilators will have smooth access to examination venues.”

Mr CHENG Chung-hang, Mr HUI Lap-san and Mr Chris MAK seconded the motion.

26. Mr CHAN Pui-ming suggested amending “the transport services in the Sha Tin District” to “the transport services in the territory”.

27. Mr Johnny CHUNG agreed with the amendment.

28. Mr Johnny CHUNG amend the provisional motion as follows:

“Background:

Since the outbreak of the epidemic, the frequency and services of all public transport have been adjusted in response to the reduced patronage, and the services of certain bus routes have been reduced from every 20 minutes to every 30 minutes. Therefore, it is worrying that the transport services in the territory may not be able to cater for the demand of candidates after the commencement of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSEE).

Motion:

The Committee requests all public transport service providers to resume normal operations, including the special trips provided at peak hours on school days, throughout the HKDSEE period. It also requests the Transport Department to activate the Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre on examination days to closely monitor the traffic and public transport services, so as to ensure that candidates and invigilators will have smooth access to examination venues.”

29. Members unanimously endorsed the provisional motion in paragraph 28.

30. Ms Natalie TSANG, Senior Transport Officer/Shu Tin of the TD gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) the TD would assess the service adjustment proposal submitted by bus companies every week based on actual circumstances. Generally speaking, approved service adjustment to routes would not be extended for more than 5 minutes during peak and non-peak hours, and the running of bus services at non-peak hours would be extended for no more than every 30 minutes after extension. Also, one of the factors for consideration during assessment was that the estimated patronage of relevant routes during peak hours should not exceed 70%. She added that the TD had met with representatives of The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited (KMB) and had seriously demanded that they provide services according to the approved service schedules;
- (b) in order to cater for the candidates' demand for bus services during the period of the HKDSEE, KMB would resume the special services that had served school areas in the district since 24 April this year, such as KMB Bus Route Nos. 288B and 288C. It would also resume certain services of major bus routes that stopped at schools in the district and strengthen services according to passenger demand. Also, the TD had written to the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) and minibuss operators to demand that they provide sufficient public transport services during the period of the HKDSEE in accordance with candidates' transportation demand. She pointed out that the morning peak hour services of the East Rail Line and Tuen Ma Line Phase 1 had not been adjusted due to the epidemic and had continued to run around every 3 minutes and 3.5 minutes respectively;
- (c) the ETCC of the TD would continue to closely monitor the traffic and the public transport services, maintain close contact with all major public transport operators and relevant government departments, flexibly adjust services when necessary, and strengthen public transport services;
- (d) the TD had written to the Hong Kong Police Force to request that the police strengthen the monitoring of the traffic conditions in school areas and maintain smooth traffic at all times;
- (e) regarding the question raised by Mr Raymond LI on whether the special services of Bus Route No. 83S would be provided, the TD would follow up on the matter and assess applications from bus companies according to actual circumstances;
- (f) the TD had requested that public transport operators implement anti-epidemic measures according to the guidelines provided by the Department of Health (DH), including strengthening disinfection of compartments and station transport facilities, providing masks for staff, and putting up posters inside compartments to advise passengers to pay attention to personal hygiene; and

- (g) as the Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities was under the purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau, the TD could not comment on the cancellation of the scheme.

31. The Chairman asked when the TD wrote to bus companies and other government departments and what they replied. He said that the MTR delayed its services to run every 10 minutes, and lost trips of public transport services could cause candidates to be late.

32. Ms Natalie TSANG reiterated that the TD, in its letter to public transport operators, already requested them to provide sufficient services in response to candidates' transportation demand. Bus companies had also promised to fully resume special services that served school areas. In response to the epidemic and the change in patronage due to the commencement of the HKDSEE, the TD was at present carefully assessing the latest service adjustment proposals submitted by bus companies, and asked that they inform passengers expeditiously according to the assessment results.

33. The Chairman hoped that the TD would fully resume bus services to its original service level during the period of the HKDSEE.

34. Ms CHIANG Lam, Senior School Development Officer (Sha Tin) 5 of the EDB gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) the EDB and the HKEAA had been monitoring the development of the epidemic and had met with representatives of all universities and secondary school principals to discuss the arrangements of the HKDSEE. She said that the HKDSEE was after all the only public examination in the territory to conclude candidates' learning over the past 6 years, and the widely-recognised qualifications acted as an indicator of further education and employment. Therefore, the mainstream view in society was for the Government to arrange for candidates to complete the HKDSEE expeditiously under safe conditions;
- (b) depending on the development of the epidemic, the Government would announce the details of the implementation of backup plans in a timely manner. Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin YEUNG, said last week that the EDB had set down 2 fallback dates if the HKDSEE had to be halted before its commencement on 24 April or during the examination period: the first day was 22 May when the postponed unfinished written examinations would be held, and the result release day would be postponed to mid-August. If the epidemic persisted and the HKDSEE could not be held in late-May, it would be further postponed to 11 June and the result release day would be postponed to late-August. The EDB would assess the epidemic situation then and consult medical experts, and announce the details as soon as possible;
- (c) she continued to point out that the HKEAA would cancel the HKDSEE if it could not commence on 11 June due to the severity of the epidemic. The HKEAA had already formulated a mechanism for assessing results, where subject results would be obtained according to the school performance of candidates, and adjustment would be made according to the past HKDSEE results of the secondary schools. The EDB understood that replacing the HKDSEE with performance assessment

could not cater for private candidates, which was why it was the last resort. As the epidemic was unpredictable, the HKEAA had already asked schools to start assessing candidates' school performance. If this year's HKDSEE was held successfully, relevant data could be used as references for schools and the HKEAA to study ways to improve the assessment mechanism in the long run;

- (d) the EDB would strengthen the anti-epidemic measures of examination centres to ensure the safety of candidates. She said that examination did not require close social contacts and was a passive activity with low risks. Candidates and invigilators were required to wear a mask and maintain safe social distance while inside examination centres, including the period before the examination and the break between 2 examination sessions;
- (e) heeding the advice of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), the HKEAA required schools to arrange candidate seats to be 1.8 metres apart. The HKEAA had also advised candidates to pay attention to personal hygiene and be alert when taking public transportation. Also, each examination centre would be equipped with thermometers and disinfection carpets. Candidates were required to have their temperature checked, their shoes disinfected and to hand in their health declaration form before entering examination centres;
- (f) she continued to point out that candidates would not be allowed to enter examination centres to sit for the HKDSEE if their temperature exceeded 38 degrees Celsius, had a fever or showed symptoms of acute respiratory infections, such as coughing or shortness of breath, or if they were undergoing compulsory quarantine or home confinement. Therefore, the EDB suggested last week that candidates take their temperature every day and seek medical care immediately if they showed signs of fever. If they required special examination arrangements due to special personal conditions, they should inform the HKEAA as early as possible;
- (g) the examination of all HKDSEE subjects started at 8:30 am and the examination for paper 2 of individual subjects started at around 11 am. Therefore, the period from 7 am to 8 am was the peak hour when most candidates would be travelling on public transportation;
- (h) the EDB had distributed anti-epidemic guidelines to all examination centres according to the guidelines of the DH. Based on the recommendations made by experts that the EDB drew reference from, each school hall would only sit around 80 to 90 candidates; and around 7 to 8 classrooms, each sitting 10 to 12 candidates, would also be used for examination. If candidates had a normal temperature but felt unwell with symptoms such as coughing or a cold, invigilators would arrange for them to continue with the examination in a special classroom or in the isolation zone at the back of the hall;
- (i) a total of 350 schools were used as examination centres for this year's HKDSEE, among which 770 classrooms were used. She said that there were 36 regular examination centres in the Sha Tin District;

- (j) all invigilators were school teachers. The HKEAA had almost doubled the amount of personnel recruited for the HKDSEE this year and the invigilator attendances reached 21 000. 1 Centre Supervisor (CS) and 1 Deputy CS, as well as in-school and outside teachers, would be stationed at each examination centre. She pointed out that there would be 1 invigilator in each classroom used for examination, and schools would deploy staff to patrol corridors. The number of janitors would also be increased accordingly;
- (k) the EDB asked that schools open their premises to candidates by 7:50 am the latest, so that they could wait inside; and it was mandatory to impose distancing regulations up to the standard in waiting areas and resting areas;
- (l) schools would open the toilets on all floors for candidates' use during breaks, and staff members would station outside the toilets to maintain order and ensure that candidates kept a suitable distance when queuing. If the waiting time was too long, staff members would advise candidates to use toilets on other floors. Also, the EDB requested that schools step up efforts on toilet disinfection, turn off hand dryers inside toilets and put up posters that advertised anti-epidemic information;
- (m) she said that, depending on the situation, the CS could delay the start time of the first examination session by 15 minutes at most; and the second session could also be delayed for 30 minutes, so that candidates would have ample time to use the toilet. After the examination, the CS would arrange for candidates to leave the examination centre by batch, so as to avoid them gathering at the school gate; and
- (n) the EDB had issued guidelines to examination centres requiring disinfection with 1:99 diluted household bleach. According to the advice of the CHP, if candidates and invigilators having visited examination centres were later confirmed to have contracted COVID-19, the schools were required to disinfect all surfaces or articles that might have been contaminated with 1:49 diluted household bleach. 1:4 diluted household bleach should be used to disinfect surfaces or articles contaminated with blood, secretions or vomitus. She added that, besides providing masks, alcohol-based handrub and thermometers for examination centres, the HKEAA had also prepared protective gears such as coveralls.

35. The views of the Chairman were summarised below:

- (a) he asked the EDB about the procurement procedures for protective equipment and ways to inspect their quality, and whether the EDB would arrange for staff members to inspect the implementation of anti-epidemic measures at examination centres. He hoped that EDB would properly monitor the situation; and
- (b) he suggested that the EDB invite Sha Tin District Council (STDC) Members to inspect examination centres on the commencement day of the HKDSEE to observe whether candidates had to wait in queues for a long time at school gates.

36. Mr Katy CHENG, Chief Liaison Officer of the Sha Tin District Office (STDO) said that the STDO had written to the examination centres in the Sha Tin District to inform them that they could each collect 5 alcohol-based hand rubs at the STDO.

37. The Vice-Chairman opined that the representative of the EDB did not focus on addressing members' questions. He asked the EDB whether candidates would be contravening the "prohibition on group gathering" regulation by waiting at school gates before entering examination centres, and whether candidates under home confinement could sit for the HKDSEE. Also, he asked how the EDB would ensure the quality of protective equipment.

38. Ms CHIANG Lam said that candidates under compulsory quarantine or home confinement would not be allowed to enter examination centres to sit for the HKDSEE. The HKEAA would assess their results according to an established mechanism. The HKEAA would also arrange for this year's candidates who were in prison to sit for the HKDSEE at suitable examination centres. Also, she said that she would have to ask relevant departments about information on masks supply and would reply to members after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The masks provided by the Government for candidates were supplied by the Government Logistics Department (GLD). The EDB had conducted sampling inspection upon the delivery of the masks according to established procedures. The GLD had also consulted the professional opinion of the DH on the standard of masks and conducted procurement on that basis.)

39. The Chairman said that he hoped that EDB would invite STDC Members to inspect examination centres on the commencement day of the HKDSEE.

40. Mr LO Yuet-chau opined that it was unfair that candidates under home confinement were not allowed to sit for the HKDSEE. He pointed out that a number of members of the public intentionally travelled many times between the territory and the Mainland for free accommodation at quarantine centres such as Heritage Lodge. He would not exclude the possibility that candidates would intentionally leave the territory before the HKDSEE in order to be assessed by the established mechanism.

41. Mr CHAN Pui-ming said that some minibus operators went out of business recently, but the Government's Anti-epidemic Fund only supported the MTRCL. He asked whether the Government would consider providing financial support for bus companies or minibus operators if the HKDSEE was further postponed.

42. Mr NG Kam-hung asked whether the results of the subjects examined would count if the HKDSEE was halted halfway through, and what arrangements would be made for retaking examinations.

43. Mr Michael YUNG said that this year's candidates were issued with a new admission form due to changes in examination centres. He was worried that some candidates might go to the wrong examination centre if they mistakenly brought the old admission form. Also, he asked whether schools would inform the DH immediately for follow-up action if centre personnel discovered suspected cases. Besides, he asked whether bus companies would resume normal services during the period of the HKDSEE and inform candidates of the relevant information.

44. Mr CHENG Chung-hang asked whether school-based assessment was included in the HKEAA's established mechanism to assess absent HKDSEE candidates. If yes, he opined that it was unfair to certain candidates. Also, he asked why candidates under home confinement could not sit for the HKDSEE at hospitals and whether the EDB would provide support for candidates who were emotionally affected and stressed.

45. Mr SHEK William asked, given the imminent commencement of the HKDSEE, how bus companies could solve the lost bus trip problem if the TD was dissatisfied with the service adjustment proposals they had submitted while they did not have enough to make amendments. Also, he pointed out that the EDB still had not responded to whether candidates gathering at school gates would be a contravention to the "prohibition on group gathering" regulation.

46. Ms Natalie TSANG said that the TD would actively conduct on-site investigation to see if bus companies provided services according to the schedules approved by the TD. She reiterated that the TD had met with representatives of bus companies to seriously demand that they provide services according to the approved service schedules. Also, the transport industry, including taxi drivers, bus companies and minibus operators, were all benefiting from the Government's Anti-epidemic Fund which included fuel subsidies and wage subsidies.

47. Mr Christopher WONG, Senior School Development Officer (Sha Tin) 2 of the EDB gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) he said that the results of the subjects examined would be taken into account. If examinations of individual subjects had to be cancelled because the epidemic worsened, the HKEAA would assess candidates according to their school performance and the past HKDSEE results of each secondary school;
- (b) the examination locations on the new admission forms remained the same; only the dates were different. The CS would report emergencies at the examination centre, such as candidates experiencing physical discomfort, to the HKEAA according to the established mechanism;
- (c) the HKEAA asked that schools let candidates enter their premises at least 40 minutes before the start of the examination. The EDB had also maintained close contact with principals of schools within the district on all examination arrangements and exchanged opinions with them; and
- (d) school social workers would continue to provide emotional support during class suspension. Students in need could contact their school.

48. The Chairman asked how the EDB ensured that candidates would not be late for entering the examination centres because of anti-epidemic measures, and if the EDB was willing to conduct on-site inspection with STDC Members to observe the situation of the commencement of the examination. Also, he asked how school social workers could contact students when class was suspended at present.

49. Mr CHENG Chung-hang asked about the mechanism and the assessment criteria the HKEAA would use to assess candidates, if the HKDSEE was cancelled.

50. Ms CHIANG Lam gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) school teachers and guidance personnel would still teach online, hold meetings and maintain contact with students during class suspension. A number of teachers said that they held online revision groups with Secondary 6 students, and schools could provide emotional support similarly; and
- (b) the HKEAA had arranged for students of Hong Kong Red Cross Hospital Schools to sit for the HKDSEE at hospitals. However, candidates under home confinement could not sit for the HKDSEE because they were not allowed to leave their quarantine residences. The EDB had contacted cross-boundary candidates before 20 March this year to urge them to reserve enough time to return to the territory for home quarantine before the start of the HKDSEE. She then pointed out that all of the cross-boundary candidates that the EDB could get in touch with had already completed quarantine at home, hotels or quarantine centres.

51. Mr Christopher WONG added that, if candidates could not sit for the HKDSEE, the HKEAA would handle such cases according to the result assessment mechanism that had been formulated for all subjects, so that schools could assess their results based on their school performance, such as their mock examination results at school and their school-based assessments of the HKDSEE.

52. Mr NG Kam-hung opined that it would be very unfair to candidates if the HKDSEE was halted midway, as some subjects would not be assessed and it would affect their plans to further their studies abroad.

53. Mr Christopher WONG said that the EDB would announce relevant arrangements based on actual circumstances.

54. The Chairman announced the end of discussion on the agenda item.

Date of Next Meeting

55. The next meeting was scheduled to be held at 2:30 pm on 9 July 2020 (Thursday).

56. The meeting was adjourned at 4:34 pm.

Sha Tin District Council Secretariat
STDC 13/15/35

June 2020