

**Sha Tin District Council**  
**Minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of**  
**the Education and Welfare Committee in 2020**

**Date** : 7 May 2020 (Thursday)  
**Time** : 2:30 pm  
**Venue** : Sha Tin District Council Conference Room  
 4/F, Sha Tin Government Offices

<b><u>Present</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Time of joining the meeting</u></b>	<b><u>Time of leaving the meeting</u></b>
Mr MAK Yun-pui, Chris (Chairman)	DC Member	2:30 pm	4:47 pm
Mr LO Tak-ming (Vice-Chairman)	"	2:30 pm	4:47 pm
Mr CHING Cheung-ying, MH	DC Chairman	2:46 pm	4:47 pm
Mr WONG Hok-lai, George	DC Vice-Chairman	2:38 pm	4:28 pm
Mr CHAN Billy Shiu-yeung	DC Member	2:30 pm	4:28 pm
Mr CHAN Nok-hang	"	2:35 pm	4:47 pm
Mr CHAN Pui-ming	"	2:30 pm	4:47 pm
Mr CHENG Chung-hang	"	2:42 pm	4:47 pm
Mr CHENG Tsuk-man	"	2:30 pm	4:35 pm
Mr CHEUNG Hing-wa	"	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Mr CHIU Chu-pong	"	3:04 pm	4:26 pm
Mr CHOW Hiu-laam, Felix	"	2:34 pm	4:47 pm
Mr CHUNG Lai-him, Johnny	"	2:42 pm	4:30 pm
Mr HUI Yui-yu	"	2:35 pm	4:47 pm
Mr LAI Tsz-yan	"	3:38 pm	4:26 pm
Dr LAM Kong-kwan	"	2:30 pm	2:44 pm
Mr LI Chi-wang, Raymond	"	2:30 pm	4:47 pm
Mr LI Sai-hung	"	2:30 pm	4:47 pm
Mr LI Wing-shing, Wilson	"	2:30 pm	4:47 pm
Mr LO Yuet-chau	"	2:38 pm	4:04 pm
Mr LUI Kai-wing	"	2:30 pm	3:51 pm
Ms LUK Tsz-tung	"	2:34 pm	4:47 pm
Mr MAK Tsz-kin	"	2:30 pm	4:34 pm
Mr MOK Kam-kwai, BBS	"	2:30 pm	3:12 pm
Mr NG Kam-hung	"	2:30 pm	4:47 pm
Ms NG Ting-lam	"	2:36 pm	4:47 pm
Mr SHAM Tsz-kit, Jimmy	"	3:55 pm	4:47 pm
Mr SHEK William	"	2:30 pm	4:28 pm
Mr SIN Cheuk-nam	"	2:30 pm	4:47 pm
Mr TING Tsz-yuen	"	2:30 pm	4:47 pm
Mr TSANG Kit	"	2:41 pm	4:47 pm
Mr WAI Hing-cheung	"	2:30 pm	4:47 pm
Mr WONG Ho-fung	"	2:53 pm	4:47 pm
Ms WONG Man-huen	"	2:30 pm	4:47 pm
Mr YAU Man-chun	"	2:30 pm	4:47 pm
Mr YIP Wing	"	2:30 pm	4:47 pm

<b><u>Present</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Time of joining the meeting</u></b>	<b><u>Time of leaving the meeting</u></b>
Mr YUNG Ming-chau, Michael	DC Member	2:30 pm	4:33 pm
Ms YU Wai-ting, Amy (Secretary)	Executive Officer (District Council) 1, Sha Tin District Office		

<b><u>In Attendance</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>
Ms WONG Yee-wah, Eva	Housing Manager (Tai Po, North District and Sha Tin 11), Housing Department
Ms CHAN Yee-chi, Elaine	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Shatin) 2/ Social Welfare Department
Mr WONG Tsz-hei, Christopher	Senior School Development Officer (Sha Tin) 2, Education Bureau
Mr CHUNG Chun-fei, Jeffrey	Senior School Development Officer (Sha Tin) 3, Education Bureau
Ms NG Suk-min	Senior Liaison Officer (East), Sha Tin District Office
Ms CHENG Siu-ling, Katy	Chief Liaison Officer, Sha Tin District Office
Mr YUEN Chun-kit, Derek	Senior Executive Officer (District Council), Sha Tin District Office

<b><u>Absent</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>
Mr LIAO Pak-hong, Ricardo	DC Member (Application for leave of absence received)
Mr CHAN Wan-tung	” (No application for leave of absence received)
Mr HUI Lap-san	” ( ” )
Mr YEUNG Sze-kin	” ( ” )

## **Action**

### **Welcome Message**

The Chairman welcomed members and representatives of government departments to the third meeting of the Education and Welfare Committee (EWC) of this year.

### **Application for Leave of Absence**

2. The Chairman said that the Secretariat had received an application for leave of absence in writing from the following member:

Mr Ricardo LIAO                      Official commitment

3. Members unanimously approved the application for leave of absence submitted by the member above.

### **Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last Meeting** (EWC Minutes 2/2020)

4. Members unanimously confirmed the above minutes of the meeting.

**Discussion Item**

Proposed Estimates under Expenditure Head 5 of 2020/2021  
(Paper No. EW 3/2020)

5. Members unanimously endorsed the above paper.

**Information Paper**

Number of Children Referred to Public Sector Primary and Secondary Schools in Sha Tin District Provided by the Education Bureau  
(Paper No. EW 4/2020)

6. Mr Wilson LI said the outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Hong Kong had affected the teaching progress of schools. He had received views from residents which opined that schools should allow parents and students to choose whether to repeat or not, so that students, especially primary school students could catch up with the learning progress. Therefore, he hoped that the Education Bureau (EDB) could relax the restriction on repetition and allocate additional resources to schools. He would put forward a related provisional motion.

7. The views of Mr CHAN Pui-ming were summarised below:

- (a) the intake date of Chun Yeung Estate, Fo Tan was yet to be confirmed. He asked how the EDB would arrange placement for students who had already planned to move into Chun Yeung Estate in the Sha Tin District;
- (b) Mr Kevin YEUNG Yun-hung, the Secretary for Education had said that schools could decide on the arrangements for classes during the summer holiday on their own. He would like to know whether the EDB had given guidelines on the teaching arrangements for the coming school year after the summer holiday to schools so as to address learner diversity among students; and
- (c) he enquired about the class arrangements for cross-boundary students, and pointed out that the EDB would have to handle a large number of admission applications when the epidemic was over.

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

- (a) many residents who were allocated with flats in Chun Yeung Estate, Fo Tan had already prepared to enrol their children in schools in the Sha Tin District. However, since the intake date was yet to be confirmed, they might arrange for their children to continue their studies in schools in the districts where they originally lived in. He asked how the Government would assist them;
- (b) since classes would resume soon, he asked whether schools would have enough anti-epidemic supplies, including surgical masks and antiseptic products, for use by students and teaching staff;

- (c) parents of students with special educational needs (SEN) had to spend more time taking care of their children during class suspension. He asked what kind of support the EDB would provide in this regard. Besides, when the classes of special schools, including schools for children with physical disability, would resume; and
- (d) he asked what arrangements would be implemented in schools to help students catch up with the learning progress as soon as possible when classes resumed in phases, and whether the EDB would provide schools with more resources to launch the remedial classes.

9. The views of Mr YAU Man-chun were summarised below:

- (a) many parents were worried that the learning progress of their children was affected by class suspension. He asked what measures were taken by the EDB to support the teaching of teachers and to deal with the learning and emotional problems of students; and
- (b) the successive intake of new housing estates in the district, including Chun Yeung Estate and Kam Fai Court would bring pressure to the demand for school places. He hoped that the EDB would provide the number of remaining places of kindergartens and primary 1 in the 3 school nets in Sha Tin.

10. Mr MAK Tsz-kin said the intake of Chun Yeung Estate, Fo Tan was originally scheduled to begin in February this year, but the intake date was now yet to be confirmed. He asked whether residents should arrange for their children to attend schools in the districts they originally lived in and whether the EDB would reserve school places in this district for them. He said he would put forward a provisional motion later.

11. Mr LO Tak-ming asked if parents were willing to let their children repeat, whether the EDB would adjust its policy to render support to them. In addition, as 5 000 residents would move into Chun Yeung Estates in future, he asked whether the bureau had reserved enough school places.

12. Mr TSANG Kit said whether the EDB would announce class suspension again or it had other plans if the epidemic situation of COVID-19 worsened.

13. The views of Mr CHENG Tsuk-man were summarised below:

- (a) he enquired about the situation of school places in the Sha Tin District. He pointed out that given the upcoming completion of several new housing estates in the district, he wondered whether there would be enough school places if the EDB relaxed the restriction on repetition, and whether the arrangement for the promotion from kindergartens to primary schools would be affected; and
- (b) he asked how the EDB would follow up the delay in the learning progress of students caused by the monthslong class suspension.

14. Mr HUI Yui-yu said children's surgical masks were in shortage and rather expensive. He asked whether the EDB would provide surgical masks for schools. He believed that students would not want to wear the CuMask+™ distributed by the Government.

15. Mr Raymond LI believed that there would be a shortage of school places if more students repeated. He asked whether the EDB would request schools to adjust the syllabus in view of the learning progress of students in the coming school year.

16. The views of the Chairman were summarised below:

- (a) he asked whether the EDB would provide extra resources for schools, parents and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). He said many services of educational organisations were suspended during class suspension, such as the "Understanding Adolescent Project", which had caused stress to social workers and parents. He asked what kind of support would be given by the EDB; and
- (b) he opined that relaxing the restriction on repetition would affect the promotion of other students. He hoped that the EDB would give an account of the short, mid and long-term measures in response to the measures put forward due to the epidemic outbreak.

17. Mr Jeffrey CHUNG, Senior School Development Officer (Sha Tin) 3 of the EDB gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) given that the epidemic had shown signs of easing, the EDB believed that schools could resume classes in phases in a gradual and orderly manner after consulting medical experts and careful assessment of the epidemic situation. Secondary 3 to Secondary 5 would resume classes on 27 May this year with half-day classes to lower the infection risk and to allow more time for cleaning of school premises;
- (b) the local epidemic situation could be volatile in future. Therefore, the EDB would consult medical experts and schools for the review of the arrangement and the progress of class resumption in due course. He further pointed out that many schools had achieved "suspending classes without suspending learning" through different means during class suspension, supporting students to learn continuously at home through e-learning. Although home learning could not totally replace in-class learning, schools would adjust teaching arrangement, including adjustment in teaching activities and arrangement of supplementary classes after class resumption;
- (c) he opined that arranging for students to repeat to catch up with the learning progress delayed during class suspension might not suit students best. It would be better for schools to employ remedial teaching measures to meet the needs of individual students and to support students who had weaker learning performance;
- (d) facing the continuous spread of COVID-19 in Hong Kong, students inevitably felt worried, anxious or fearful. Besides, students did not have to attend schools during this period and there were fewer opportunities for social activities and

going out. Their daily routines were thus affected and some might easily generate negative emotions and mental stress. Therefore, the EDB suggested that schools refer to “Emotional Support for Students on Class Resumption”, the guidelines provided by the EDB, to help students cope with the emotions that might arise from the epidemic outbreak, and return to school;

- (e) he said as “Understanding Adolescent Project” included leadership training and adventure-based training activities, it was not suitable for student participation when the epidemic had not been fully under control yet. However, the EDB would not reduce the funds for the project, and schools could carry on the project subject to the epidemic development in the coming school year;
- (f) under the prevailing mechanism, the Government reserved sites for public schools when planning large-scale residential developments with regard to the planned population and service demand of the community in accordance with the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, with a view to supporting the population growth of the district and the related public housing development project, meeting the educational needs of the community, including the demand for school places in the district, as well as supporting relevant policy initiatives. According to the current projections of Primary 1 school-age population, the overall demand for Primary 1 places was expected to reach the peak in the 2018/19 school year, and drop in the 2019/20 school year and then progress to a stable level, and therefore there were enough school places in the district. If a student who had already been enrolled in a school had to transfer to another school because of removal, apart from approaching the school they preferred directly, parents could also seek help from the EDB; and
- (g) primary and kindergarten students would each be given 2 CuMask+™. The Government would deliver child and child (small) sized CuMask+™ to schools directly. He said parents had to prepare surgical masks for their children, while schools would also keep an appropriate quantity of surgical masks for students who had difficulties.

18. The Chairman said many extracurricular activity instructors and social workers of schools were employed by NGOs, and therefore they did not have any income during class suspension, nor did they receive government subsidies as stationing school social workers did.

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

- (a) instructors under NGOs could be granted a subsidy of \$7,500 only by applying for the Anti-epidemic Fund through schools. However, he pointed out that some schools charged administrative fees, and thus cutting the subsidies that the instructors received; and
- (b) he said the Government treated Secondary 3 to Secondary 5 students as guinea pigs by arranging for them to resume classes first before the epidemic situation had shown any significant improvement.

20. The views of the Vice-Chairman were summarised below:

- (a) with the successive intake of newly completed housing estates, the number of enrolments would increase. However, he did not wish the EDB to increase school places by expanding the class size because it would not only affect the teaching quality but also increase the risk of infection; and
- (b) he enquired of the EDB about the number of remaining school places in the district in future for the counting of school places that could be reserved for repeaters.

21. Mr CHAN Pui-ming said he hoped that the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and the EDB could assist social workers whose livelihood were affected by the epidemic. He also pointed out that many members of the public opined that the size of CuMask+™ was too big and could not fit young children. Besides, the examination papers of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination and the Territory-wide System Assessment of next year were being prepared. He asked whether the difficulty of the examination papers would be adjusted due to class suspension this year.

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

- (a) the EDB stated that parents should prepare surgical masks for their children for class resumption. However, surgical masks that fitted children were in shortage, while the CuMask+™ distributed by the Government were mainly for adults, which could not help solve the problem; and
- (b) he was worried that students might not follow the instructions and wore surgical masks during their time at school. If they did not wear surgical masks properly, with the confined environment of classrooms, their risk of infection would increase.

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

- (a) he proposed a provisional motion because he hoped that the EDB would provide one more option for parents and students, so that they could apply for repetition if necessary. This would allow students who were in need to catch up with the learning progress; and
- (b) under the current regulation of the EDB, the whole-grade repetition rate was capped at 3%, but he believed that Primary 1 and Primary 2 students had a greater need to repeat. He also hoped that the EDB would provide more resources for schools to facilitate their support for students who had emotional problems.

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

- (a) apart from classes, extra-curricular activities were also suspended during class suspension. He asked whether the EDB had given schools any guidelines on arranging for students to take part in extra-curricular activities again after classes resumed; and
- (b) he opined that students would not want to repeat if the situation allowed and he asked if the EDB had any guidelines for schools' reference.

25. Mr CHIU Chu-pong said he was aware that many janitors had lost their source of income because of class suspension. He hoped that the EDB could bring the situation to the attention of the Government so that janitors could receive subsidies like school bus drivers and activity instructors did.

26. Mr YAU Man-chun hoped that the EDB could provide current figures of school places in the district.

27. Mr Jeffrey CHUNG gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) the safety of students was the EDB's priority concern, and therefore the EDB would keep a close eye on the epidemic development and consult experts of public health and schools. The EDB had also issued the guidelines on class resumption to schools. Basically, teaching staff and students should always wear surgical masks and properly maintain social distancing when they were in schools, public transport and crowded places. Students had to sit in a single row with a "face-to-back" setting, and teachers should face a single direction when teaching students. Desks set side-by-side in the classrooms in double rows should be rearranged to single rows and the use of space of classrooms or the environment should be maximised to ensure a proper physical distance among students;
- (b) the EDB had required schools to instruct teaching staff and students that they should immediately report to schools if they were confirmed with COVID-19 or defined as "close contacts" of confirmed cases by the Department of Health to facilitate the implementation of contingency measures and the report to the EDB by the schools;
- (c) as far as he was aware, most of the schools in the district hired janitors on their own and janitors still had to go back to schools for cleaning and disinfection during class suspension. He would talk to Mr CHIU Chu-pong to learn about the situation and then follow up the matter with the concerned schools; and
- (d) schools should make appropriate adjustment to their teaching arrangement, including learning activities, and consider arranging supplementary lessons for particular classes, subjects or individual students in need according to the school-based circumstances and the needs of parents and students, with a view to keeping up the learning progress of their students.



28. The Chairman asked whether the EDB would provide the schools with more resources so that the schools could arrange supplementary lessons for students and support their emotional needs when classes resumed.

29. Mr Jeffrey CHUNG said schools could utilise existing resources to provide learning and emotional support for students according to the actual circumstances. Schools could also apply for “Learning Support Grant” to obtain extra resources.

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

- (a) the Government provided operating expenses grant for schools, allowing them to have flexible arrangements on manpower, and therefore most schools employed part-time workers. He opined that the Government should provide economic assistance for these part-time workers; and
- (b) he asked how the Government would help parents who could not afford surgical masks for their children.

31. Mr NG Kam-hung opined that the representative of the EDB did not give a direct response to members’ questions. It was the responsibility of parents to prepare surgical masks for their children. But he wondered whether the EDB would provide any assistance for parents if they could not do so due to financial hardship.

32. Mr HUI Yui-yu queried why the Government distributed CuMask+™ to the public if it was the responsibility of parents to prepare surgical masks for their children. He asked why the Government did not consult the public before distributing CuMask+™.

33. Mr LUI Kai-wing said primary schools would also resume classes in phases. However, primary students had lower self-care ability and might often take off their surgical masks, which would increase the risk of the spread of virus.

34. Mr LO Yuet-chau said “Learning Support Grant” was put forward to support schools to take better care of students with SEN.

35. Mr Raymond LI asked since the EDB called for schools to apply for “Learning Support Grant” for more resources, whether it meant that the EDB believed that all students had SEN during the epidemic outbreak.

36. Mr Wilson LI opined the EDB should allocate more resources to schools.

37. The views of the Chairman were summarised below:

- (a) he hoped that the EDB would convey members’ opinions to the Labour and Welfare Bureau, so that the Government would allocate more resources to schools to solve the problems caused by class suspension during the epidemic outbreak; and
- (b) the SWD and the EDB could integrate their policies to provide assistance for social workers of schools, outsourced instructors, etc.

38. Mr Jeffrey CHUNG said the provision of “Learning Support Grant” aimed at providing additional allowances to the concerned schools, so that the schools could flexibly use the grant together with other resources. Apart from supporting students with SEN, the schools could also strengthen their emotional support and counselling services. Besides, the EDB had already approached all schools in the district to look into their surgical masks reserves. Schools would keep an appropriate quantity of surgical masks and provide assistance for students with difficulties.

39. The Chairman suggested that the EDB should request schools to provide surgical masks for students who received Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, and should also provide more resources for schools to strengthen their teaching work.

40. Mr Wilson LI proposed a provisional motion as follows:

“In view of the class suspension due to the epidemic situation,  
the Education Bureau is requested to consider  
allowing students and parents to choose to repeat or not  
and raising the cap on the total number of repeaters to help primary students

#### Background

Since the end of January, the epidemic situation in Hong Kong has become severe. Classes of primary schools have been suspended since Lunar New Year Holiday and it is still unsure when classes of primary schools will resume. Around 80 or 90 school days of primary schools will be lost even if classes can resume at the end of May or early June. It will be not only hard for some students to catch up with the learning progress but also difficult for teachers to catch up with the teaching progress and grade students. Teachers and students will both suffer, especially for those students studying in Primary 1 and 2, the foundation classes. Their learning ability and confidence in the coming few years may be affected in the long term.

In fact, some parents of primary school students have expressed that they hope schools can allow students to repeat on a voluntary basis, so that students can have a better foundation for learning, especially for Primary 1 and 2 students.

From the perspective of resources, according to a news report by the Hong Kong Economic Times, the total number of school-age children in 2018/2019 was nearly ten thousand, which was less than that in 2018/2019. So it can be estimated that the existing resources should be sufficient to cater to the additional repeaters (at the same time, the situation of teachers being laid off due to class reduction can be greatly alleviated and the staff structure of schools can be stabilised. But definitely, this is not the primary goal).

It is noted that the current guidelines of the Education Bureau state that “the whole-school annual repetition rate is capped at 3% of the total number of students”. In fact, in the past, most students repeated because they failed to catch up academically. The repetition rate is capped at 3% and is school-oriented.

Motion

In view of the class suspension due to the epidemic situation, the Education and Welfare Committee of the Sha Tin District Council suggests that the Education Bureau actively consider relaxing the above restriction to help the students in need and to alleviate parents' concern. It is hoped that the Education Bureau can discuss with the school sector, parents, etc., to work out a suitable plan for the specific arrangement."

Mr TING Tsz-yuen seconded the motion.

41. Mr CHAN Pui-ming suggested urging the EDB to give schools clear guidelines on supplementary classes so that schools could help students catch up with the learning progress during the summer holiday. In so doing, students needed not to repeat.

42. Mr Michael YUNG suggested that the motion be revised as "In view of the class suspension due to the epidemic situation, the Education and Welfare Committee of the Sha Tin District Council suggests that the Education Bureau allow schools to handle the promotion or grade repetition of students according to their students' learning progress in a flexible manner, with a view to catering to the learning difficulties faced by the students in need and alleviating parents' concern over class resumption and their children's learning. It is hoped that the Education Bureau can discuss with the school sector and parents to work out a suitable plan for the specific arrangement."

43. The Chairman opined that Mr Michael YUNG had made a relatively large number of amendments, and therefore he suggested adjourning the meeting for 5 minutes for Mr Wilson LI's consideration.

44. Mr Raymond LI said although Mr Wilson LI's motion was well-intentioned, he was worried that, in view of the successive completion of new housing estates in the district, there would be a shortage of school places if the EDB relaxed the restriction on repetition.

45. The Chairman said schools already had established mechanisms for repetition, and relaxing the restriction might have an impact on the promotion of students of other forms. He asked Mr Wilson LI whether the EDB should relax the restriction on repetition for all schools in Sha Tin or all schools throughout the territory. He would cast an abstention vote if the proposal to relax the restriction on repetition was kept in the motion.

46. The Vice-Chairman said he had discussed with Mr IP Kin-yuen, a Legislative Council Member, the arrangement on class resumption this morning, and opined that all primary and secondary students throughout the territory were delayed in learning, and allowing students to repeat might not be the best solution to the problem. He suggested that the EWC urge the EDB to request schools to help students catch up with the learning progress by arranging supplementary classes or intensive class.

47. The Chairman adjourned the meeting for 5 minutes.

48. The meeting continued. Mr Wilson LI amended the provisional motion as follows:

“In view of the class suspension due to the epidemic situation, the Education and Welfare Committee of the Sha Tin District Council suggests that the Education Bureau provide schools with school-and-parent-oriented assistance, including allocation of additional resources, or relaxation of the limitation on repetition rate, so that schools can help students catch up with the learning progress better.”

49. The Chairman opined that the motion should not suggest the EDB relax the restriction on the repetition rate and the motion did not suggest a percentage for the relaxed restriction on the repetition rate. He said the EWC should suggest the EDB directly allocate additional resources instead, allowing schools to arrange supplementary classes for their students during the summer holiday.

50. Mr Wilson LI said he hoped that the EDB could, in response to the epidemic situation, allow schools to handle the restriction on the repetition rate flexibly. He also said that about a dozen residents, including parents and social workers, had expressed to him that the EDB should relax the 3% restriction on the repetition rate.

51. Mr CHAN Pui-ming said the approval of applications for repetition made by students or parents should be a school-based decision and he opined that arrangement for supplementary classes was more important.

52. Mr Raymond LI said most students were aware that their learning was delayed due to class suspension, but it did not represent that they believed they had to repeat. He did not believe repetition was the best arrangement and it would also bring stress to students. If there were a large number of students seriously falling behind in learning in individual schools and the number of students who had to repeat exceeded the 3% limit stipulated in the guidelines, he opined that the EDB should reserve room for discussion with those schools.

53. Mr Michael YUNG opined that Mr Wilson LI should reconsider the approach of his motion from different aspects and a macro perspective. If students' learning was seriously disrupted by class suspension, the EDB should relax the restriction on the repetition rate to what percentage. This would also affect the number of school places in the district. He further pointed out that primary and secondary school curriculums lasted for a few years. Even if the learning progress of this school year was delayed, it could still be caught up with by other means such as having supplementary lessons in the coming year. He suggested that Mr Wilson LI delete the suggestion to relax the restriction on the repetition rate in the motion.

54. The Chairman agreed that repetition might not be the best solution to students' learning problems, and it might also bring adverse effects on their mental health. Besides, there might not be enough school places if the number of repeaters increased.

55. Mr Jimmy SHAM opined that regarding the EDB's relaxation of the restriction on the repetition rate, a "one-size-fits-all" percentage should not be adopted because the learning situation of students varied from school to school. He suggested that the motion raised by Mr Wilson LI should focus on urging the EDB to allocate more resources to help students catch up with the learning progress, including considering the relaxation of the restriction on the repetition rate.

56. Mr Wilson LI said his motion requesting the relaxation of the restriction on the repetition rate mainly focused on the needs of Primary 1 and Primary 2 students. Although repetition was not the sole effective remedy, it would be one of the options for students and parents if the restriction was relaxed.

57. The Chairman said the current restriction on repetition rate was 3%, and he asked what percentage it should be after the restriction was relaxed. He stressed that repetition was not the only way for students to catch up with the learning progress.

58. Mr Wilson LI opined that it was up to the EDB and schools to decide the new rate of restriction on repetition. He said some residents suggested that the rate should be 6% to 10% after relaxation.

59. Mr Raymond LI believed that the EDB should adjust the syllabus to narrow the disparities between the learning progress of different students to alleviate the pressure on them. He would consider supporting Mr Wilson LI's motion if it did not suggest relaxing the restriction on the repetition rate.

60. Mr Michael YUNG opined that Mr Wilson LI held on to his own views. He should consider the motion from a macro perspective. He pointed out that the EDB already had an established mechanism for the arrangement of repetition.

61. Mr Wilson LI said he had consulted members before putting forward this provisional motion. The motion aimed at urging the EDB to consider relaxing the established restriction on the repetition rate in response to the monthslong class suspension. He believed that even if 90% of the parents would choose not to let their children repeat, many parents still believed that there was such a need.

62. The Chairman announced that the meeting would be adjourned for 5 minutes, allowing Mr Wilson LI to consider further amending his motion.

63. The meeting continued. Mr Wilson LI amended his provisional motion as follows:

“In view of the class suspension due to the epidemic situation,  
the Education Bureau is requested to consider  
allowing students and parents to choose to repeat or not  
and raising the cap on the total number of repeaters to help primary students

#### Background

Since the end of January, the epidemic situation in Hong Kong has become severe. Classes of primary schools have been suspended since Lunar New Year Holiday and it is

still unsure when classes of primary schools will resume. Around 80 or 90 school days of primary schools will be lost even if classes can resume at the end of May or early June. It will be not only hard for some students to catch up with the learning progress but also difficult for teachers to catch up with the teaching progress and grade students. Teachers and students will both suffer, especially for those students studying in Primary 1 and 2, the foundation classes. Their learning ability and confidence in the coming few years may be affected in the long term.

In fact, some parents of primary school students have expressed that they hope schools can allow students to repeat on a voluntary basis, so that students can have a better foundation for learning, especially for Primary 1 and 2 students.

From the perspective of resources, according to a news report by the Hong Kong Economic Times, the total number of school-age children in 2018/2019 was nearly ten thousand, which was less than that in 2017/2018. So it can be estimated that the existing resources should be sufficient to cater to the additional repeaters (at the same time, the situation of teachers being laid off due to class reduction can be greatly alleviated and the staff structure of schools can be stabilised. But definitely, this is not the primary goal).

#### Motion

In view of the class suspension due to the epidemic situation, the Education and Welfare Committee of the Sha Tin District Council suggests that the Education Bureau, subject to the individual circumstances of schools, provide them with school-and-parent-oriented assistance, including allocation of additional resources, or relaxation of limitations stipulated in the existing guidelines established by the Education Bureau, so that schools can help students catch up with the learning progress better.”

64. The Chairman declared that the voting process began.
65. Members vetoed the provisional motion in paragraph 63 by 11 affirmative votes, 0 dissenting vote, 16 abstention votes.
66. The Chairman said no member had raised any objections and the provisional motion put forward by Mr MAK Tsz-kin would now be dealt with.
67. Mr MAK Tsz-kin proposed the provisional motion as follows:

“The intake of Chun Yeung Estate was originally scheduled for February this year and prospective tenants have already prepared for the intake, for example, cancellation of their original tenancies and change of the districts in which their children are studying. However, the Government has reneged on its promise and forcibly uses Chun Yeung Estate as a quarantine centre.

Since the intake schedule is still yet to be confirmed, parents who are arranging placement for their children are greatly affected. In view of this, the Education and Welfare Committee of the Sha Tin District Council requests:

1. prompt intake arrangement for prospective tenants
2. reservation of school places in the Sha Tin District for prospective tenants of Chun Yeung Estate
3. full support to those prospective tenants in need to go through the school transfer procedures
4. provision of transport allowance and assistance to families and students who are affected by the delay of intake.”

Mr LUI Kai-wing and Mr Felix CHOW seconded the motion.

68. Mr CHAN Pui-ming suggested deleting the word “transport” in point 4.

69. Mr MAK Tsz-kin agreed to the amendment and revised the provisional motion as follows:

“The intake of Chun Yeung Estate was originally scheduled for February this year and prospective tenants have already prepared for the intake, for example, cancellation of their original tenancies and change of the districts in which their children are studying. However, the Government has reneged on its promise and forcibly uses Chun Yeung Estate as a quarantine centre.

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1. prompt intake arrangement for prospective tenants
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3. full support to those prospective tenants in need to go through the school transfer procedures
4. provision of allowance and assistance to families and students who are affected by the delay of intake.”

70. Members unanimously endorsed the provisional motion in paragraph 69.

71. The Chairman asked members to note the above paper.

**Date of Next Meeting**

- 72. The next meeting was scheduled to be held at 2:30 pm on 9 July 2020 (Thursday).
- 73. The meeting was adjourned at 4:47 pm.

Sha Tin District Council Secretariat  
STDC 13/15/35

July 2020