



Task Force on School-based Management Policy

Review Report

July 2019

Preface

Attaching great importance to school education, the Government endeavours to enhance the quality of education and nurture talent for the sustainable development of Hong Kong. To attain quality education, schools are required to adopt appropriate modus operandi in pedagogy and governance to develop their own culture and characteristics, cater for the development needs of students and seek continuous self-improvement in pursuit of excellence. All along, primary and secondary education in Hong Kong is mainly provided by aided schools which were opened by their school sponsoring bodies (SSBs). Development goals and directions of individual schools are therefore set in light of the mission and vision of SSBs, schools' own history, culture and characteristics and the expectations and needs of relevant stakeholders such as parents, students and alumni, while the Government is responsible for supporting the day-to-day operation of aided schools through provision of resources and developing education policies and school governance framework to ensure the quality of education. The features that providing schools with resources by the Government and sponsoring schools by their SSBs make the education system of Hong Kong unique among those of other places; hence effective school-based management (SBM) becomes more important in this context.

In line with the above, the aim of implementing the SBM policy is to authorise schools to develop their own characteristics, cater for students' diverse learning needs and enhance their learning outcomes through delegation of more authority and responsibility which allow schools greater autonomy and flexibility, thereby delivering quality education. Meanwhile, the participation of major stakeholders in decision-making helps enhance transparency and accountability in school operation and management.

In the Policy Address delivered in October 2017, the Chief Executive announced the setting up of various task forces to carry out in-depth reviews on eight key areas of education. This includes clarifying the relationship between the Education Bureau (EDB) and SSBs and their schools, and taking the SBM policy further to remove encumbrances and create room for the education sector for research and exchange pertinent to education policies. Readily accepting the EDB's invitation, the Education Commission set up the Task Force on School-based Management Policy in November 2017 to carry out the review.

Besides thoroughly examining the current implementation of the SBM policy, the Task Force fully explored and analysed the related issues and consulted the education sector, particularly the ways to further

enhance the quality of governance and unleash capacity for teachers and principals by removing encumbrances. A number of preliminary recommendations were then drawn up. To solicit the views of the education sector and stakeholders, the Task Force not only sent copies of a consultation paper to all aided schools and their SSBs, but also uploaded the consultation paper onto the EDB website. A number of consultation sessions were conducted for the education sector and stakeholders as well. Upon detailed analysis and discussion of the views collected, the Task Force has finally put forward 27 specific recommendations, details of which are set out in this report.

The active participation of Task Force members during the past months and their valuable inputs make the review a success. Being knowledgeable, experienced and forward-looking, they have made distinguished contributions to the exploration and formulation of improvement measures. My heartfelt thanks go to each and every member.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the representatives of various educational bodies and stakeholders for unreservedly offering insightful advice and suggestions during the consultation. Their enlightenment has enabled us to explore deeper the relevant issues and develop recommendations that could better cater for the needs of the sector and stakeholders. My appreciation also goes to the Task Force Secretariat for its robust and dedicated support throughout the review.

It is my sincere wish that with the joint efforts of the Government and the education sector, the recommendations put forth by the Task Force will be fully carried out to achieve greater effectiveness in implementation of the SBM policy, thereby fostering the provision of quality education that prepares our students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

Tim LUI Tim-leung
Chairman
Task Force on School-based Management Policy

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Executive Summary

School-based management

Under the school-based management (SBM) policy, schools are devolved with greater autonomy and flexibility in management, resource deployment and development planning, which aim to enable them to formulate school-based policies that can better meet the needs of schools and those of their students, develop school characteristics and enhance students' learning outcomes, hence delivering quality education. The current SBM system is essentially built on the participation of major stakeholders in school management, thereby enhancing transparency and accountability in school operation and governance.

The SBM framework is a participatory governance framework. The Education (Amendment) Ordinance 2004, which came into operation on 1 January 2005, clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of different parties under the SBM framework and requires all aided schools to set up an incorporated management committee (IMC), with the specified composition, for school management. In addition, schools with IMCs should strive for self-improvement systematically by conducting self-evaluation through the Planning-Implementation-Evaluation cycle.

Since 1999, the Education Bureau (EDB) has rolled out various measures to support schools in implementing the SBM policy. These include providing additional resources, introducing more flexible funding arrangements, streamlining administrative procedures, and delegating to schools more authority and responsibility to handle matters related to school administration, school-based curriculum, etc. School inspections and External School Reviews are conducted by the EDB to offer feedback and improvement suggestions for promoting schools' sustainable development.

Task Force on School-based Management Policy

Following the announcement by the Chief Executive in the 2017 Policy Address, the Education Commission (EC) accepted the EDB's invitation and set up in November 2017 the Task Force on School-based Management Policy (Task Force) to study the current implementation of the SBM policy in aided schools and propose improvement measures.

Having reviewed the current implementation of the SBM policy, the Task Force considers it appropriate to study how to optimise SBM along three broad areas: (I) improving the quality of governance; (II) strengthening the administration capabilities of schools and unleashing capacity for teachers and principals; and (III) enhancing the participation of major stakeholders in school governance. Between late June and mid-September 2018, the Task Force extensively consulted the education sector and stakeholders on its preliminary recommendations through arrangement of consultation sessions and release of a consultation paper.

On the whole, the preliminary recommendations received positive feedback from the sector and stakeholders. Upon careful deliberation on the views collected, the Task Force has put forward 27 specific recommendations for the reference of the EDB, school sponsoring bodies (SSBs) and IMCs. The recommendations are summarised below.

Recommendations of the Task Force

(I) Improving the quality of governance

The Task Force is of the view that the quality of governance of IMCs is closely related to whether the school managers have a clear understanding of their respective functions and responsibilities, and whether they are ready to serve as school managers with the required capability and enthusiasm. Its recommendations in this connection are as follows:

1. The EDB is advised to strengthen its effort to elaborate to SSBs and IMCs the importance of managers' broad knowledge of school governance in enhancing school governance and encourage them to assist school managers in planning for their training.
2. The EDB is advised to set up focus groups to get in-depth understanding of the concerns of different stakeholders and the training needs of school managers.
3. The EDB is advised to enhance the training content, diversify the training modes and increase the number of training places for school managers.
4. The EDB is advised to further enhance the SBM webpage to facilitate school managers' easy reference and produce web-based tools to help

school managers grasp the essence of SBM.

5. SSBs are recommended to co-organise their school manager training programmes with the EDB, optimise the use of training resources and motivate their school managers to participate.
6. SSBs are encouraged to establish “learning circles”/“communication groups” to strengthen cross-school sharing and mutual support among supervisors and managers of their sponsored schools, and open up their training for the participation of school managers of other SSBs.
7. Soft training targets for school supervisors and managers are recommended:

	Newly registered	Serving/ re-nominating
Supervisors	At least a total of six hours’ training in the first year of service	A training programme of at least two hours every year
School managers	At least a total of three hours’ training in the first year of service	A training programme of at least two hours every year

It is recommended that this proposal be run on a trial basis for four school years, and both interim and overall reviews be conducted.

8. The EDB is advised to prepare a list of the roles and functions, authority and responsibilities, conduct and ethics, etc. of a school manager; to enrich the ‘Information Bank of Persons Who Are Interested to Serve As School Managers in IMCs of Aided Schools’ to help SSBs and IMCs identify suitable persons to serve as school managers; and to encourage persons who aspire to be school supervisors/managers to receive training for preparation to take up the respective roles.
9. The EDB is advised to enhance school visits specifically for IMCs so as to strengthen support to the operation of IMCs and facilitate early detection and intervention of potential mismanagement cases.
10. The IMCs are recommended to make proper plans and arrangement for succession of school managers and provide training for potential and newly registered school managers in accordance with the school

circumstances.

(II) Strengthening the administration capabilities of schools and unleashing capacity for teachers and principals

The Task Force notes that the tasks related to school administration and management have significantly increased and become increasingly complex, but the existing school administrative support which is mainly rendered by clerical grade staff is grossly inadequate to meet the prevailing needs of schools in terms of the number of staff and their capability. Its recommendations in this connection are as follows:

11. The EDB is advised to provide schools with additional manpower at the Executive Officer rank/additional resources to strengthen their administrative support.
12. The EDB is advised to continue the existing review of its requirements on schools on a regular basis to streamline the administrative arrangements/procedures while ensuring the accountability of IMCs and the proper use of public funds.
13. The EDB is advised to further refine the existing guidelines/reference materials, strengthen the related training and facilitate the dissemination of good practices in different administrative areas gathered from schools.
14. The EDB is advised to digitise the forms/reports to be submitted by schools and highlight the updates made in the guidelines/reference materials for schools' easy identification and comprehension.
15. SSBs are encouraged to streamline the administrative requirements to be observed by their sponsored schools and assume a coordinating role in school administration among them, where appropriate (for example, arranging centralised procurement for their sponsored schools).
16. The EDB is advised to provide schools with additional resources to strengthen school manager training and administrative support for IMCs.
17. IMCs are recommended to regularly review the internal administrative arrangements of the schools and revisit the content requirements for various school documents for streamlining to

enhance work efficiency.

18. IMCs are recommended to revisit their constitutions and, where necessary, revise the clauses and streamline the procedures, and identify persons other than the principals and teachers to undertake the secretarial duties of IMCs/various committees.

(III) Enhancing the participation of major stakeholders in school governance

The Task Force considers it necessary for schools to put in place effective engagement mechanisms under SBM to ensure the due participation of major stakeholders, such as teachers, parents and alumni, in school governance to enhance transparency and accountability, and for the EDB to strengthen its communication mechanism with teachers to facilitate professional exchange. In addition, both schools and the EDB should optimise their respective complaint handling mechanisms. Relevant Task Force's recommendations are as follows:

19. IMCs are recommended to strengthen the engagement mechanisms through formal and informal channels to enhance communication with different stakeholders (for instance, organising regular consultative meetings between the school and teachers and arranging for school managers to meet with the stakeholders).
20. IMCs are encouraged to assess whether there is a need for setting up committees, comprising school managers with relevant expertise, relevant school personnel and external experts, to take care of the major areas of school operation to promote participation of stakeholders in school governance.
21. The EDB is advised to reinstate the annual district-based small group discussion forums with teachers to facilitate professional exchange.
22. During school development visits, the EDB officers are advised, apart from meeting the school management, to approach teachers directly for the purpose of strengthening communication.
23. The EDB is advised to enrich the training programmes for newly appointed and aspiring principals, particularly on major subjects such as professional conduct, core values, and communication skills and culture, so that the principals could better grasp their role and acquire the related skills.

24. The EDB is advised to expand the scope of review by the Panel of Review Boards on School Complaints from covering only complaints made by parents, students or the public about schools' daily operation or internal affairs to that made by teachers so that independent, objective and credible review results will be available to both parties, i.e. the complainant and the subject of complaint; and to help stakeholders better understand the prevailing arrangements for handling various types of complaints through different channels.
25. IMCs are recommended to make reference to the Guidelines for Handling School Complaints issued by the EDB in developing/refining their mechanisms and procedures for handling staff complaints. The EDB is advised to gather information from public sector schools about staff complaints they receive on a yearly basis, in order to get a clear picture of individual schools and take appropriate follow-up actions when necessary.
26. IMCs are recommended to settle disagreement with stakeholders by mediation as early as possible to prevent the situation from deteriorating and help the two parties restore mutual trust and maintain a harmonious relationship; and to review on a regular/need basis their school-based mechanisms and procedures for handling complaints and appeals, including complaints made by teachers, to further enhance fairness, impartiality and acceptance of the handling procedures.
27. The SSBs are encouraged to settle disagreement between their schools and complainants by mediation as early as possible to help the two parties restore mutual trust and maintain a harmonious relationship; and to review on a regular/need basis the mechanisms and procedures for handling complaints and appeals against their schools, including complaints made by teachers, to further enhance fairness, impartiality and acceptance of the handling procedures.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

1.1 Participation of stakeholders in school governance is a world-wide trend. In 1997, the EC issued its Report No. 7 on Quality School Education and one of the key recommendations to the Government was to provide schools with greater autonomy and flexibility by devolving more authority and responsibility to them, such that schools could develop their own characteristics to meet the diverse learning needs of students and enhance the learning outcomes in order to deliver quality education. In parallel, there should be enhanced transparency of school operation and management as well as increased accountability of school governance with greater stakeholders' involvement in school management, development planning, assessment and decision-making.

1.2 In line with the above recommendations of the EC, since 1999, the EDB has put in place various initiatives, such as revising the Education Ordinance to establish the governance framework under SBM, devolving more authority and responsibility to schools and streamlining administrative procedures, to assist schools in implementing SBM.

1.3 With the aim of attaining quality education, the Chief Executive actively listens to the views of the education sector and various stakeholders. In addition to the implementation of a package of priority measures in the 2017/18 school year, it was announced in the Policy Address released in October 2017 that different task forces be set up to conduct in-depth study on eight areas of education, including clarifying the relationship between the EDB and SSBs and their schools and taking the SBM policy further with a view to removing encumbrances for the education sector to provide more room for studies and exchanges on education policies.

Composition of the Task Force

1.4 The EC accepted the invitation of the EDB and established the Task Force on School-based Management Policy in November 2017 to study the current implementation of the SBM policy in aided

schools¹ and based on the results of the study, to make recommendations on the optimisation of SBM.

1.5 The Task Force comprises 13 experienced educators and related stakeholders from the EC, SSBs, school councils, parent associations and teacher organisations and the EDB. The Task Force is chaired by the EC Chairman, Mr Tim LUI Tim-leung. Its terms of reference and membership list are detailed in Appendix I.

Work of the Task Force

1.6 Since its establishment in November 2017, the Task Force has conducted 10 meetings to have a comprehensive review on the implementation of SBM. Various issues were discussed in detail to explore improvement measures, including further unleashing capacity for teachers and principals, strengthening the understanding of the school managers and stakeholders of the respective roles and responsibilities of different parties and enhancing their governance capabilities, as well as exploring in-depth to formulate plans for the basic training requirements for school supervisors and school managers. To take forward the review, the Task Force met respectively with the primary and secondary school principals representing 18 districts of Hong Kong in February 2018 to listen to their views and launched an extensive consultation exercise on its preliminary recommendations for the optimisation of SBM from late June to mid-September 2018. A consultation paper was drawn up for distribution to all aided schools and their SSBs and uploading onto the EDB and relevant Government websites to invite written submissions from the education sector and relevant stakeholders. Five consultation sessions were arranged for different stakeholders (including school managers, principals, teachers, parents, and representatives of SSBs and educational bodies).

1.7 This report summarises the conclusions of the Task Force after in-depth analysis and consideration of the views from discussion with the education sector and stakeholders, resulting in 27 specific recommendations for reference of the EDB, SSBs and IMCs to formulate relevant strategies and initiatives to improve the quality of

¹ Given that the Education (Amendment) Ordinance 2004 which came into operation on 1 January 2005 requires all aided schools to set up an IMC and be managed by it, the current review essentially covers aided schools. However, subject to prevailing circumstances, the Government will consider implementing the recommendations of the Task Force in other public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools.

governance, promote the participation of major stakeholders in school governance and further unleash capacity for teachers and principals.

Chapter 2

Current Implementation of School-based Management Policy

Objectives of the SBM policy

2.1 The SBM policy aims to enable schools, through devolution of more authority and responsibility to allow them greater flexibility in management, resource deployment and development planning, to formulate school-based policies that can better meet the needs of schools and students, develop school characteristics and enhance students' learning outcomes, hence delivering quality education. Since the quality of school education has a direct bearing on students' learning outcomes, while enjoying greater autonomy, schools should increase transparency by involving more stakeholders in school management, development planning, evaluation and decision-making, and enhance accountability for their overall performance and proper use of public funds.

2.2 Since 1999, the EDB has rolled out various measures to support schools in implementing the SBM policy. These include introducing flexible funding arrangements, streamlining administrative procedures and delegating to schools more authority and responsibility to handle matters related to personnel management, finance and curriculum design and delivery. To tie in with the implementation of the SBM policy, the Education (Amendment) Ordinance 2004 came into operation on 1 January 2005. The provisions governing SBM not only establish a governance framework for schools, but also clearly define the roles and responsibilities of different parties under the framework, thereby enabling the participation of major stakeholders in school governance.

Roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders

2.3 The Education (Amendment) Ordinance 2004 clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of different parties under the school governance framework. The legal provisions concerning the functions and responsibilities of SSBs and IMCs are set out in Appendix 2.

2.4 The respective functions and responsibilities of the EDB, SSBs and IMCs are summarised below:

- The EDB: enforcing relevant legislation; developing policies and guidelines; setting targets and monitoring the standards for education services; allocating resources to schools; and serving as schools' professional partner through the provision of support and advice.
- SSBs: setting the vision and mission of schools; giving general directions to IMCs in regard to formulating school policies ; monitoring the performance of IMCs; and ensuring, through SSB managers, the accomplishment of the mission.
- IMCs: managing schools; formulating school policies in line with the vision and mission set by SSBs; undertaking the planning and management of finance, human resources, curriculum design and delivery, etc.; and answering to the EDB and SSBs for the performance of schools.

The mutual relationship among the EDB, SSBs and IMCs is illustrated in Appendix 3.

Governance framework under the SBM policy

2.5 SBM is built on a governance framework under which all major school stakeholders are engaged in management and decision-making, with the aim of enhancing transparency and accountability for school operation and the use of public funds. To underpin the SBM policy and ensure direct involvement of major stakeholders in school governance, the Education (Amendment) Ordinance 2004 requires all aided schools to set up an IMC and to be managed by it. Being a body corporate, an IMC comprises six categories of school managers, namely independent manager, school principal, SSB manager, and teacher manager, parent manager and alumni manager returned by election. The participation of different stakeholders in policy-making not only contributes to greater transparency and accountability in school governance, but also helps bring betterment to school policies through collective wisdom and synergy, and at the same time, put in place effective checks and balances to avert anything that could be detrimental to school development.

2.6 In addition, schools are required to operate, and principals are required to manage and lead the schools in accordance with the Education Ordinance, the Education Regulations, the Codes of Aid, other pertinent legislation, instructions and circulars issued by the EDB from time to

time, guidelines drawn up by SSBs and the IMC constitutions.

2.7 Given enhanced flexibility and autonomy in daily operation with the SBM policy, schools with IMCs should put in place a School Self-evaluation (SSE) mechanism under the School Development and Accountability Framework. As one of the core elements of SBM, the SSE mechanism seeks to enable schools' self-improvement in a systematic manner through the Planning-Implementation-Evaluation cycle². On top of SSE, school inspections and External School Reviews (ESRs) are conducted by the EDB to offer feedback and improvement suggestions from different perspectives to help promote schools' sustainable development.

Existing support measures

2.8 The EDB strives to render appropriate support in the form of training, seminars, briefings, school visits, etc. to assist aided schools in implementing the SBM policy, particularly in the initial stage of IMC establishment. Apart from the measures mentioned in paragraph 2.2 above, the EDB prepares reference materials and information kits and provides on-site support services to help schools with IMCs put in place an SBM system that emphasises accountability and transparency and handle matters related to human resources and financial management, etc. Whenever necessary, the EDB will offer advisory services to schools. The key measures that support schools in implementing the SBM policy are summarised below:

- (i) Since 2005, the EDB has been arranging school visits that aim to assist aided schools in implementing the SBM policy. In particular, visits are conducted in the initial stage of IMC establishment to offer on-site support by advising aided schools on formulation of school-based policies and handling of related matters. This helps ensure schools' compliance with the Education Ordinance and the Education Regulations, and raises schools' awareness of the need to comply with pertinent provisions.
- (ii) To equip school managers with the knowledge and skills necessary for school management, the EDB offers basic training courses, such as the structured manager training programmes, for different

² In a gist, schools have to determine the development foci and strategies for a school development cycle, work out implementation details and report the progress/outcomes on an annual basis, and conduct a holistic review of effectiveness at the end of the school development cycle to inform planning for future development.

categories of school managers. The EDB also organises thematic briefings and seminars on such aspects as financial management, procurement procedures, personnel management, the Codes of Aid, for SSBs, school managers and personnel of aided schools to better acquaint them with the roles and responsibilities of major stakeholders under the SBM policy and the operation of IMCs.

- (iii) To facilitate the smooth and effective operation of IMCs, the EDB has prepared various reference materials and information kits for IMC deployment, and the contents of such are revisited on a regular basis. These materials include the Manual for Change-over Arrangements, Code of Aid for Aided Schools, Compendium to Code of Aid for Aided Schools, Supplement to School Administration Guide, Guide to Financial Management for Aided Schools Operated by Incorporated Management Committees, handy tips on personnel and financial management and a checklist on procurement procedures. Moreover, the EDB has developed the SBM webpage, which provides various online resources on school governance for the easy reference of schools.
- (iv) To help SSBs and IMCs identify suitable persons to fill the vacancies of SSB/independent managers, the EDB launched in the 2016/17 school year the “Information Bank of Persons Who Are Interested to Serve As School Managers in IMCs of Aided Schools”, which contains particulars of several hundred professionals from different fields, for reference of SSBs/IMCs looking for new SSB/independent managers.
- (v) To protect school managers and thus enable them to assume their roles and responsibilities without concern about any civil liability for performing their functions in good faith, the EDB has taken out liability insurance for IMCs and school managers of aided schools. In addition, the EDB organises briefings for schools every year to explain the coverage and claim procedures of the IMC liability insurance policy and to draw their attention to risk management.
- (vi) In view of schools’ increased administrative workload arising from greater autonomy and responsibility devolved to them, the EDB has introduced various measures to ease the burden on teachers and schools, such as providing additional resources for schools to employ

extra supporting staff/procure necessary services³, streamlining administrative arrangements and disseminating good practices and experience.

Review

2.9 Having examined the current implementation of the SBM policy, the Task Force considers that the Education Ordinance has clear provisions about the functions and responsibilities of SSBs and IMCs (Appendix 2), and that SSBs and IMCs in general have adequate and appropriate exchange and collaboration that facilitate their discharge of statutory functions and responsibilities. For example, IMCs develop policies for schools in line with the vision and mission set by SSBs, and maintain effective liaison with SSBs to ensure the accomplishment of the mission. Moreover, the EDB has been putting in place monitoring and support measures, including conducting ESRs and other school inspections, scrutinising schools' audited accounts, conducting regular audit inspections and school visits, and investigating complaints to ensure the quality of school education and proper use of public funds. In case malpractices are identified in schools, it will take appropriate intervention measures, including issuance of verbal or written advice and warning, and monitoring the progress of improvement measures. In addition, the EDB maintains partnership with SSBs to support schools with concerted efforts. In short, SSBs and IMCs generally have a clear understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities under the SBM policy, and of their relationship with the EDB. They will seek assistance or support from the EDB whenever necessary to provide education services that suit students' needs.

2.10 On the actual implementation of the SBM policy, the Task Force observes that schools with IMCs have, by and large, made a smooth changeover to the system and operation under IMCs and put in place a school-based mechanism for communication with major stakeholders. After years of implementation of the SBM policy, schools have become conversant with the operation and acquired relevant experience. Most of them are now operated in a smooth, orderly and effective manner. The efforts of aided schools in this regard are applauded by the Task

³ For example, starting from the 1998/99 school year and the 2014/15 school year, the Government has respectively provided a recurrent cash grant equivalent to the salary of a Clerical Assistant for public sector secondary and primary schools to enhance administrative support. In the 1999/2000 school year, to facilitate the implementation of SBM policy, a supplementary grant was provided for aided schools to cope with additional clerical and administrative support work. Starting from the 2000/01 school year, schools may use the Capacity Enhancement Grant to hire outside services or recruit additional staff (such as clerks) to provide administrative support.

Force.

2.11 However, the Task Force reckons that there is still room for improvement in SBM. For example, governance in individual schools has been compromised as their managers lack the knowledge and skills necessary for school governance; and some supervisors fail to effectively perform their functions under the Education Ordinance. IMCs' inability to govern effectively will affect the effectiveness of school operation and student learning. The Task Force considers whether school managers can fully perform their functions is crucial to the quality of school governance. To ensure the governance quality of IMCs, all parties involved should accurately grasp their respective functions and responsibilities, and the governance capabilities of major stakeholders should be enhanced.

2.12 As mentioned in paragraph 2.8(vi) above, the EDB has, in view of the extra workload arising from the implementation of the SBM policy, rolled out various measures to ease the administrative burden on teachers and schools. However, according to some schools, principals and teachers have to shoulder considerable administrative and non-teaching duties which have notably undermined their time and effort that can be devoted to enhancing learning and teaching, managing the school and caring for students. Having analysed and studied the evolution of school administration and management in recent years and examined the administrative support available, the Task Force finds it necessary to strengthen administrative support and streamline administrative procedures for schools and enhance schools' administration and management capabilities, in a bid to unleash capacity for teachers and principals and enable them to focus on core teaching duties and take better care of student development.

2.13 The SBM framework is a participatory governance framework, under which schools are managed by IMCs. As a core element of SBM, IMCs comprise such major stakeholders as SSB representatives, independent members, school principals, teachers, parents and alumni. While most schools have put in place a school-based mechanism for communication with stakeholders, the Task Force opines that given the importance of major stakeholders' participation to the realisation of SBM, IMCs and schools should strengthen their communication mechanisms to involve major stakeholders in school governance, thereby enhancing transparency and accountability and maintaining proper checks and balances that help take SBM forward in a more effective manner.

2.14 Taking account of the above considerations, the Task Force suggests that optimisation of SBM be explored along three broad areas: (I) improving the quality of governance; (II) strengthening the administration capabilities of schools and unleashing capacity for teachers and principals; and (III) enhancing the participation of major stakeholders in school governance. Considering that other than the EDB, SSBs also have a vital role to play in realising SBM, the Task Force has taken SSBs into account when formulating the improvement measures.

Summing up

2.15 Overall, the Task Force is of the view that with the accumulation of experience after years of implementation of the SBM policy, most schools are now operated in a smooth and orderly manner. Upon examining the current implementation of the SBM policy as well as the views and concerns of stakeholders, the Task Force considers that measures to optimise SBM would cover three areas, i.e. improving the quality of governance, strengthening the administration capabilities of schools and enhancing the participation of major stakeholders in school governance.

2.16 Chapter 3 of this report will set out stakeholders' views on the preliminary recommendations made by the Task Force to refine SBM.

Chapter 3

Consultation

Consultation work

3.1 Since its establishment in November 2017, the Task Force has convened a number of meetings to review the current implementation of the SBM policy in aided schools, and conducted in-depth study and analysis on how to further improve the quality of school governance and unleash capacity for teachers and principals by removing encumbrances.

3.2 In mid-2018, the Task Force put forward 17 preliminary recommendations that covered the following three major areas: (I) improving the quality of governance; (II) strengthening the administration capabilities of schools and unleashing capacity for teachers and principals; and (III) enhancing the participation of major stakeholders in school governance. Since SSBs have a vital role to play under the SBM policy, the Task Force has taken SSBs into account when formulating the improvement measures.

3.3 The Task Force consulted the education sector and stakeholders on its 17 preliminary recommendations from late June to mid-September 2018. The exercise included five consultation sessions for school supervisors, school managers, principals, teachers, parents, and representatives of SSBs and educational bodies in June and July. These sessions were attended by a total of 491 representatives.

3.4 Apart from conducting consultation sessions, the Task Force drew up a consultation paper for distribution to all aided schools and their SSBs in July 2018 to solicit their views. The consultation paper was also uploaded onto the EDB and relevant Government websites to invite the education sector and relevant stakeholders to submit their views in writing by mid-September 2018.

3.5 The Secretariat received a total of 12 written submissions from principal and teacher organisations, SSBs, IMCs and teachers. The views expressed by stakeholders on the media were also collated by the Secretariat.

3.6 Consultation paper and statistics on stakeholders' participation in consultation sessions and written submission of views are respectively

in Appendices 4 and 5.

Majority views

3.7 In general, the education sector and stakeholders responded positively to the preliminary recommendations. In particular, they were unanimously in favour of providing additional manpower at the Executive Officer rank/additional resources to support school administration. Recommendations such as streamlining school administration, enhancing the training of school managers, providing additional support for IMCs, enhancing the SBM webpage, offering online self-study programmes to school managers and strengthening the communication between schools and stakeholders also gained wide support.

3.8 Among the preliminary recommendations put forward by the Task Force, three received the most attention, namely, (i) setting basic training targets for school managers; (ii) strengthening administration capabilities and streamlining school administration; and (iii) providing schools with additional manpower at the Executive Officer rank/additional resources. Views on these three aspects are set out in gist as follows:

- (i) Setting basic training targets for school managers
 - The majority agreed that training could enable school managers to better perform their functions. It may help managers gain a deeper understanding of their roles and functions, acquaint themselves with school operation and management, and master the basic knowledge and skills necessary for school governance. In addition, stakeholders in general considered the training of school supervisors most important since supervisors assumed a leadership and pivotal role in school governance and the operation of IMCs. The performance of supervisors has a direct impact on the quality of school governance. As such, school supervisors should have the abilities to lead and steer strategically and at the same time, should be knowledgeable about the keys to school governance, as well as school administration and management. For supervisors from non-education sectors, the need for comprehensive and intensive training is even greater.
 - Stakeholders agreed that training courses should be conducted in diverse modes (for example, through class participation or

online self-study) to cater for the needs of different school managers.

- To improve the quality of governance, some suggested that corresponding training requirements should be set according to the background of school managers and the category they belonged to (for example, parent managers, teacher managers and / or managers who were newly-joined, less experienced and unfamiliar with education matters).
 - Respondents generally had reservations about making the basic training mandatory for all school managers. The major reason is that school managers, being unpaid, may not be able to spare time for training as most of them would be in full-time employment. Given their diverse backgrounds, experience and needs, it would be difficult to draw up a set of training targets to be universally applicable to school managers. Furthermore, mandatory training would discourage those who aspire to join IMCs or undermine the willingness of parents and alumni to stand for election. This would render recruitment of managers even more difficult. On the other hand, some commented that the performance of school managers was crucial to the quality of school governance and supported making the basic training mandatory for school managers, especially school supervisors. Alternatively, it was suggested that a percentage of managers who had completed training within an IMC be set for this purpose.
 - Some respondents suggested that a commendation system be established for school managers to encourage more suitable persons to take up the role of school manager.
- (ii) Strengthening administration capabilities and streamlining school administration
- Respondents strongly supported streamlining the EDB's requirements governing school administration. For example, the existing procurement requirements in respect of financial limits for tenders/quotations and the relevant procedures and rules may be relaxed. It was generally agreed that an SSB's support in coordinating procurement of the items commonly required by its sponsored schools could help reduce the administrative workload of individual schools.

- They suggested that the EDB should strengthen its support for school procurement, such as providing a supplier list and templates (for example, the works-related tendering) and setting up a technical support hotline to help schools with the drafting of procurement documents.
 - Moreover, it was suggested that the EDB strengthen support in other aspects as well. For example, the EDB may provide reference materials and set up an enquiry hotline to render better support in such general school administration matters as appointment of teachers and handling of contingencies.
 - There were views suggesting that all Government grants should take the form of Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant so that schools may deploy and use the funds flexibly according to their own needs. This could avoid excessive categorisation and restriction over the use of grants which would help reduce the schools administrative work involved in compiling the annual financial reports.
 - The EDB's administrative requirements on schools should not be over-stringent. It should review the existing rules and procedures, in particular those in respect of complex administrative matters, such as audit inspection and school documentation, with a view to exploring room for streamlining. Divisions within the EDB should cooperate with one another to realise consistently the principle of streamlining school administration.
- (iii) Providing schools with additional manpower at Executive Officer rank/additional resources
- Some suggested that the existing manpower for supporting school administration was inadequate. For instance, normally there are only two clerks in each primary or special school, and an Assistant Clerical Officer should have the academic qualifications up to the level of Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination/Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination. The existing manpower strength was found not adequate for effectively handling the school administrative work which had been getting heavier and more complicated.
 - The sector and stakeholders shared the view that it should be a

priority measure to provide schools with additional manpower at the Executive Officer rank/additional resources to handle administrative work which had been getting more diversified and complicated (such as coordination in accounting, maintenance and repair, property management and staff recruitment) and to support the operation of IMCs, etc. This would help release capacity for principals and teachers so that they could focus on learning and teaching and take better care of student development.

- Some respondents were of the view that the nature of administrative work would remain unchanged irrespective of the scale of school operation and the workload incurred would not vary significantly with the number of operating classes. They thus opined that the number of classes should not be taken as the sole basis of calculation for manpower enhancement.
- Some found it necessary for the EDB to create the third vice-principal post in schools to specifically oversee school administration and management. In the long run, the EDB may consider, similar to Mainland schools, adopting the arrangement of separation between teaching and administration streams in schools. However, some pointed out that teaching and administration could not be entirely separable. For example, the procurement of stores and services required by different subjects would inevitably involve the teachers concerned as well, in particular, when specifying the requirements of the goods/services to be procured and assessing whether the goods/services delivered fulfil the requirements set out in the tenders. Besides, some suggested that the EDB should further improve the teaching staff establishment of schools so as to reduce teachers' workload.

3.9 Other views are summarised below:

- To ensure the quality of school governance, it was suggested that basic qualification requirements (for example, those in respect of academic qualifications) should be set for school managers. Given the importance and complexity of school governance and IMC operation, it was suggested that persons to be appointed as school supervisors should have the experience of performing the role of school manager.
- To enhance training for school managers, it was suggested that

training should primarily be knowledge-based and practical so as to help participants get a good grasp and ensure that they were fully aware of the need to observe the Codes of Aid when handling school matters. It was also suggested that the roles of different categories of school managers should be reviewed, with a view to enhancing managers' understanding of and their functions in school operation. The EDB should arrange thematic training for different categories of school managers to enable stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of the functions that managers in their respective categories are expected to perform.

- There were two preliminary recommendations to encourage stakeholders to take part in school governance: organising school and teacher consultative meetings regularly to maintain effective communication with teachers (as stakeholders in school management), and setting up committees under IMCs or co-opting outside members to handle important school matters. While these two recommendations received some support, stakeholders in general considered that they should not be made mandatory because schools may have different circumstances and needs. Rather, provided that there are adequate channels for communication in the school-based context, schools/IMCs should have discretion whether or not to adopt such measures.
- It was suggested that the EDB should provide recurrent funding to subsidise school-based/SSB-based training organised for school managers and support SSBs to assist the operation of their sponsored schools.

3.10 A summary of the views collected during consultation is in Appendix 6.

Summing up

3.11 The consultation results as summarised above reveal that except for the setting of basic training targets for school managers, all other preliminary recommendations in the consultation paper basically received the general support of the education sector and stakeholders. After studying carefully the views collected, the Task Force has fine-tuned and revised its preliminary recommendations and formulated additional recommendations to better address the practical needs of the education sector and stakeholders, and put forward its recommendation

on the basic training targets for school managers upon balancing the prevailing circumstances of schools with the training needs of managers.

3.12 Chapter 4 of this report will set out and elaborate on the recommendations of the Task Force in detail.

Chapter 4

Recommendations

4.1 Upon detailed examination of the current implementation of SBM policy and the training and support provided for IMCs, the Task Force has put forward preliminary recommendations on three areas: (I) improving the quality of governance; (II) strengthening the administration capabilities of schools and unleashing capacity for teachers and principals; and (III) enhancing the participation of major stakeholders in school governance, for more effective implementation of the SBM policy. Considering that other than the EDB, SSBs also have a vital role in realising the essence of SBM, the Task Force has taken SSBs into account when formulating the improvement measures.

4.2 As shown by the views collected during the consultation period, stakeholders generally support the Task Force's preliminary recommendations. Having carefully considered and analysed the views collected, the Task Force has fine-tuned and revised its preliminary recommendations, formulated additional recommendations and advised the EDB to give priority to individual measures widely supported by stakeholders to address the pressing concerns of the education sector. The recommendations made by the Task Force are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

(I) Improving the quality of governance

4.3 Aided schools are managed by their IMCs in which the performance hinges largely on managers' understanding of their functions as well as their ability, enthusiasm and readiness to discharge their responsibilities. To improve the quality of governance, the Task Force considers it necessary for all parties involved to accurately grasp their respective functions and responsibilities, and for major stakeholders to strengthen their governance capabilities.

Functions and responsibilities of different parties

4.4 The Task Force observes that most schools are now generally operated in a smooth manner under SBM. However, governance in some schools has been undermined as their school managers lack the knowledge and skills necessary for school management. In this

connection, the Task Force considers that training for school managers should be enhanced, in order that they can better understand their roles and functions and closely collaborate in school governance, thereby ensuring provision of quality education for students.

Getting well prepared for the mission

4.5 Education is a profession. While the management of schools and that of other organisations are basically governed by some general principles, there are indeed differences between them. To foster school development and ensure quality education for students, school managers need to be conversant with school operation and the latest developments in education that enable them to offer constructive advice on school matters and take a leading role in promoting sustainable development of schools, improving the quality of teaching and enhancing the learning effectiveness of students. To draw school managers' attention to the need for and the importance of training, the Task Force recommends that the EDB should further elaborate to SSBs and IMCs how crucial school managers' broad knowledge of school governance is in enhancing school managers' governance capabilities, and encourage SSBs and IMCs to explain to school managers (including potential, newly registered, and serving managers) their roles, responsibilities and the significance of training and to motivate and help them to make plans for the pre-service, induction and continuous training in order to gain a deeper understanding of their roles and functions and to strengthen their competence in school governance. This helps to achieve synergy through stakeholders' participation in school governance and put in place checks and balances to facilitate more effective implementation of the SBM policy.

Recommendation 1

The EDB is advised to further elaborate to SSBs and IMCs how crucial school managers' broad knowledge of school governance is, and encourage SSBs and IMCs to motivate and help school managers (including potential, newly registered and serving managers) to make plans for the pre-service, induction and continuous training to strengthen their understanding of SBM. This helps to achieve synergy through stakeholders' participation in school governance and put in place checks and balances to facilitate more effective implementation of the SBM policy.

Enhancing training

4.6 At present, the EDB, SSBs and IMCs separately arrange training for school managers. School managers may receive different training in the light of their backgrounds, experience and needs. The training provided by the EDB, SSBs and IMCs carries the following features:

- EDB: Different training programmes and learning activities are organised to cater for the general needs of school managers. They enable school managers to learn about and comply with relevant regulations, grasp the key to strategic leadership and school governance and keep abreast of the latest developments in education policies.
- SSBs: Training programmes are organised to convey their vision and mission, core values, etc. to school managers. These SSB-based programmes not only cover the roles, functions and ethics of school managers, but also elaborate SSBs' expectations of school managers' contribution to the development of their sponsored schools under a common vision.
- IMCs: School-based training is provided to brief school managers on schools' characteristics, stakeholders' needs, direction of school development, existing measures and mechanisms, etc., with a view to enabling school managers to fulfil their obligations with a thorough understanding of the schools.

The Task Force is of the view that since the training programmes provided by the EDB, SSBs and IMCs serve their respective purposes and complement one another, such a tripartite arrangement should remain to ensure that school managers may receive all-round training.

4.7 The Task Force recommends the following to further enhance training for school managers:

(i) EDB

Setting up focus groups to solicit views on genuine needs for training

4.8 In the light of stakeholders' views collected, different stakeholders have different concerns and expectations of manager training. The Task Force considers that apart from collecting feedback

from school managers who have attended the training programmes or learning activities to review the training effectiveness and gather their views, the EDB could set up focus groups where necessary to have an in-depth study of the concerns of different stakeholders and the needs of school managers, and to collect stakeholders' views on the contents and delivery modes of training in order to offer appropriate and diversified training for school managers with different backgrounds and experience to familiarise them with the IMC operation and enable them to contribute to more effective school governance.

Recommendation 2

The EDB is advised to set up focus groups to study the concerns of different stakeholders and the genuine needs of school managers for the purpose of providing appropriate and diversified training for school managers.

Enriching training contents and diversifying delivery modes

4.9 To equip school managers for the smooth operation of IMCs and the strengthening of school governance, the EDB organises training programmes and learning activities that mainly address the needs of school managers. These include structured manager training programmes⁴, refresher training, thematic seminars and sharing sessions. The Task Force is of the view that the EDB could, on the basis of the existing provision, enrich training contents, diversify delivery modes and offer more training places so as to enhance school managers' understanding of the respective functions and responsibilities of SSBs, IMCs and the EDB. In respect of training contents, the Task Force recommends that training should primarily be knowledge-based and practical, supplemented with case studies for illustration, so that school managers may better understand their roles and responsibilities to strengthen their understanding of the intent of relevant regulations and the importance of observing such regulations, and their knowledge of promoting effective governance through the monitoring and check-and-balance mechanism. This will foster school managers' continuous professional development and improve the quality of school governance.

⁴ The EDB has commissioned tertiary institutions to organise structured manager training programmes, including:

- (a) 15-hour programme for school supervisors;
- (b) 15-hour programme for school managers who are not familiar with education and school operation; and
- (c) Two 9-hour programmes for school managers who are familiar with education and school operation.

4.10 School managers may not be able to spare time for every training programme as most of them are in full-time employment. In this context, the Task Force recommends that the EDB should produce online self-learning packages so that school managers may explore relevant issues according to their own needs and pace to strengthen their governance capabilities.

Recommendation 3

To meet the training needs of school managers, the EDB should enrich training contents, adopt diversified delivery modes and offer more training places, and ensure that training is primarily knowledge-based and practical, supplemented with case studies for illustration. These will enable school managers to discharge their responsibilities in a more effective manner when they have acquired a better understanding of the functions of SSBs, IMCs and the EDB, the roles and responsibilities of school managers, the intent of relevant regulations and the importance of observing such regulations, and the role of the monitoring and check-and-balance mechanism in achieving effective governance. Moreover, the EDB should produce more online self-learning packages so that school managers may explore relevant issues according to their own needs and pace.

Optimising SBM webpage

4.11 To familiarise school managers with the major aspects of school administration and management, the Task Force considers that apart from providing training for school managers, the EDB should consolidate and re-arrange materials on the SBM webpage by, for example, enriching administrative guidelines and learning resources on various areas, and enhance the functionality of the webpage by improving its design and search engine to facilitate school managers' browsing and easier access to the necessary information at their convenience.

4.12 At the consultation sessions, some of the school managers indicated that, due to their lack of experience in the education field, they found it difficult to participate in discussions and/or scrutinise school plans/reports at the commencement of their tenure. To facilitate newly registered managers without education background in discharging their responsibilities, the Task Force recommends that the EDB should devise handy online tools on functions and responsibilities of school managers

with an aim to enabling them to grasp the key to SBM and have an initial understanding of how to assess school performance.

4.13 The Task Force considers that the EDB could, through the focus groups mentioned in paragraph 4.8 above, have in-depth discussion with stakeholders to ascertain the genuine needs of school managers (especially newly registered managers) so as to gradually fine-tune the online tools. Moreover, to facilitate school managers in obtaining the information they need, the EDB should actively promote the optimised SBM webpage through such channels as training programmes, thematic seminars and sharing sessions.

Recommendation 4

The EDB is advised to optimise the SBM webpage and devise handy online tools covering essential information on school administration and governance for the easy reference of school managers, especially newly registered managers.

(ii) SSBs

Co-organising programmes with the EDB

4.14 The Task Force recognises that SSBs have a pivotal role in school governance because they understand the needs of their school managers and are in an advantageous position to motivate them to receive training. Apart from providing training for school managers on their own, SSBs may collaborate with the EDB to offer SSB-based training for school managers. This approach is worth consideration by SSBs since it can cater for the overall needs of school managers under an SSB, enable SSBs to schedule training sessions convenient to their managers and save them the effort of identifying suitable training materials and trainers.

Recommendation 5

SSBs are recommended to consider providing SSB-based training in collaboration with the EDB, which could optimise the use of EDB's training resources and motivate more school managers who have the same vision and mission to receive training.

Culture of sharing

4.15 The Task Force considers the promotion of a culture of

sharing instrumental in enhancing exchange and mutual support among school managers, hence improving governance capabilities. It encourages SSBs to form learning circles and discussion groups for their school managers. For example, cross-school learning circles may be formed for school managers who have taken up different responsibilities (as chairman, treasurer or key members of committees set up under IMCs) to enable school supervisors and managers to meet and exchange ideas on a regular basis, which helps promote sharing and mutual support for effective school governance. In addition, since some SSBs, for various reasons, are unable to organise training for their school managers, the Task Force encourages SSBs that provide training for their own school managers to open up their training programmes to school managers under other SSBs with a view to strengthening cross-school support and collaboration.

Recommendation 6

SSBs are encouraged to form learning circles and discussion groups to promote cross-school sharing and support among their school supervisors and managers with a view to strengthening their concerted efforts to achieve effective governance; and open up their training programmes to school managers under other SSBs.

Training targets for school managers

4.16 The Task Force has initiated a number of in-depth reviews and discussions regarding formulation of a training threshold for school managers. In the light of the views of members of the Task Force and stakeholders, the Task Force appreciates the considerable importance of training for school managers, in particular school supervisors. As the leader of an IMC, a school supervisor needs to lead the school for continuous development and guide school managers in discussing different issues and making collective decisions when chairing IMC meetings. As such, school supervisors should be acquainted with the regulations governing schools and different aspects of school operation. On the other hand, stakeholders generally do not consider a mandatory training threshold desirable, given that supervisors and managers serve on IMCs on a voluntary basis and the backgrounds, experience and training needs vary among different categories of school managers. Setting a mandatory training threshold may undermine the willingness of suitable persons to serve as school managers. Having regard to the actual situation at present and the difficulties in recruiting school managers, the Task Force considers that a step-by-step approach is

preferable in setting training targets for school managers. At present, it should primarily rely upon the tripartite collaboration among SSBs, IMCs and the EDB for providing diversified training for school managers. In this connection, the Task Force proposes soft training targets below:

(i) For school supervisors:

4.17 IMCs should encourage newly registered school supervisors⁵ to take, within the first year of their tenure, at least a total of six hours' training provided by (i) the EDB, and (ii) SSBs or IMCs. On top of this, to help school supervisors grasp the latest information on education or the keys to school governance, the Task Force recommends that serving or re-nominating school supervisors should receive at least two-hour refresher training provided by the EDB each year during their tenure as school supervisors. Training received by school supervisors should be documented properly in school files.

(ii) For school managers:

4.18 To enable newly registered school managers⁶ to understand the thrust of SBM and school operation, the Task Force recommends that newly registered school managers should take, within the first year of their tenure, at least a total of three hours' training with a good mix of theory and practice provided by the EDB, SSBs or IMCs. Training received by school managers should be documented properly in school files.

4.19 Considering that school managers should keep abreast of the times through continuous learning, the Task Force recommends that serving or re-nominating school managers should receive at least two-hour training related to school governance each year. In addition, IMCs may consider enriching their school-based training with diversified themes, for example, sharing of enlightenment from training or information on school governance by school managers. Training received by school managers should be documented properly in school files.

4.20 On the understanding that development in provision of

⁵ A newly registered school supervisor refers to a person who for the first time takes up the post as the supervisor of a school with an IMC, irrespective of whether he has served as a manager in the same school or other school(s) before assuming the role of supervisor.

⁶ A newly registered school manager refers to a person who for the first time takes up the post as the manager of a school with an IMC. A person who has served as a manager, irrespective of category, in a school with an IMC is not considered a newly registered school manager.

training for school managers varies among different SSBs or IMCs, the Task Force reckons that adjustments may be made to the above recommendations according to the actual circumstances after adequate discussion of IMCs, with review to be conducted on a regular basis. If necessary, schools may relay their concerns about training of managers to the respective School Development Sections of the EDB to facilitate the coordination of district- or region-based training activities.

4.21 The Task Force proposes implementing the above soft training targets for school managers on a trial basis for four school years starting from the 2019/20 school year. The EDB is recommended to collect data and feedback on the training of school managers during and upon the close of the trial period for the purpose of mid-term and overall review. This would enable the EDB to have an overview of the training of school managers and map out the way forward.

Recommendation 7			
Soft training targets for school supervisors and managers are proposed as follows:			
	Number of training hours		Training programme
	Newly Registered	Serving/re-nominating	
School supervisor	At least a total of six hours in the first year	One training programme of at least two hours each year	Newly Registered supervisors may select training provided by (i) the EDB, and (ii) SSBs or IMCs. Serving/re-nominating supervisors should enrol for training provided by the EDB for refreshment.
School manager	At least a total of three hours in the first year	One training programme of at least two hours each year	Newly registered managers may select training provided by SSBs, IMCs or the EDB.

			Serving/re-nominating managers should enrol for training that is related to school governance.
<p>Since schools have different development in provision of training for school managers, SSBs and IMCs may make adjustments according to the actual circumstances. The above recommendations are to be implemented on a trial basis of four school years. The EDB should collect data and feedback on training of school managers during and upon the close of the trial period for the purpose of reviewing the provision of training for managers and mapping out the way forward.</p>			

Identifying suitable persons as school managers

4.22 Currently, teacher managers, parent managers and alumni managers are elected by stakeholders of their respective categories, while independent managers and SSB managers are nominated by IMCs and SSBs respectively. Some IMCs and SSBs indicate that they have difficulties in identifying suitable persons to serve as independent and/or SSB managers.

4.23 Since having suitable persons to serve as school managers is crucial to effective school governance, the Task Force recommends that the EDB should enhance support to help IMCs/SSBs in search of new school managers. In this regard, the Task Force suggests that the EDB collate information on the roles, functions, authority and responsibilities, conduct and ethics, etc. of school managers for the reference of IMCs and SSBs. Such information not only helps IMCs and SSBs identify suitable persons as independent/SSB managers, but also enables potential managers to understand their duties and responsibilities.

4.24 To help SSBs and IMCs in search of suitable persons to fill the vacancies for SSB managers and independent managers, the EDB launched the “Information Bank of Persons Who Are Interested to Serve

As School Managers in IMCs of Aided Schools” (Information Bank)⁷ in the 2016/17 school year for the reference of SSBs/IMCs looking for new SSB/independent managers. To cater for the different needs of schools and SSBs, the Task Force considers that the EDB should enrich the Information Bank by including, on top of professionals from the selected fields, persons who specialise in educational research, have good knowledge of school administration or possess management experience. The Task Force also suggests that the EDB should step up publicity encouraging SSBs and IMCs to identify suitable persons from the Information Bank to serve as school managers. Moreover, the Task Force is of the view that the EDB should review the effectiveness and long-term arrangements of the Information Bank in a timely manner, including the provision of proper training for persons who are interested to serve as school managers.

Recommendation 8

The EDB is advised to compile a list of the roles, functions, authority and responsibilities, conduct and ethics, etc. of school managers for the reference of SSBs, IMCs and potential managers. The existing “Information Bank of Persons Who Are Interested to Serve As School Managers in IMCs of Aided Schools” should be enhanced by including, on top of professionals from the selected fields, persons who specialise in educational research or have good knowledge of school administration, and publicity should be stepped up to help IMCs/SSBs identify suitable persons to serve as school managers. In addition, persons who are interested to serve as school supervisors/managers should be encouraged to undertake training in preparation for assuming the role of school manager.

Strengthening school visits specifically for IMCs

4.25 From time to time, various EDB officers conduct visits to aided schools to render support to IMC operation so as to ensure schools’ compliance with the law and the guidelines and requirements laid down by the EDB. The Task Force notes that some schools have been found to have malpractice in school governance in recent years. While these are individual cases, the EDB is recommended to strengthen its visits to aided schools. Officers conducting the visits should possess expertise

⁷ The Information Bank contains particulars of several hundred professionals from such fields as law, accountancy, engineering, architecture and surveying, who are interested in serving as school managers.

in such related areas as financial and human resource management, in order that useful advice and enhanced support can be provided to help IMCs understand where they are weak and how they can improve their management. In the course of rendering enhanced support to schools, potential mismanagement cases can also be identified for early intervention.

4.26 There are views suggesting that strengthening school visits is two-sided because preparations for visits also mean extra workload for schools. The Task Force, however, upholds the view that by strengthening school visits, appropriate support can be provided for schools which do less well in governance, and early intervention by the EDB can possibly prevent the exacerbation of governance problems.

Recommendation 9

The EDB is advised to strengthen school visits specifically for IMCs to offer more in-depth suggestions on major issues such as school governance, financial and personnel management to support the operation of IMCs during face-to-face meetings with school managers and the persons concerned. Through such visits, the EDB may identify potential mismanagement cases and take early intervention measures.

Succession planning for school managers

4.27 The Task Force considers the continuity and succession of IMCs vital. IMCs should not only ensure their smooth operation and transition, but also make early and long-term plans appropriately for the succession of school managers. For example, IMCs should review the tenure of serving managers in the light of current situation, look for their successors in a timely manner and arrange training as appropriate. Specifically, IMCs may invite suitable persons to join the committees set up by IMCs/schools and offer proper training to potential and newly registered managers to enhance their understanding of school background and circumstances, stakeholders' needs, characteristics of school development, operation, management and so forth. These endeavours not only ensure smooth succession of school managers, but also enable school managers to discharge their responsibilities.

4.28 The Task Force considers that on top of school-based training, potential and newly registered managers should be encouraged to participate in training programmes or activities, including structured

manager training programmes, thematic seminars and sharing sessions organised by the EDB, so that they can better understand their functions and roles and grasp the essence of school operation.

4.29 There are views suggesting that a commendation system be established for school managers to encourage more suitable persons to take up the role of school manager. The Task Force finds it difficult to formulate territory-wide assessment criteria for evaluating the performance of school managers in view of different school-based circumstances. However, in case of need, SSBs may set up a system complimenting their school managers so as to encourage suitable persons serving on IMCs.

Recommendation 10

IMCs are recommended to make proper plans for succession of school managers, identify suitable successors early and provide, in the light of school-based circumstances, appropriate training for potential and newly registered managers to help them acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for school governance for the discharge of their responsibilities.

(II) Strengthening the administration capabilities of schools and unleashing capacity for teachers and principals

4.30 In the past two decades, the EDB introduced a number of measures to help teachers and principals handle the administrative work. These include streamlining administrative procedures; delegating to schools the authority to handle most of their personnel and administrative matters⁸; allocating extra resources to schools for hiring additional supporting staff/procuring services required⁹; and critically reviewing the arrangements of schemes/projects and use of grants/funds disbursed by the EDB to minimise the data and reports to be submitted by schools. However, schools are generally concerned about the extra time and effort required from teachers and principals to cope with the ever-increasing

⁸ Please refer to the [Checklist on Common Administrative Issues in Aided Schools](#).

⁹ For example, starting from the 1998/99 school year and the 2014/15 school year, the Government has respectively provided a recurrent cash grant equivalent to the salary of a Clerical Assistant for public sector secondary and primary schools to enhance administrative support. In the 1999/2000 school year, to facilitate the implementation of SBM policy, a supplementary grant was provided for aided schools to cope with additional clerical and administrative support work. Starting from the 2000/01 school year, schools may use the Capacity Enhancement Grant to hire outside services or recruit additional staff (such as clerks) to provide administrative support.

administrative workload arising from implementing the SBM policy and carrying out the tasks thereunder (such as those involved in direct handling of personnel and financial matters by IMCs and providing support for IMCs by school personnel). Administrative work not only increases in quantity, but also becomes more complex with the requirement for enhanced transparency and accountability. As a result, schools have to devote considerable manpower and time to various tasks, such as liaising with stakeholders, handling complaints and maintaining effective communication with parents on crisis management.

4.31 The Task Force considers it necessary to strengthen administrative support and streamline administrative procedures for schools, thereby unleashing capacity for teachers and principals and enabling them to focus on core education tasks and take better care of student development.

Dedicating extra resources to strengthening administrative support

4.32 Administrative work in schools has become more demanding and diversified than before. In addition to legal matters, accounting, school maintenance, property management, and personnel matters and staff recruitment, schools have to support the operation of IMCs, prepare documents for election of school managers and compile reports on various grants. Administrative workload is getting heavier and increasingly complicated. At present, administrative support is mainly rendered by the clerical staff. Whether in terms of competence or strength, the existing manpower provision is insufficient to address the actual needs arising from the diversified and complex administrative work. For instance, normally there are only two clerks in each primary or special school, and an Assistant Clerical Officer and a Clerical Assistant should respectively have the academic qualifications up to the level of Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination/Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination and Secondary 4.

4.33 Given the recent changes in administrative work as mentioned above and the existing administrative manpower in aided schools, the Task Force considers it necessary to provide schools with additional resources so that they can recruit more capable administrative staff to coordinate and handle the administrative work that has become more demanding, diversified and complex. This will release teachers and principals from some non-teaching duties and enable them to focus more on teaching and take better care of student development. Please see paragraph 4.66 for follow-up details of this recommendation.

4.34 The Task Force notes that stakeholders' other views and concerns, such as those about improvement to the establishment of teachers, creation of an additional post of vice-principal and review of the professional development of teachers, fall within the scope of study of another task force, i.e. Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers. Their concerns that mentioned above have been relayed to the task force concerned.

Recommendation 11

The EDB is advised to provide schools with additional manpower/resources, including additional manpower at the Executive Officer rank, to reduce the administrative workload of teachers and principals and enable them to focus more on teaching and take better care of student development.

Streamlining requirements on school administration

4.35 The Task Force has conducted in-depth discussions about strengthening the administration capabilities of schools and unleashing capacity for teachers and principals. It has met with representatives respectively from primary and secondary school heads associations of the 18 districts in February 2018 and different stakeholders between late June and mid-September 2018 for their views.

4.36 The education sector and stakeholders strongly agree that the EDB should review the requirements/stipulations for schools to streamline schools' administrative work. For example, stakeholders suggest that in view of the heavy workload generated by the current tendering procedures, the EDB should relax procurement requirements, including financial limits for tenders/quotations and pertinent procedures and rules, as well as restrictions on contract periods. In this regard, the Task Force notes that the EDB will review its administrative requirements from time to time and upon the review conducted in the 2017/18 school year, the EDB has decided to streamline reporting arrangements for a number of grants/funds starting from the 2018/19 school year. Taking the Capacity Enhancement Grant and Sister School Scheme Grant as an example, their report templates have been simplified. As for the Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant which has been provided for a number of years and schools are capable of making use of the grant appropriately to address students' needs, separate reporting in this regard has been waived.

4.37 Having gauged the current situation and the views collected, the Task Force appreciates the EDB's efforts to strengthen the administration capabilities of schools and streamline school administration. Members agree that the EDB should continue to conduct regular review of schools' administrative work and where feasible and appropriate, further streamline school administration. It is also suggested that if circumstances allow, aided schools should be given more flexibility in procurement/trading operations, for example, by relaxing restrictions on contract periods, financial limits for tenders/quotations and requirements on the number of written quotations, in order to further reduce the workload of teachers and principals. However, as public funds are involved, the Task Force considers that a right balance should be struck between streamlining the administrative arrangements and ensuring the accountability for proper use of public resources. Consequently, members generally agree that in parallel to making an effort to streamline requirements on school administration, the EDB should ensure that the streamlined requirements would not affect the arrangements to examine whether the intended objectives and desired results of the initiative concerned are attained.

4.38 The Task Force concurs with the education sector and stakeholders that the EDB should further refine the existing administrative guidelines/reference materials and enhance the related training for schools, particularly those covering more complex administrative work, such as procurement and assessment of teachers' salary. In addition, to handle administrative matters (for example, appointment and promotion of staff, and financial control), schools should put in place internal arrangements and related documents in respect of different administration areas, for which there should be good operating practices/experience. It is therefore advisable for the EDB to gather and disseminate these practices and experience for schools' reference. Besides, when updating the existing guidelines/reference materials, the EDB should highlight the revisions made for easy identification and comprehension of schools. In respect of forms and reports to be completed by schools, the Task Force suggests that the EDB should step up efforts to make more of them available in an electronic format to facilitate schools' completion and updating.

4.39 During consultation, some stakeholders suggested that the EDB should streamline procedures and requirements for dismissal of teachers as schools find it very difficult to dismiss underperformers. As this issue is highly complicated with mixed views among stakeholders

and the existing arrangements were reached after taking into account prudently major stakeholders' views and balancing the concerns of different parties, the Task Force considers it undesirable and inappropriate to make any hasty recommendation proposing amendment.

Recommendation 12

To ease schools' administrative workload, the EDB is advised to continue to conduct review of the requirements/stipulations for schools on a regular/need basis and streamline procedures to further facilitate schools' administrative work. Meanwhile, schools' accountability for the proper use of public funds should be ensured.

Recommendation 13

The EDB is advised to further refine the existing guidelines and reference materials, enhance the related training, particularly those covering more complex administrative work, and identify and disseminate schools' good operating practices/experience/documents in different administration areas, with a view to strengthening administrative support for schools.

Recommendation 14

To facilitate schools' administrative work, the EDB is advised to make forms/reports to be completed by schools available in an electronic format, and highlight the revisions made in the guidelines/reference materials for easy identification and comprehension of schools.

Streamlining administrative requirements on sponsored schools by SSBs

4.40 The Task Force believes that to remove encumbrances for teachers and principals, apart from streamlining the EDB's administrative guidelines and requirements as suggested in paragraphs 4.36 and 4.37 above, schools' internal administrative arrangements and requirements are another important aspect that needs to be revisited for streamlining. Generally, schools work out their school-based implementation details in line with the EDB's guidelines and requirements. Observation reveals that some SSBs have imposed on their sponsored schools rules and procedures that are more stringent than

the EDB's requirements in respect of procurement, financial management and reporting arrangements, etc. While understanding that SSBs aim to perform their monitoring role as expected, the Task Force reckons that more work will be created for principals and teachers as a result. The SSBs are therefore encouraged to review the administrative requirements laid down for their sponsored schools and reduce schools' workload by removing red tape and streamlining procedures.

4.41 Noting that some SSBs have effectively eased the burden on schools by coordinating procurement of the goods/services commonly required by their sponsored schools, the Task Force encourages other SSBs to provide coordinated support (for example, in respect of procurement and audit) for their sponsored schools where applicable. This will not only reduce schools' administrative workload, but also have the benefit of economy of scale.

4.42 The recommendation above is supported by a number of stakeholders, including SSBs. Some SSBs suggest that the EDB should provide recurrent funding to facilitate SSBs in coordinating support for the operation of their sponsored schools, such as offering assistance in procurement and preparation of financial reports.

4.43 Concurring with the stakeholders, the Task Force recommends that the EDB should consider providing additional resources to support the operation of IMCs and strengthen training for school managers. Please see paragraph 4.66 for follow-up details of this recommendation.

Recommendation 15

SSBs are encouraged to streamline administrative requirements, including those related to overseeing/monitoring the performance and management of their sponsored schools, and where applicable, assume a coordinating role over such matters as centralising procurement of the goods/services commonly required by their sponsored schools for benefiting from economy of scale and alleviating administrative workload.

Recommendation 16

The EDB is advised to provide schools with additional resources to enhance training for school managers and strengthen

administrative support for schools and IMCs. Schools may, following the promulgated procurement procedures, procure from their SSBs such services as training for school managers and administrative support.

Streamlining schools' internal administrative arrangements/procedures by IMCs

4.44 The Task Force is aware that apart from the requirements imposed by the EDB and SSBs, some IMCs have laid down stringent internal administrative requirements and procedures according to their school-based circumstances and needs. Since the SBM policy has been implemented for years and continuous developments have been witnessed among schools, there may be room for refining and streamlining relevant requirements and procedures to tie in with the development and prevailing needs of schools. The Task Force, therefore, recommends that IMCs should review and streamline, in the light of schools' actual circumstances and needs and on a regular/need basis, internal arrangements and procedures governing the administration and daily business of schools and the operation of IMCs, and consult relevant stakeholders, for example, school staff, during the process. Besides, IMCs should revisit the content requirements for various school documents. Regardless of whether schools adopt the templates provided by the EDB or not, what is required in the documents should be concise and succinct. This is particularly true for School Development Plan, Annual School Plan and School Report, the content requirements of which are of great concern to teachers.

4.45 With the advancement and extensive application of technology nowadays, the Task Force recommends that schools should make wider use of information technology in administrative work, such as preparing various documents, conducting procurement exercises and communicating with stakeholders, to further minimise cumbersome arrangements and procedures and achieve greater work efficiency. Moreover, the Task Force suggests that the EDB should further explore how to assist schools to handle administrative work with information technology tools.

Recommendation 17

IMCs are recommended to review and streamline schools' internal administrative arrangements and procedures on a regular/need basis; revisit the contents required for various school documents,

especially School Development Plan, Annual School Plan and School Report, which should be kept concise and succinct; and encourage schools to make wider use of information technology to support school administration and reduce workload. Moreover, the EDB could further explore how to assist schools to handle administrative work with information technology tools.

Reviewing IMC constitutions in a timely manner

4.46 Since the enactment of the Education (Amendment) Ordinance 2004 on 1 January 2005, more and more aided schools have established their IMCs. Of these schools, some have been operating under an IMC for a considerable period of time, and hence certain provisions and/or requirements in their IMC constitutions need modification to keep in line with the schools' ongoing development and changes in circumstances. As such, the Task Force recommends that IMCs should review their constitutions in the light of their operational experience and current situation, and where necessary, make amendments in accordance with the Education Ordinance and the provisions in the constitutions. For example, IMCs may, having regard to the actual operation, review the electoral procedures and tenure of school managers returned by election, and subject to relevant provisions in the Education Ordinance and school-based circumstances, seek to minimise the election-generated work. Besides, IMCs may make delegation arrangements under statutory procedures to enhance their work efficiency. In regard of supporting IMC operation, principals or teachers are nominated by many IMCs and/or their committees to undertake secretarial duties, which creates extra administrative workload for them. The Task Force recommends IMCs to identify persons other than principals, teachers or teacher managers for taking up the secretarial duties of IMCs/committees so as to lessen the administrative workload of the teaching staff. The EDB may provide resources as appropriate to enable IMCs to solicit administrative support from persons other than the teaching staff.

Recommendation 18

IMCs are recommended to, in the light of their operational experience and current situation, review their constitutions and amend provisions and procedures therein as necessary, and identify persons other than principals, teachers or teacher managers for undertaking the secretarial duties of IMCs/committees so as to lessen the administrative workload of

the teaching staff. The EDB may provide resources in this regard.

(III) Enhancing the participation of major stakeholders in school governance

4.47 Under the SBM policy, an aided school should put in place a participatory governance framework that emphasises transparency and accountability, and establish an IMC that comprises major stakeholders from different backgrounds. A key element of such a governance framework is that on top of SSB and independent members, other major stakeholders, such as teachers, parents and alumni, are also engaged in school governance, development planning, evaluation and decision-making. The involvement of all these stakeholders will make school operation more transparent, school governance more accountable and administrative management more impartial.

Maintaining close communication with stakeholders

4.48 There are views requesting some schools to strengthen their communication and consultation mechanisms to ensure stakeholders' adequate participation in school governance. In this regard, the Task Force considers that IMCs and schools should build a participative culture among stakeholders and maintain close communication with major stakeholders. It is thus recommended that IMCs should from time to time review and strengthen both formal and informal communication mechanisms to facilitate effective dialogue with stakeholders on school matters. For instance, in the light of schools' prevailing circumstances and needs, IMCs may regularly organise school and teacher consultative meetings or arrange gatherings for teachers and school managers to enhance communication with school personnel. Through these meetings and gatherings, IMCs could find out how school personnel think about school policies and measures and what support they need in learning and teaching, etc. IMCs may also take these opportunities to clarify policies and measures in an attempt to dispel doubts and enhance the sense of belonging among school personnel. Though some consider it necessary for schools to establish the consultative system for teachers to directly express their views to school managers, the Task Force considers that as circumstances vary from school to school, when adequate channels for communication are ensured in the school-based circumstances, whether to organise such consultative meetings should be left to the discretion of individual schools. When

needs arise, IMCs may set up ad hoc groups on specific issues for school personnel to make known their views.

4.49 In addition, IMCs should enhance dialogue with such stakeholders as parents and alumni, and develop both formal and informal channels of communication through, for example, creating online discussion forums and sending IMC representatives to stakeholders' formal meetings (such as annual general meetings) or informal gatherings. By taking heed of stakeholders' views through different channels, IMCs could enable the participative culture to take root among stakeholders and ensure their (in particular parents') due participation in school management and decision-making.

4.50 The Task Force considers that enhancing dialogue with stakeholders not only facilitates their participation in school governance but also enables schools to identify and settle misunderstandings and differences early with stakeholders. Efforts to prevent the exacerbation of problems and the mounting of tension contribute to the sustainable development of schools.

Recommendation 19

IMCs are recommended to strengthen their engagement mechanisms to maintain close and effective communication with such stakeholders as teachers, parents and alumni, for instance, by regularly organising school and teacher consultative meetings and arranging gatherings for school managers, teachers and other stakeholders, so as to enable the participative culture to take root among stakeholders and ensure their due participation in school management and decision-making.

Assessing the necessity of setting up committees to handle important school matters

4.51 To ensure stakeholders' participation in school governance, some IMCs set up, on a need basis, committees that comprise relevant school staff and school managers to hold discussions and make recommendations on such areas/issues as human resources, financial management and audit, handling of complaints or appeals, and school development planning. Where necessary, the IMCs may co-opt outsiders who possess the expertise required to serve the committees. For instance, professionals from the accounting field may be invited to join the committee responsible for financial management and audit

offering expert advice on financial management and control as well as use of resources and enhancing the related school-based mechanisms and transparency of the operation. In addition, these committees may consult stakeholders on specific issues and make recommendations to the IMCs after giving consideration to the views collected. The Task Force believes that the operation of such committees facilitates thorough discussion on particular issues, thereby enhancing the transparency of IMCs, improving the efficiency of IMC meetings and contributing to the continuity of school managers' service and their succession. Notwithstanding the above, as needs vary among schools, the Task Force expects IMCs, in the light of the prevailing circumstances and needs of their schools, to prudently assess the necessity of setting up committees and engaging the school managers with the expertise required and the personnel concerned to handle important matters related to school operation.

4.52 Regarding the views that teacher managers should neither be asked to withdraw from meetings that discuss such personnel matters as disciplinary actions and promotion nor be excluded from committees that look at personnel matters, the Task Force is aware that under the SBM policy and the IMC constitutions, school managers of all categories should serve on IMCs in their **personal capacity**, and an IMC, which operates under the principle of collective responsibility, is collectively accountable for all decisions made. Hence, school managers of all categories have the right to engage in discussions and express themselves, and their views should be respected. Only when a conflict of interest arises should the school manager concerned withdraw from the meeting. The Task Force notes that IMCs should have put in place a mechanism for members to declare interests in respect of discussions at meetings and daily operation, which enables IMCs and their committees to determine in the light of actual circumstances whether any participant (including school managers and school personnel) should withdraw from meetings or discussions because of a conflict of interest. In principle, a person who has not violated any stipulation laid down in the school's governing directive on conflict of interest should be treated equally as other participants.

Recommendation 20

IMCs are invited to prudently assess the necessity of setting up committees that comprise school managers, school personnel or other persons with the expertise required to handle important matters related to school operation, such as human resources,

financial management and audit. Setting up these committees may also be conducive to the succession of school managers.

Strengthening communication between the EDB and teachers

4.53 There are views that apart from strengthening communication between IMCs and stakeholders, the EDB should put in place a more effective communication mechanism to collect frontline teachers' feedback on education policies and the management and operation of their schools. In this connection, the Task Force recommends that the EDB should reinstate¹⁰ for teachers the annual district-based small group discussion forums, which invite participation of the representatives elected by all teachers in each public sector school. At these forums, teacher representatives may offer their views on education policies and school measures, while the EDB officers may collect opinions and clarify misunderstanding (if any) to facilitate professional exchange.

4.54 Besides, the Task Force considers that during school development visits, officers of the Regional Education Offices of the EDB should, apart from meeting the school management (for example, principals and vice-principals), approach other teachers directly to listen to their views on education policies and measures, school operation and development, for the purpose of strengthening communication. To enable teachers to speak freely, it should be held in the absence of the school management (for example, principals).

Recommendation 21

The EDB is advised to reinstate the annual district-based small group discussion forums with teachers, during which teacher representatives from various schools may express their views to the EDB officers on education policies and school measures, etc. to facilitate professional exchange.

Recommendation 22

During school development visits, the EDB officers are advised to, not only meet the school management, but also approach teachers directly to find out how they think about education policies and measures, school operation and development, etc. for the purpose

¹⁰ This arrangement ceased since around 2000 having regard to the establishment of regular consultation channels with educational bodies such as teacher associations and school councils.

of strengthening communication.

4.55 Under the SBM framework, principals assume a professional leading role in schools' daily operation and management, and should maintain close communication with different stakeholders to facilitate their participation in school governance. To help principals discharge their responsibilities more effectively through a firmer grasp of their roles and related skills, the Task Force recommends that the EDB should enrich the training programmes for newly appointed and aspiring principals¹¹, particularly on major subjects such as professional conduct, core values, and communication skills and culture.

Recommendation 23

The EDB is advised to enrich the training programmes for newly appointed and aspiring principals, particularly on major subjects such as professional conduct, core values, and communication skills and culture, so that the principals could better grasp their professional leading role in schools' daily operation and management and acquire the related skills.

Refining complaint handling mechanism

4.56 As society advances, people have better understanding of their rights and thus higher expectations of schools. While schools have established communication mechanisms and channels for responding to enquiries and feedback, some may, for various reasons, make complaints to schools or related organisations, such as SSBs, teachers' associations, Legislative Council, District Councils, Office of the Ombudsman and the media.

4.57 The Education Ordinance has entrusted IMCs with the power and responsibility to manage schools. As such, schools should establish their school-based mechanisms and procedures for handling school matters, including complaints relating to schools. Though the SBM policy does not cover complaint handling mechanisms, the tragic incident of a teacher who fell from a height in early March 2019 has led to widespread discussion and concern in the education sector about the mechanism for handling complaints from teachers. The Task Force

¹¹ Please visit the following webpage for details on training programmes for newly appointed and aspiring principals:
<https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/teacher/qualification-training-development/development/cpd-principals/programmes.html>.

finds it necessary to look into the issue and make recommendations for improvement.

4.58 The Enhanced School Complaint Management Arrangements¹² (Enhanced Arrangements) have been fully implemented in all public sector schools and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS). Upon review of the Enhanced Arrangements, the Task Force considers that the respective roles and responsibilities of schools and the EDB in handling complaints have been clearly spelt out under the Enhanced Arrangements. As a general practice, complaints from parents, students or the public about schools' daily operation or internal affairs should be handled by the schools concerned in accordance with their school-based mechanisms and procedures, and an appeal avenue should be provided. In the event that such complaints are lodged to the EDB, with complainants' consent, the EDB will refer the cases to the schools concerned for follow-up actions, and the schools will then give the complainants direct replies. For complaints lodged to the EDB by school staff or complaints other than those mentioned above¹³, they will be dealt with by the EDB. When school staff directly make complaints to their schools, these complaints should be handled by the schools under the school-based mechanisms. The EDB has established an independent complaint review mechanism and the Panel of Review Boards on School Complaints (Panel), under which independent review boards comprising Panel members could be formed to review complaints from parents, students or the public about schools' daily operation or internal affairs.

4.59 The Task Force considers the existing division of labour between schools and the EDB in handling school complaints reasonable. Having considered the sector's views on handling complaints from teachers, the Task Force recommends that the Panel's scope of review should be expanded to cover complaints lodged by teachers to their schools or to the EDB direct. The Panel comprises independent persons from the education and non-education sectors, and whether it is for the

¹² On the recommendation of the Committee on Enhancement of Complaint Management in Schools, the EDB launched three phases of pilot project from the 2012/13 to 2014/15 school years to assist schools in putting in place a fair, just and transparent mechanism under the Enhanced School Complaint Management Arrangements for handling complaints from parents, students or the public about schools' daily operation or internal affairs. Given the positive outcomes as indicated by the review of the pilot project, the Enhanced Arrangements have been fully implemented in all public sector and DSS schools since 1 September 2017.

¹³ These complaints include (i) those pertinent to the Education Ordinance, education policies and services directly provided by the EDB; and (ii) those referred by other departments/statutory bodies (for example, Office of the Ombudsman, Legislative Council, Equal Opportunities Commission and District Councils).

complainant or the subject of complaint, the involvement of Panel members in the review boards could make the review of teachers' complaints more independent, objective and credible. Like the arrangements for parents, students or the public who request a review, appealing teachers are required to provide sufficient justification or further evidence for the Chairperson of the Panel (who is not from the EDB) to determine whether to accept the applications. Furthermore, since there has been some misunderstanding about complaint handling (for example, teachers' complaints received by the EDB are referred back to schools), the Task Force recommends that the EDB should, through different channels, help stakeholders (including teachers) better understand the prevailing arrangements for handling various types of complaints and correct misconceptions. For example, it should be made clear that upon receipt of any complaints from teachers, the EDB, instead of referring them back to the schools concerned, will directly initiate investigation into the cases.

Recommendation 24

The EDB is advised to expand the scope of review by the Panel of Review Boards on School Complaints from covering only complaints made by parents, students or the public about schools' daily operation or internal affairs to that made by teachers so that independent, objective and credible review results will be available to both parties, i.e. the complainant or the subject of complaint, and to help stakeholders (including teachers) better understand the prevailing arrangements for handling various types of complaints through different channels.

4.60 The Task Force observes that when schools receive complaints from their staff, they have to deal with such complaints in accordance with school-based or SSB mechanisms and procedures for handling staff complaints (if applicable). The Task Force considers that although circumstances vary among schools, basic principles and arrangements for handling complaints about schools' daily operation and internal affairs are applicable to the handling of staff complaints as well. Hence, the Task Force recommends that IMCs may make reference to the Guidelines for Handling School Complaints issued by the EDB in developing/refining their mechanisms and procedures for handling staff complaints, so as to deal with such complaints in a more proper manner.

4.61 Given that teachers may directly make complaints to schools, the Task Force recommends that the EDB should, on a yearly basis,

gather information from public sector schools about staff complaints they receive and then review such information along with that directly lodged to the EDB, in order to get a clear picture of the situation in individual schools. In case of any abnormalities, the EDB may take such follow-up action as requesting the schools concerned to provide further information and/or discussing with the schools how to make improvement to avoid deterioration of a situation.

Recommendation 25

IMCs are recommended to make reference to the Guidelines for Handling School Complaints issued by the EDB in developing/refining their mechanisms and procedures for handling staff complaints. In addition, the EDB is advised to gather information from public sector schools about staff complaints they receive on a yearly basis, in order to get a clear picture of the situation in individual schools and take appropriate follow-up actions when necessary.

Reviewing school-based complaint handling mechanism

4.62 The Task Force considers that IMCs should, on a regular/need basis, review their school-based mechanisms and procedures for handling complaints and appeals, including complaints made by teachers, in a bid to further enhance fairness, impartiality and acceptance of such mechanisms and procedures, and ensure that early/timely response is given to complainants and follow-up actions are taken at an opportune time. For instance, schools and IMCs should review the mechanisms and procedures and ensure the following:

- The handling procedures are clear and objective, free from undue influence or interference by any persons and capable of protecting privacy of the persons involved, including complainants;
- Suitable persons are assigned to handle complaints/appeals. Any staff member who is the subject of a complaint should not handle the case concerned and/or oversee the investigative work.
- Teachers and parents are consulted when establishing and refining procedures for handling complaints/appeals to ensure that the procedures are widely accepted by stakeholders. Details about the mechanisms for handling complaints/appeals

and the procedures involved have been communicated to and understood by all major stakeholders, for example, school staff and parents.

- A declaration system is set up for persons involved in handling complaints/appeals to declare conflict of interest; and
- A task force may be set up to handle a special complaint/appeal case taking into account its nature and severity. Members of the task force may include school managers and SSB representatives as appropriate. Social workers, lawyers, psychologists and/or uninvolved parents or teachers, etc. may be invited to join the task force as independent persons to render professional advice and support, and an independent person should be appointed as the chairperson to enhance fairness and impartiality of the handling process and credibility of the task force.

Mediating disagreement

4.63 Given the large number of stakeholders, the Task Force opines that occasionally, disagreement between schools and individual stakeholders is inevitable. As it is often difficult to distinguish between “absolutely right” and “absolutely wrong” in a dispute, schools are advised to resolve disagreement by means of mediation as early as possible to prevent a situation from getting out of hand. In view of the above, the Task Force recommends that mediation should be made an option or consideration in the school mechanism for handling complaints/appeals, so that differences between the two parties could be properly settled at the initial stage. In a spirit of mutual support, respect and understanding, and by means of candid discussion, the parties involved should be able to seek common ground while accommodating differences and work towards an agreed solution. This not only prevents the situation from deteriorating, but also enables schools and complainants to better understand each other and re-build mutual trust and team spirit, which help the two parties maintain rapport for further interaction and cooperation thereafter. Schools/IMCs should, depending on the nature of a case, appoint an independent person to conduct mediation, with the goal of assisting the dispute parties to reach a solution in a fair and impartial manner.

4.64 Complainants, particularly those dissatisfied with their school’s investigation results, may express their grievances to SSBs in

addition to schools and the EDB. The Task Force encourages SSBs to review, on a regular/need basis, the mechanisms and procedures for handling complaints and appeals against their schools, including complaints made by teachers, in a bid to further enhance fairness, impartiality and acceptance of the handling procedures and ensure suitable persons being assigned to handle complaints or appeals. It is recommended that mediation should be made an option or consideration under the pertinent mechanisms of SSBs to settle the differences between the two parties as early as possible to prevent a situation from getting out of hand.

Recommendation 26

IMCs are recommended to settle disagreement with stakeholders by means of mediation as early as possible, with a view to working towards an agreed solution in order to prevent the situation from deteriorating and to help the two parties restore mutual trust and maintain a harmonious relationship; and to review their school-based mechanisms and procedures for handling complaints and appeals on a regular/need basis, including complaints made by teachers, in a bid to further enhance fairness, impartiality and acceptance of the handling procedures and ensure that early/timely response is given to complainants and follow-up actions are taken at an opportune time.

Recommendation 27

SSBs are encouraged to settle disagreement between their schools and complainants by means of mediation as early as possible so as to help the two parties restore mutual trust and maintain a harmonious relationship; and to review the mechanisms and procedures for handling complaints and appeals against their schools on a regular/need basis, including complaints made by teachers, in a bid to further enhance fairness, impartiality and acceptance of the handling procedures and ensure suitable persons being assigned to handle complaints or appeals.

Summing up

4.65 The Task Force would like to express its heartfelt thanks to the education sector and stakeholders for their invaluable views, which serve as an important source of reference for drawing up the final recommendations.

4.66 The education sector and stakeholders share the view that it should be a priority to provide schools/IMCs with additional manpower at the Executive Officer rank/additional resources to reduce the administrative workload of teachers and principals and strengthen support for IMCs. In view of such, the Task Force unanimously supported at its meeting on 26 September 2018 the early implementation of the recommendations concerned before the submission of a review report to the Government, and reached a resolution that the Secretary for Education should be requested in writing to implement them as from the 2019/20 school year. The Government has accepted this proposal and as announced by the Chief Executive in the Policy Address on 10 October 2018, will provide public sector schools and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme with additional resources starting from the 2019/20 school year to strengthen the administrative support for schools and their management committees. With these resources, schools may recruit additional staff at the Executive Officer rank and enhance training for school managers, thereby reducing the administrative workload of teachers and principals to enable them to focus more on teaching and take better care of student development. The annual additional expenditure involved will be around \$570 million.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 The SBM policy aims, through delegation to schools of more authority and responsibility and coupled with the participation of major stakeholders in school governance, to provide schools with greater flexibility in management, resource deployment and development planning for delivering quality education with their own characteristics, hence enhancing the quality of teaching and the outcomes of learning.

5.2 Upon thorough review of the current implementation of the SBM policy and in-depth deliberation on various issues and the related improvement measures, the Task Force drew up 17 preliminary recommendations on the following three areas to consult the education sector and relevant stakeholders: (I) improving the quality of governance; (II) strengthening the administration capabilities of schools and unleashing capacity for teachers and principals; and (III) enhancing the participation of major stakeholders in school governance.

5.3 After detailed analysis and discussion of the views collected, the Task Force has refined and revised its preliminary recommendations as appropriate and formulated additional recommendations, and finally put forward 27 specific recommendations, as set out in Chapter 4 of this report, for the reference and follow-up action of the EDB, SSBs and IMCs.

5.4 The Task Force trusts that through implementing the recommendations on the three areas mentioned above, the pressing needs and concerns of the education sector will be properly addressed, the SBM policy strengthened, and teachers and principals released from the heavy administrative workload to focus more on teaching and have more time to take care of student development. The Task Force hopes that the strengthened collaboration among the EDB, SSBs and IMCs will help foster more effective school governance and management, so that schools will develop sustainably and deliver quality education that equips our students for the challenges and opportunities in the wake of the 21st century.

Task Force on School-based Management Policy

(I) Terms of reference

- To study the current implementation of the SBM policy in aided schools;
- Based on the results of the study, to make recommendations on the optimisation of SBM, with particular regard but not limited to the following areas:
 - enhancing the understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the school sponsoring bodies, incorporated management committees and the Education Bureau by all parties concerned to enable effective implementation of the SBM policy for the ultimate benefit of school development and student learning;
 - strengthening administration capabilities of schools and, where appropriate, streamlining school administration in aided schools in order to unleash teachers' capacity for teaching, professional development and exchange on education policies, etc; and
 - enhancing the capacity of the major stakeholders in school governance.

(II) Membership

Chairman	Mr Tim LUI Tim-leung
Members	Mrs Helen YU LAI Ching-ping Mr CHAN Shiu-choy Professor Alvin LEUNG Seung-ming Mr Langton CHEUNG Yung-pong Mr Lester Garson HUANG Mr WONG Kam-leung Dr FUNG Wai-wah Mr Antony IP Sing-piu Mr LAU Chi-chung Dr Halina POON Suk-han Mr Raymond POON Tak-cheong Mr LEE Kam-kwong (Secretary)

Legal Provisions on Functions and Responsibilities of SSBs and IMCs

Cap. 279

EDUCATION ORDINANCE

01/01/2005

40AE. Functions of sponsoring body and incorporated management committee

(1) The sponsoring body of a school shall be responsible for—

- (a) meeting the cost of furnishing and equipping the new school premises of the school to, where applicable, standards as recommended by the Permanent Secretary;
- (b) setting the vision and mission for the school;
- (c) maintaining full control of the use of funds and assets owned by it;
- (d) deciding the mode of receiving government aid;
- (e) ensuring, through the sponsoring body managers, that the mission is carried out;
- (f) giving general directions to the incorporated management committee in the formulation of education policies of the school;
- (g) overseeing the performance of the incorporated management committee; and
- (h) drafting the constitution of the incorporated management committee.

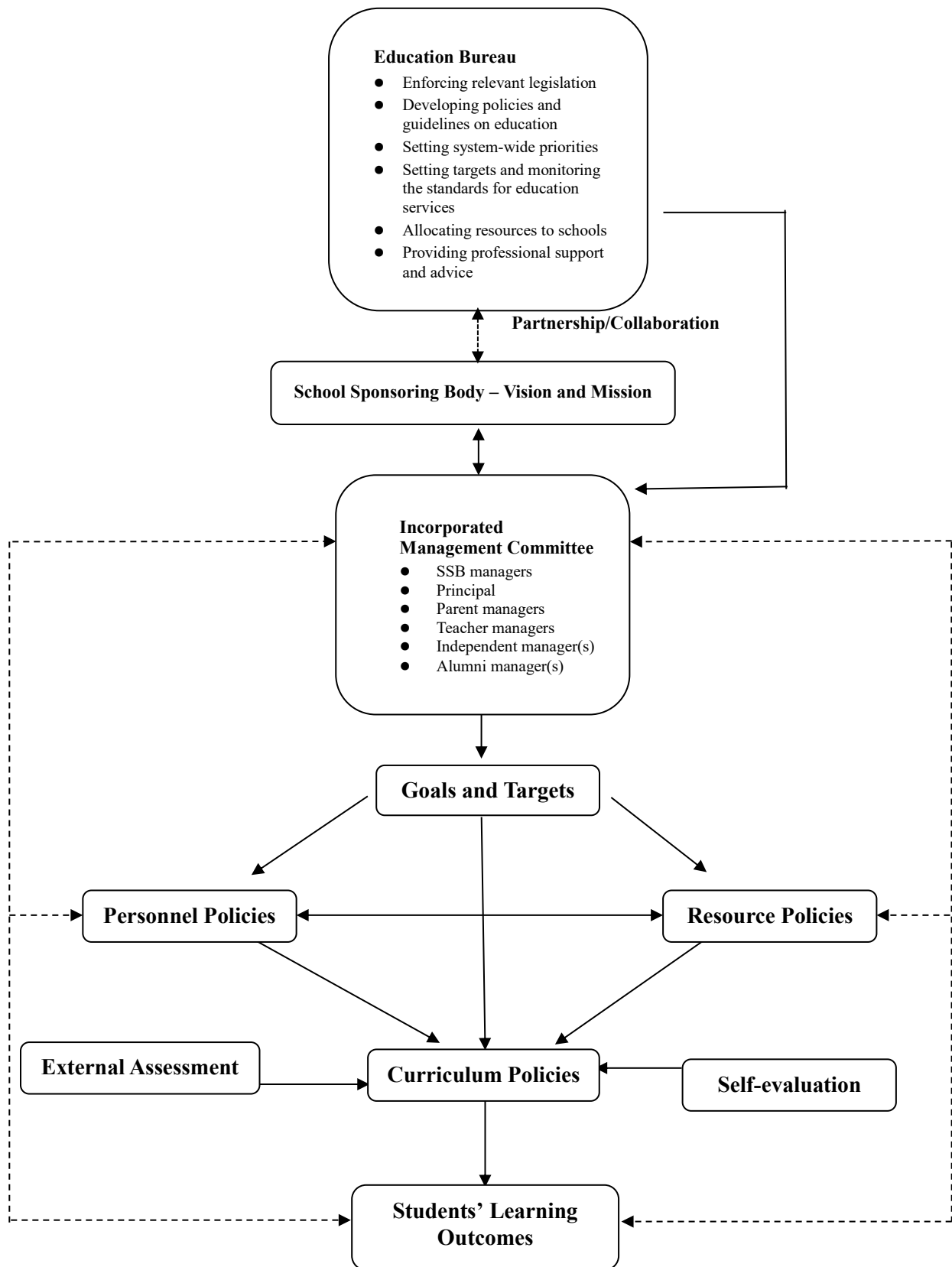
(2) The incorporated management committee of a school shall be responsible for—

- (a) formulating education policies of the school in accordance with the vision and mission set by the sponsoring body;
- (b) planning and managing financial and human resources available to the school;
- (c) accounting to the Permanent Secretary and the sponsoring body for the performance of the school;

- (d) ensuring that the mission of the school is carried out;
- (e) ensuring that the education of the pupils of the school is promoted in a proper manner; and
- (f) school planning and self-improvement of the school.

(PART IIIB added 27 of 2004 s. 16)

Illustration of Mutual Relationship among the EDB, SSBs and IMCs



Consultation Document Released by the Task Force in July 2018

**Task Force on School-based Management Policy
Invitation of Views**

PURPOSE

The Task Force on School-based Management (SBM) Policy (the Task Force) has examined the current implementation of the SBM policy in aided schools¹ and based on which has consolidated preliminary recommendations on optimisation of the implementation of SBM. This document aims to consult the stakeholders on the main recommendations proposed by the Task Force.

BACKGROUND

2. In 1997, the Education Commission issued its Report No. 7 on Quality School Education and one of the key recommendations to the Government was to provide schools with greater autonomy and flexibilities by devolving more responsibilities to them, such that schools could develop their own characteristics to meet the diverse learning needs of students and enhance the learning outcomes. In parallel, there should be enhanced transparency of school operation and accountability of school governance with increased stakeholders' involvement in decision-making and school management. Participation of stakeholders in school governance is, in fact, a world-wide trend.

3. With a view to ensuring direct involvement of the major stakeholders in school governance, aided schools shall establish incorporated management committee (IMC) comprising different stakeholders according to the provisions of the Education Ordinance. With devolved responsibility and accountability, schools can enjoy greater autonomy and flexibilities in school management, resource

¹ Given that the Education (Amendment) Ordinance 2004 which came into operation on 1 January 2005 requires all aided schools to set up an incorporated management committee and be managed by it, the current review essentially covers aided schools. However, subject to prevailing circumstances, the Government will consider implementing the recommendations of the Task Force in other public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools.

deployment as well as school development.

4. With the aim of attaining quality education, the Chief Executive actively listens to the views of the education sector and various stakeholders. In addition to the implementation of a package of priority measures in the 2017/18 school year, other education areas have been identified for further review and action, and one of which is SBM, which aims at removing encumbrances for the education sector to provide more room for studies and exchanges on education policies.

5. The Education Commission (EC) accepted the invitation of the Education Bureau (EDB) and formed the Task Force in November 2017 to study the current implementation of the SBM policy in aided schools and based on the results of the study, to make recommendations on the optimisation of SBM. The Task Force is chaired by the EC Chairman, Mr Tim Lui Tim-leung, with its membership comprising representatives of school sponsoring bodies (SSBs), school councils, parents associations and teachers unions as well as experienced educators.

6. The Task Force convened a number of meetings in the past 6 months and met the representatives of district primary and secondary school heads associations respectively. It has examined the current implementation of the SBM policy and based on which has consolidated preliminary recommendations on the optimisation of the implementation of SBM.

7. To take forward the review, the Task Force now invites stakeholders' written submissions about their views on the preliminary recommendations as detailed in the ensuing paragraphs. Views gathered will be an important source of reference for the review and for the formulation of the final recommendations of the Task Force.

STATE OF PLAY

8. Providing schools with more flexibility in their operation and management, resource deployment and development planning with devolution of enhanced responsibilities and accountability, SBM aims at empowering schools to formulate their policies that can better meet the needs of the students and schools, develop their own characteristics and improve the learning outcomes. However, schools should operate within a centrally determined governance framework. All

aided schools are required to set up an IMC which comprises different stakeholders and should operate in compliance with the rules and regulations under the Education Ordinance, Education Regulations, Codes of Aid, other related Ordinances, instructions and circulars issued by the EDB from time to time and guidelines from the SSB and their IMC Constitution.

9. The SBM framework is a participatory governance framework with transparency and accountability, with schools managed by an IMC which comprises representatives from the SSB, the principal, teachers, parents, alumni and independent members. The participation of various stakeholders in formulating school policies helps enhance the transparency and accountability of school governance and create synergy, thus enabling the betterment of school policies, and at the same time, provide effective checks and balances to guard against any unfavorable development.

10. After examining the current implementation of the SBM policy, the Task Force is of the view that over the years of implementation of SBM, the majority of schools are generally characterised by well-coordinated, systematic and effective operation, and appreciates the efforts of the aided school sector in this regard. There leaves, however, room for improvement. For example, there are individual schools whose quality of governance is not satisfactory due to the fact that their school managers lack the required knowledge and skills in school management; there are isolated cases in which supervisors cannot perform effectively the functions as stipulated in the Education Ordinance. When an IMC cannot play its managing functions effectively, school operation and student learning would be affected.

11. The Task Force suggests that optimisation of the implementation of SBM be explored along 3 broad levels – (i) to improve quality of governance; (ii) to strengthen administration capabilities of schools and unleash capacity for teachers and principals; and (iii) to enhance participation of major stakeholders in school governance. Moreover, the Task Force considers that in addition to the EDB, SSBs also play an important role to realise the benefits of SBM, hence, the Task Force’s preliminary recommended initiatives cover them as well.

TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF GOVERNANCE

12. Aided schools are managed by their respective IMCs whose performance hinges on the competency and readiness of the IMC managers. To improve the quality of governance, it is important to have a correct understanding of the respective functions and responsibilities of the different parties involved and to strengthen the capability of the major stakeholders.

13. The respective roles and responsibilities of SSBs, IMCs and EDB are summarised below:

- (a) The SSB sets the vision and mission for the school and gives general directions to the IMC in formulating education policies of the school. It has the responsibility in overseeing the performance of the IMC and ensuring that the mission of the school is realised through SSB managers.
- (b) The IMC is responsible for managing the school and is accountable for the performance of the school which is required to operate in compliance with the rules and requirements under the relevant Ordinances and Regulations, instructions and circulars from the EDB from time to time and guidelines from the SSB and its IMC Constitution.
- (c) The EDB plays the role of regulator to ensure that the IMC / schools comply with the provisions in the Education Ordinance, Codes of Aid and such requirements as promulgated in circulars and instructions issued by the EDB from time to time; and provides resources and professional support to schools.

Illustration of the interactive relationship among the EDB, SSBs and IMCs is at [Annex 1](#).

14. The Task Force considers that the legal provisions on the functions and responsibilities of a SSB and an IMC ([Annex 2](#)) clear and sufficient and in general, SSBs and IMCs can maintain adequate and proper interaction and collaboration between them to fulfill their respective functions. For example, when IMCs formulate education policies based on the vision and mission set, with appropriate interaction with SSBs, it helps ensure that the mission is carried out for the ultimate benefit of students. Besides, the EDB ensures the quality of school education through putting in place various monitoring and support measures, including conducting external school reviews and inspections on individual schools. It also fosters partnership with SSBs for collaborating support to schools. In addition to the existing

support measures provided by the EDB, the Task Force considers that the parties concerned have to step up their efforts to improve the capability of managers and quality of school governance through enhancement of training and support measures.

Preliminary Recommendations (i) – (x)

Enhancing stakeholders' understanding of the functions and responsibilities of the parties concerned

15.1. For the EDB –

- (i) The existing training for IMC managers² and SSBs³ should be improved⁴, including enhancing the training content and mode of delivery, to help IMC managers and SSBs gain a better understanding of the respective functions and responsibilities of the SSB, IMC and EDB and to foster their continuous professional development, as appropriate. This will enable them to discharge their responsibilities more effectively.
- (ii) The Task Force considers training organised by the EDB and SSBs necessary and complementary to each other. While the EDB's training programmes help keep participants abreast of the latest education policies and good practices gathered, IMCs / SSBs would tailor-make training to ensure their managers are well acquainted with the SSBs' vision and mission, and will address the specific mission of individual SSBs, etc. In this regard, additional resources would be made available for IMCs for such purposes.
- (iii) As finding a suitable person to fill a manager vacancy is crucial to school governance, a list of the duties, the values and attributes, the skills and competency of a school manager, etc., should be compiled for SSBs' and IMCs' reference and for aspiring managers to understand adequately their functions and responsibilities. Besides, the existing information bank of

² Including the Structured Manager Training Programmes, refresher courses, seminars and briefings, etc.

³ Including tailored-made SSB-based programmes with specific learning themes such as roles and responsibilities of school managers, crisis management etc., and case study.

⁴ Including improving the SBM website, for example, strengthening the training materials / videos and updating the SBM-related information.

potential managers⁵ should be enriched to include more professionals of relevant fields such as retired principals, and be promoted to SSBs / IMCs to help them identify suitable candidates for appointment to the IMCs as school managers.

Strengthening the capability of IMC managers

- (iv) The Task Force generally agrees that IMC managers would benefit from training which helps improve their capability in discharging their responsibilities. As many of the school managers have full-time jobs and may find it difficult to spare the time for training courses, the SBM website should be further enhanced to provide school managers with greater accessibility to training materials, for example, training video episodes, built-in links to the relevant circulars / guidelines of EDB, etc. Besides, e-based self-learning programmes would be provided so that IMC managers can study at their own pace. In this connection, it has already been indicated that an e-based self-learning package comprising essential knowledge of SBM, handy tips and web-based video episodes would be developed.
- (v) To facilitate IMC managers, especially the newly appointed / elected ones, in managing schools and assessing schools' performance, a web-based handy tool containing essential and important items in school administration and governance should be devised for school managers as a quick reference.
- (vi) School visits / inspections by EDB officers should be strengthened to support the IMC operation of aided schools which are weak in governance so as to provide more in-depth advice on important issues on school governance, financial matters and personnel management through direct communication among the EDB officers, school managers and school personnel involved. Potential mismanagement can hopefully be identified and arrested early.

15.2 For the SSBs –

- (vii) Similar to the formation of a 'learning circle', SSBs, in particular those sponsoring a number of schools, are encouraged

⁵ The bank was set up in mid-2017 by the EDB and currently contains a few hundreds of professionals in various areas, including law, accountancy, engineering, architecture and surveying, who have expressed interest in serving as IMC managers.

to:

- enhance internal sharing among supervisors and managers of their sponsored schools with a view to developing mutual support and making concerted efforts to promote effective governance while the EDB would take the lead to promote the sharing culture by organising district / regional theme-based discussion / sharing for standalone / other SSBs deemed necessary.
- open up their training programmes to schools sponsored by other SSBs, where appropriate.

(viii) Given their indispensable role in school governance, SSBs are in a good position to support the respective IMCs to tailor-make training, where possible, to enable managers well acquainted with the SSBs' vision and mission and to address the specific needs of individual SSBs / IMCs.

15.3 For the IMCs / schools –

- (ix) For maintaining continuity and smooth manager transition, the IMCs should attach greater importance to succession planning through early identification of suitable manager candidates and grooming of potential managers in the school-based context, for example, through coopting them into the committees formed under the IMC / school. For novice managers, school-based orientation could be organised to help them understand the key elements in school administration and operation and grasp the skills and acquire the knowledge required for fulfilling their roles and responsibilities in school governance.
- (x) There is a suggestion of setting a minimum training requirement for the school managers as some consider that as an IMC is an independent legal entity with devolved authority to determine the major aspects of school administration and management, its managers should have the basic knowledge and skills as required in school governance for fulfilling the respective roles and responsibilities. On the other hand, some opine that such a training threshold would probably render recruitment of managers more difficult, including deterring some of the existing managers from continuing their service and the potential managers from joining the IMC. Besides, it would be difficult to set a minimum training requirement appropriate for and applicable to all managers of different IMCs as training

needs of school managers would vary in light of their own qualifications / experience and prevailing circumstances of the schools concerned and individual SSBs would have put in place their own policies / arrangements on manager training.

16. The Task Force welcomes stakeholders' views on recommendations (i) to (x) as mentioned above, in particular feedback to the following questions:

- (a) Are there any views or other suggestions on the initiatives initially proposed for improving the quality of governance?
- (b) Should a minimum training requirement be set for all IMC managers, including supervisors? If so, would it be mandatory or optional? What are the basic contents? Are there any practical difficulties if such training threshold is to be put into practice?

TO STRENGTHEN ADMINISTRATION CAPABILITIES OF SCHOOLS AND UNLEASH CAPACITY FOR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS

17. The EDB has been putting in place various measures in the past two decades to help teachers and principals cope with the administrative work, such as streamlining administrative procedures, delegating authority on personnel and administrative matters to schools, providing additional resources for schools to hire extra supporting staff / services required, and conducting review critically to minimise the data collection as well as reporting requirements for schools when participating in different schemes / initiatives and using various grants / funding disbursed by the EDB. However, the school sector is concerned that with more administrative work in relation to the implementation of SBM and the related work arisen (such as handling personnel and financial issues directly by IMCs and providing support to the IMC operation), principals and teachers have to spend more time and energy, for instance, planning and arranging the respective school-based initiatives according to the needs of school development and / or student learning for provision of quality education. In addition to the ever-increasing demands of administrative work, school administration has become more complex with enhanced transparency and accountability. Schools have to handle labour-intensive and time consuming tasks such as liaising with

different stakeholders, handling complaints and maintaining effective communication with parents for crisis management, etc.

18. In addition to the above, the Task Force is of the view that internal administrative arrangements and requirements form an integral and essential part of school administration / management, which are school-based and usually at the discretion of the SSB and / or IMC. It is observed that apart from observing the requirements laid down by the EDB, some SSBs have tighter control on schools, for example, in procurement and financial management matters.

19. The Task Force considers it necessary to help enhance school administration and management by cutting red tape, streamlining procedures and strengthening schools' administrative support, thereby unleashing capacity for teachers and principals for the core business of education, as set out below.

Preliminary Recommendations (xi) – (xv)

20.1 For the EDB –

- (xi) To alleviate schools' administrative workload, the EDB should continue the review exercise of its requirements on schools on a regular / need basis to facilitate schools handling their administrative work more smoothly. Taking the rules governing procurement / trading operation as an example, more flexibility can be considered where appropriate, such as relaxing the recommended requirement on the contract period, the financial limits of tendering and the number of written quotations required by making reference to other subvention schemes as appropriate.
- (xii) It is considered necessary and desirable to provide additional manpower / resources to specifically support schools / IMCs in managing their administrative work. It is also advisable that administrative support be rendered by the personnel of higher ability, such as degree holders, as school administration and management have become more complex.

20.2 For the SSBs –

- (xiii) SSBs are encouraged to examine its administrative procedures

and arrangements to oversee / monitor, for example, the financial and human resource management of the sponsored schools with a view to streamlining the administrative work on the part of the schools. SSBs are also encouraged to assume a coordinating role in school administration, where possible and deemed appropriate, for example, supporting their sponsored schools to arrange centralised procurements of various stores / services commonly required to attain economy of scales and alleviate the workload of schools.

20.3 For the IMCs –

- (xiv) Similarly, IMCs should review / streamline the internal arrangements and procedures in administration and daily operation of the school as well as operation of the IMC on a regular / need basis as deemed appropriate and in consultation with the school personnel. By the same token, they would revisit the level of details required for various school documents especially the School Development Plan, Annual School Plan and School Report, which are required to be compiled under the implementation of School Development and Accountability Framework and SBM and have attracted grave concern from teachers about the contents required. Whether the school follows the templates provided by EDB or not, these documents should be succinct and to the point. In addition, the IMC should encourage the school concerned to apply information technology more widely to support administration work, such as processing procurement, thereby helping reduce the workload of the school personnel.

- (xv) IMCs are advised to revisit their constitution and revise the terms and procedures, etc., where necessary, with reference to their experience and to tie in with the prevailing circumstances, such as revising the tenure of the elected managers to help reduce the election-generated work and arranging the necessary delegation of authority according to the legislative provisions. Besides, IMCs might explore appointing a person other than the principal, teacher or Teacher Manager to be the secretary of IMC / various committees as far as possible, thereby relieving the administrative workload of the teaching staff.

21. Concurrently, the Task Force will continue to explore further for unleashing capacity for teachers and principals for teaching,

professional development and exchange on education policies etc., including exploring the possibility of further streamlining the schools' reports and information as currently required by the EDB. Stakeholders' views on preliminary recommendations (xi) to (xv) and the following questions are particularly invited by the Task Force:

- (a) What can be done to further unleash capacity for teachers and principals?
- (b) Are there any views on the initiatives proposed to strengthen administration capabilities of schools which would help unleash capacity for teachers and principals, for example, streamlining the EDB's requirements, relaxing the procurement-related rules (such as the requirement on the contract period and the financial limits of tendering)?
- (c) Are there any views on the initiatives initially proposed for the SSB and / or IMC to review the internal administrative requirements and procedures on schools, for instance, financial and human resource management matters? Is there any further action EDB or SSB or IMC should take?

TO ENHANCE PARTICIPATION OF MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

22. Under SBM, an aided school should put in place a participatory (P) governance framework with transparency (T) and accountability (A) with the establishment of an IMC comprising managers who are major stakeholders from different backgrounds. Under the P-T-A governance framework, one of the key elements is the due participation of major stakeholders, such as teachers, parents and alumni, in school management, development planning, evaluation and decision-making, which helps enhance the transparency of operation in schools and accountability of school governance and ensure the fairness of administrative management.

23. Having regard to the feedback received that some schools should step up their efforts to strengthen the communication and consultation mechanism and to help ensure adequate participation of stakeholders, the Task Force agrees that IMCs and schools should build up a participative culture among stakeholders. To achieve this, IMC should review and strengthen the engagement mechanisms for

different stakeholders, both formal and informal, from time to time to facilitate effective communication in the school context.

Preliminary Recommendations (xvi) and (xvii)

(xvi) IMCs are encouraged to strengthen the mechanisms to ensure there is close and effective communication with teachers, for instance, organising school and teacher consultative meeting regularly, establishing small groups to discuss specific issues and arranging gatherings between teachers and school managers. In addition, communication with stakeholders such as parents and alumni should be enhanced and diverse channels, both formal and informal, should be developed with a view to enabling the participative culture among stakeholders to take root and ensuring due participation of stakeholders in school management and decision-making.

(xvii) IMCs are encouraged to review critically whether there is a need for setting up committees, comprising school managers with relevant expertise and respective school personnel, to take care of major areas of school operation like human resources, financial control and audit, complaint- / appeal-handling and school development planning. These committees would facilitate thorough discussion about the specific issues and in turn, help enhance transparency of the IMC and efficiency of the IMC meetings.

24. The Task Force welcomes stakeholders' views on recommendations (xvi) and (xvii) as mentioned above, in particular feedback to the following questions:

- (a) Are there any other suggested means to strengthen communication between the IMC and different stakeholders?
- (b) Are there any views on the recommendation of encouraging IMC to review critically their need for setting up committees, comprising school managers with relevant expertise and respective school personnel, to take care of the major areas of school operation?

INVITATION OF VIEWS

25. Any views / comments on the above recommendations from the education sector and stakeholders are welcomed. Written submissions should be sent to the Task Force Secretariat **on or before 10 September 2018 (Monday)** by post, e-mail or fax:

Mailing Address : Secretariat of the Task Force on School-based Management Policy
School Development Division,
Education Bureau
5/F, East Wing, Central Government
Offices
Tamar, Hong Kong

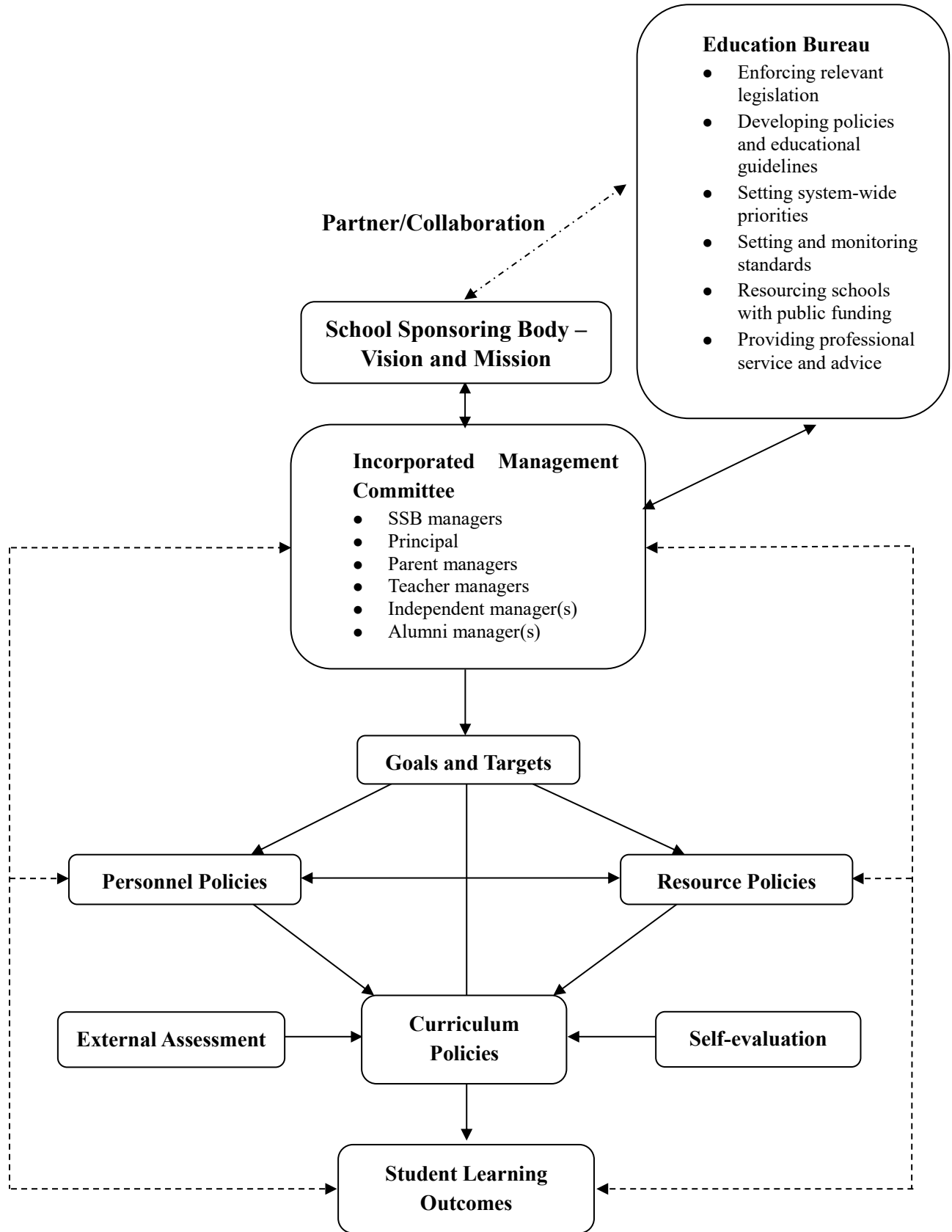
E-mail address : sd_centralteam2@edb.gov.hk
Fax number : (852) 2891 2593

26. The provision of personal data when offering views on this consultation document is voluntary. Any personal data thus collected will only be used for the purpose of this consultation exercise. The data will be destroyed after analysis.

27. Subject to prevailing circumstances, the Task Force may, as appropriate, reproduce, quote, summarise or publish any written comments received, in whole or in part, in any form and for any purpose without seeking prior permission of the contributing parties. However, the EDB will not disclose the personal data of the respondents when citing the relevant content.

Task Force on School-based Management Policy
23 July 2018

Mutual Relationship among the EDB, SSBs and IMCs



40AE. Functions of sponsoring body and incorporated management committee

- (1) The sponsoring body of a school shall be responsible for—
 - (a) meeting the cost of furnishing and equipping the new school premises of the school to, where applicable, standards as recommended by the Permanent Secretary;
 - (b) setting the vision and mission for the school;
 - (c) maintaining full control of the use of funds and assets owned by it;
 - (d) deciding the mode of receiving government aid;
 - (e) ensuring, through the sponsoring body managers, that the mission is carried out;
 - (f) giving general directions to the incorporated management committee in the formulation of education policies of the school;
 - (g) overseeing the performance of the incorporated management committee; and
 - (h) drafting the constitution of the incorporated management committee.
- (2) The incorporated management committee of a school shall be responsible for—
 - (a) formulating education policies of the school in accordance with the vision and mission set by the sponsoring body;
 - (b) planning and managing financial and human resources available to the school;
 - (c) accounting to the Permanent Secretary and the sponsoring body for the performance of the school;
 - (d) ensuring that the mission of the school is carried out;
 - (e) ensuring that the education of the pupils of the school is promoted in a proper manner; and
 - (f) school planning and self-improvement of the school.

(PART IIIB added 27 of 2004 s. 16)

Statistics on Stakeholders' Participation in Consultation Sessions and/or Tendering of Written Submissions**(I) Consultation sessions**

Date	Principal	Vice-principal	Teacher	SSB	Parent	Educational body	IMC		Others (e.g. student and social worker)
							School manager	School supervisor	
20/6/2018	28								
5/7/2018				24	18	8			
11/7/2018	4	14	141						1
12/7/2018	11	3	139						3
13/7/2018							74	21	2
Sub-total	43	17	280	24	18	8	74	21	6
Total	491								

(II) Written submissions

Tenderer	SSB	IMC		Teacher/ Principal association	Teacher	Educational body
		School supervisor	School manager			
Number of submissions	5	1	1	3	1	1
Total	12					

Summary of Views Collected during Consultation

Enhancing stakeholders’ understanding of the functions and responsibilities of the parties concerned

Preliminary recommendation (i)

Training for school managers, including training contents and delivery modes, should be enhanced.

Major views of stakeholders
<p>Overall, stakeholders were strongly in favour of the recommendation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Training courses should neither give too much weight to theories nor merely cover general aspects. What is delivered should be easily comprehensible and highly practical so that participants could firmly grasp the contents and become well aware of the need to comply with the Codes of Aid in school management. ● The roles of different categories of school managers should be reviewed, and their understanding of and functions in school operation should be enhanced. ● While training provided by the EDB should cover the latest education policies and good practices, training arranged by IMCs/SSBs should focus on their vision and mission. ● Provision of face-to-face training should continue, and school managers should have interaction and exchange in class. ● The EDB should arrange thematic training for different categories of school managers to enable stakeholders to have a deeper understanding of the functions that managers in their category are supposed to perform.

Enhancing stakeholders' understanding of the functions and responsibilities of the parties concerned

Preliminary recommendation (ii)

The EDB should provide SSBs/IMCs with resources to arrange training for school managers.

Major views of stakeholders
<p>Overall, stakeholders were strongly in favour of the recommendation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● SSBs should arrange thematic training that fits in with the schedules of their school managers.● The EDB should increase funding for IMCs to deal with the legal issues.

Enhancing stakeholders' understanding of the functions and responsibilities of the parties concerned

Preliminary recommendation (iii)

The EDB should compile a list of the roles, functions, authority and responsibilities, ethics, etc. of school managers, and expand the information bank of persons who are interested to serve as school managers.

Major views of stakeholders

Overall, stakeholders were generally in favour of the recommendation.

- Individual stakeholders did not consider the information bank highly useful because SSBs had their specific requirements or considerations over the nomination of school managers. Yet, stakeholders generally considered that an information bank that covered professionals of different fields would enable SSBs/IMCs to identify suitable school managers and enhance the level of professional competence of IMCs.

Strengthening the capabilities of school managers

Preliminary recommendation (iv)

The EDB should further optimise its SBM webpage and develop online self-learning packages for school managers.

Major views of stakeholders
<p>Overall, stakeholders were strongly in favour of the recommendation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Stakeholders generally agreed that an online learning platform should be set up so that school managers may engage in learning according to their own needs and schedules.● Materials on the SBM webpage should be consolidated and rearranged for the easy reference of school managers.● Provision of face-to-face training should continue and school managers should have interaction and exchange in class.

Strengthening the capabilities of school managers

Preliminary recommendation (v)

A set of handy online tools should be designed by the EDB to assist school managers (particularly newly registered/potential managers) in managing schools and assessing school performance.

Major views of stakeholders
<p>Overall, stakeholders were generally in favour of the recommendation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Stakeholders generally considered that handy online tools could facilitate school managers in performing their responsibilities in school management.● A new SBM database should be created for schools' reference.● The EDB should keep its SBM webpage up-to-date in a timely manner for stakeholders' reference.

Strengthening the capabilities of school managers

Preliminary recommendation (vi)

The EDB should strengthen visits to aided schools which are relatively weak in governance so that more in-depth suggestions can be offered to their IMCs on major issues such as school governance and administration, and potential mismanagement cases can be identified for intervention at an early stage.

Major views of stakeholders

Overall, stakeholders were generally in favour of the recommendation.

- While stakeholders were generally in favour of the recommendation, the following views were also held:
 - Preparations for the EDB's visits would create extra workload for principals.
 - District School Development Sections of the EDB should closely keep in view the management and decision-making process of IMCs, and ensure that IMCs have sufficient knowledge of the education legislation and policies as well as school operation, possess governance capabilities, engage school staff in discussions, and fully comply with the Codes of Aid in school operation.
- School visits should seek to review and monitor the quality of governance of IMCs. For example, random checks of relevant documents could be carried out and on-site discussions with school managers could be held to know more about their participation in school management.
- During school visits, officers of EDB's District School Development Sections should not only meet principals and vice-principals, but also approach teachers so as to look into the actual situation from multiple perspectives.

Strengthening the governance capabilities of school managers

Preliminary recommendation (vii)

As with the concept of “learning circles”, SSBs, in particular those sponsoring a number of schools, should be encouraged to:

- (i) enhance connection and sharing among supervisors and managers of their sponsored schools; and*
- (ii) open up their training programmes to schools under other SSBs.*

Major views of stakeholders
<p>Overall, stakeholders were generally in favour of the recommendation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● There was a suggestion that cross-school learning circles may be formed for school managers who have taken up different responsibilities (as chairman, treasurer or key members of the committees set up under IMCs).● The EDB may provide support for SSBs and schools in need, particularly SSBs with manpower and resource constraints in performing their management and monitoring roles.

Strengthening the governance capabilities of school managers

Preliminary recommendation (viii)

SSBs should be encouraged to support their sponsored schools in arranging tailor-made training for school managers.

Major views of stakeholders
<p>Overall, stakeholders were strongly in favour of the recommendation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● SSBs should be provided with financial resources to meet expenditure incurred by provision of training for managers of their sponsored schools, including the costs on administrative staff, speakers and e-training materials.

Strengthening the governance capabilities of school managers

Preliminary recommendation (ix)

IMCs should ensure their continuity and smooth transition by making proper plans for succession of school managers and providing school-based training for newly registered/potential managers.

Major views of stakeholders
<p>Overall, stakeholders were generally in favour of the recommendation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Stakeholders generally agreed that it was the IMCs' responsibility to make proper and long-term plans for succession of school managers.● Given the difficulties in recruiting suitable parent and alumni managers, some stakeholders suggested that IMCs consider to lengthen the tenure of these categories of managers to two to three years.

Strengthening the governance capabilities of school managers

Preliminary recommendation (x)

Consideration should be given to the appropriateness of prescribing basic training targets for school managers.

Major views of stakeholders
<p>Overall, stakeholders generally had reservations about setting mandatory basic training targets.</p>
<p><u>Training needs of/training arrangements for school managers</u></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Training is essential to school managers (including school supervisors), particularly those without any previous experience and from non-education sectors, who should familiarise themselves with school affairs, such as keys to governance and school-based operation.● School supervisors from non-education sectors should be provided with more comprehensive and in-depth training.● Apart from training programmes, online self-learning tools should be made available so that school managers may engage in learning according to their own needs/schedules. With such tools, school managers would still receive training if they could not squeeze time for attending classes, and refresher training is possible at any time.● It would attain better results for SSBs to arrange training programmes for managers of their sponsored schools.
<p><u>Should training be mandatory?</u></p>
<p>Views not in favour —</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Stakeholders in general expressed reservations. They considered that school managers, being unpaid, may not be able to squeeze considerable time for training programmes as most of them were engaged in a full-time job or had taken up multiple responsibilities.● Given the varying backgrounds, experience and needs of school managers, it would be difficult to draw up a set of training targets that are universally applicable.

- Mandatory training would discourage those who aspire to join IMCs. For instance, it would undermine the willingness of parents and alumni to stand for election, which renders recruitment of school managers more difficult. School managers usually welcome training when they realise their inadequacy in the discharge of responsibilities. Therefore, the existing mode in terms of soft targets to encourage school managers to receive training should continue.

Views in favour —

- School managers, particularly school supervisors, should receive basic training. Meanwhile, a certain percentage of managers who have completed training within an IMC should be set.
- A certain percentage of school managers in an IMC should receive more in-depth training, and the rest may undergo basic training online.
- In the long run, a certification mechanism similar to the one applicable to principals should be put in place.

Other views

- A commendation system should be established for school managers to encourage more suitable persons to take up the role of school manager.
- Training should focus on the functions and roles of school managers, personnel and financial management, self-evaluation and development of schools, etc.
- In determining training contents/foci, corresponding training requirements should be set according to the background of school managers and the category they belong (for example, parent managers, teacher managers and/or managers who are newly-joined, less experienced and unfamiliar with education matters), with a view to improving the quality of governance. For example,
 - More in-depth training should be arranged for school managers who are less experienced and unfamiliar with education matters. School managers who are quite knowledgeable about education matters, such as principals, may attend shorter training programmes that seek to refresh and update participants.
 - Face-to-face in-depth training is considered appropriate for SSB managers as they usually have a stronger sense of purpose, while online

training is suggested for parent managers taking into account their diverse backgrounds.

- Thematic training could be provided to address the needs of individual schools.

Strengthening the administration capabilities of schools and unleashing capacity for teachers and principals

Preliminary recommendation (xi)

The EDB should continue to review, on a regular/need basis, the requirements/stipulations it has laid down for schools to streamline their administrative work, for example, by relaxing the requirements on procurement/trading operations.

Major views of stakeholders
<p>Overall, stakeholders were strongly in favour of the recommendation.</p> <p><u>Relaxing procurement-related requirements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Administrative procedures and requirements should be streamlined, particularly those pertaining to procurement.● SSBs' arrangement to centralise procurement of the goods/services commonly required by their sponsored schools could alleviate the administrative workload of individual schools.● The EDB should strengthen its support for school procurement, such as providing a supplier list and forms/templates (for example, works-related tendering documents and employment contracts for staff like part-time sports coach) for schools' reference.● The EDB should allocate resources to help schools migrate to e-administration. <p><u>Other recommendations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Isolated cases of mismanagement should be handled on an individual basis. They should not be taken as evidence for making sweeping generalisations about school governance and imposing a heavier burden on all school principals and managers on account of such isolated incidents.● The EDB should not be over-stringent about its requirements on school administration.● Different Sections within the EDB should cooperate with one another to realise consistently the principle of streamlining school administration.

- Reference materials relating to such general school administration matters as appointment of teachers and common issues of contingency should be provided.
- Advisory services should be rendered through, for example, an enquiry hotline to help schools handle their administrative work in relation to legal, insurance and personnel matters.
- All government grants should take the form of Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant, so that schools may deploy and use the funding flexibly according to their own needs. This could avoid excessive categorisation of grants or restriction over their use.
- The requirements under the prevailing policy should be reviewed to unleash capacity for teachers. For example, requirements on audit inspection as well as submission of proposals and reports for application of grants could be streamlined.
- Training for the EDB's School Development Officers should be strengthened with a view to achieving better coordination among various districts in handling the administrative matters for schools and enabling them to be more well-versed in the pertinent administrative procedures and time frames.

Strengthening the administration capabilities of schools and unleashing capacity for teachers and principals

Preliminary recommendation (xii)

The EDB should provide additional administrative manpower/additional resources to support schools' administrative work.

Major views of stakeholders
<p>Overall, stakeholders were unanimously in favour of the recommendation.</p> <p><u>Providing additional manpower at the Executive Officer rank/additional resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Stakeholders unanimously agreed that it should be a priority measure.● The administrative work varies little with the scale of school operation. Given that large-scale schools have more teachers and staff, the number of classes should not be the sole basis of calculation when considering manpower enhancement.● The EDB should provide recurrent funding for SSBs and IMCs to cover their administrative expenses.● A detailed study on the provision of professional supporting staff and technical staff should be carried out.● The post of Assistant Clerical Officer should be upgraded to Clerical Officer to attract talent. <p><u>Creating senior teaching posts and improving staff establishment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Many principals pointed out that primary schools in the Mainland usually had six vice-principals each to take care of school maintenance, curriculum, finance, administration, etc. In Hong Kong, there are only two vice-principals in each aided school, and they are so occupied that can hardly spare time to coordinate the administrative work. Therefore, a third vice-principal post should be created to specifically oversee school administration.● Staff establishment, particularly that of primary schools, should be improved so that a sufficient number of teachers could be provided and the manpower gap between primary and secondary schools could be narrowed.

- A specialised administrative support team should be formed, together with the provision of their standard duties, the related induction and continuous training and a professional development ladder, etc.

Separation between teaching and administration

- A separation between teaching and administration streams, as being adopted by Mainland schools, should be considered.
- School operation is now as complex as that of a commercial organisation, and therefore schools need to be operated by a team of professional school administrators.
- The EDB should draw up guidelines on the number of teaching periods for teachers at different ranks.
- Some stakeholders considered that teaching and administration were not entirely separable, and the proposed additional staff at the Executive Officer rank may not be able to take up all the administrative work. For example, as school procurement covers different areas/subjects, the teachers concerned and clerical staff should be involved, in particular when specifying the requirements of the goods/services to be procured and assessing whether the goods/services delivered fulfil the requirements.

Strengthening the administration capabilities of schools and unleashing capacity for teachers and principals

Preliminary recommendation (xiii)

SSBs should be encouraged to review and streamline administrative procedures and arrangements, including those related to overseeing/monitoring the performance and management of their sponsored schools, and where applicable, assume a coordinating role over such matters as centralising procurement of the goods/services commonly required by their sponsored schools.

Major views of stakeholders
<p>Overall, stakeholders were generally in favour of the recommendation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The EDB should provide recurrent funding to facilitate SSBs in supporting the operation of their sponsored schools, such as offering assistance in centralising procurement and preparing financial reports.● A reasonable amount of recurrent resources should be regularly provided for SSBs according to the number of their sponsored schools, so that they could arrange administrative staff dedicated to support IMCs for effective operation.

Strengthening the administration capabilities of schools and unleashing capacity for teachers and principals

Preliminary recommendation (xiv)

IMCs should review/streamline, on a regular/need basis, internal arrangements and procedures governing schools' administration and daily operation, and revisit the contents required for various school documents, particularly School Development Plan, Annual School Plan and School Report, which should be kept concise and succinct.

Major views of stakeholders

Overall, stakeholders were generally in favour of the recommendation.

- The EDB should streamline application procedures to avoid too many restrictions.
- Some of the EDB's requirements on school documents are outdated. Taking School Development Plan as an example, schools are required to devise a three-year plan for their development direction and policies, but given the rapid changes in society, the actual implementation often deviates notably from the original plan. Therefore, it is advisable to modify the requirements and allow schools more flexibility.
- The EDB should coordinate to provide a set of document templates for schools' reference/use.
- The EDB should advise schools how to simplify School Development Plans and Annual School Plans, etc. when conducting external school reviews.

Strengthening the administration capabilities of schools and unleashing capacity for teachers and principals

Preliminary recommendation (xv)

IMCs should review their constitutions in a timely manner, and explore the possibility of appointing a person other than principals, teachers or teacher managers as secretary to alleviate the administrative workload of the teaching staff.

Major views of stakeholders
<p>Overall, stakeholders were strongly in favour of the recommendation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Given the difficulties in recruiting suitable parent and alumni managers, IMCs may consider to lengthen the tenure of these categories of managers to two to three years.● Electoral procedures for school managers should be streamlined to lessen the workload of principals and teachers.

Enhancing participation of major stakeholders in school governance

Preliminary recommendation (xvi)

IMCs should maintain close communication with stakeholders by, for example, regularly organising school and teacher consultative meetings, setting up small groups to discuss specific issues and arranging gatherings between stakeholders and school managers.

Major views of stakeholders

Overall, stakeholders were strongly in favour of the recommendation.

- Appropriately enhancing major stakeholders' participation in school governance not only helps improve transparency and quality of school management, but also deepens stakeholders' understanding of school development and the implementation of policies. Generally, communication between schools and stakeholders is sufficient at present. For example, gatherings between school managers and parents are arranged by schools on a regular basis.
- IMCs should send representatives to stakeholders' formal meetings (for example, annual general meetings) or informal gatherings to better acquaint stakeholders with the functions and responsibilities of various parties.
- Some opined that the lack of communication with parent-teacher associations of some IMCs had hindered their effective liaison with parents. As compared with parents serving the parent-teacher associations, parent managers of IMCs have fewer contact with other parents. School managers were advised to meet parents and students regularly, say, once a year, to enhance mutual understanding.
- Additional resources should be adequately provided to establish formal and informal communication channels for different stakeholders.

Consultative system

- While some considered that the consultative system should be reinstated for teachers to directly express their views to school managers and the EDB representatives, the general view was that schools should be allowed to exercise discretion as to whether or not to organise school and teacher consultative meetings.

Enhancing participation of major stakeholders in school governance

Preliminary Recommendation (xvii)

IMCs should be encouraged to critically assess the necessity of setting up committees that comprise school managers with the expertise required and relevant school personnel to handle important matters related to school operation.

Major views of stakeholders

Overall, stakeholders agreed that IMCs should be allowed to make their own decisions according to the school-based needs.

- Stakeholders generally considered that whether to set up such committees should be decided by schools in light of their school-based circumstances. No mandatory requirements should be imposed on the establishment of committees on personnel matters, finance, school administration and so forth.

Favourable views —

- Only a few persons would be required to participate in the meetings to handle specific matters as compared with that of IMC, work efficiency as well as the effectiveness of IMC meetings could then be enhanced. Besides, shared responsibility can strengthen mutual trust and rapport among school managers.
- More opportunities for teachers' professional advancement should be provided by drawing reference to the universities' frameworks. For example, schools may be requested to establish the committee to handle major operational affairs.

Concerns reflected —

- Requiring teachers and/or principals to serve on the committees will increase their workload, which defeats the objective of unleashing capacity for teachers and principals.
- The staff establishment varies greatly between primary schools and secondary schools. Primary schools and schools with a smaller number of classes may not have sufficient manpower to handle the work involved, and hence need additional resources to recruit dedicated staff for provision of support.
- Teacher managers should not be excluded from the committees on appointment, promotion and personnel matters set up under IMCs.

Other views

Major views of stakeholders
<p><u>Regarding school managers/supervisors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Whether to expand the IMC by having one more independent manager should be a school-based decision.● Given the increasing complexity of school administration/operation (<i>for example</i>, matters involving appointment, promotion, dismissal and disciplinary action), persons to be appointed as school supervisors should have the experience of performing the role of school manager.● Though teacher managers, parent managers and alumni managers are returned by election, they serve on IMCs in their personal capacity. In other words, they only represent themselves, and they are not supposed to consult the bodies to which they belong on issues being considered by IMCs. Yet, parents and alumni, as voters, reasonably expect the managers they have elected to represent them in the IMCs. While the consultation document suggests enhancing communication and consultation between school managers and stakeholders, it does not touch on the representativeness of school managers. Hence, it is dubious whether the purpose of “enhancing participation of major stakeholders in school governance” can be achieved. Without any institutional reform, the proposal to arrange gatherings with school managers and group discussions lacks substance. <p><u>Others</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Evidence-based review should be conducted to find out how SBM has a bearing on the effectiveness of school education.● Clearer guidelines on corporate governance should be provided for schools’ compliance.● Emotional support services should be made available for teachers.

