

EDB announces arrangements for implementing “all-graduate teaching force” policy in aided and caput schools

The Education Bureau (EDB) issued a circular today (March 26) to all aided schools (including special schools) and caput schools to announce the implementation details of the "all-graduate teaching force" policy.

The Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, said, "The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region attaches great importance to education and hopes to provide a stable, caring, inspiring and satisfying learning and teaching environment to students and teachers. We are committed to providing support to teachers and raising their professional status. Through the implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy, we not only recognise the contributions of those teachers with a bachelor's degree, but also hope to facilitate teachers' professional development and raise their professional roles and functions to further improve the quality of education.

"In the past two years, the current-term Government has allocated an additional \$8.3 billion in recurrent new resources for the education sector. Considerable resources have been used to increase teaching manpower and provide support to teachers' work, which include increasing the teacher-to-class ratio for primary and secondary schools by 0.1 across the board, creating the Special Educational Needs Coordinator post and other regular teaching posts, and increasing manpower for professional support, such as information technology assistants, executive officers, social workers, educational psychologists and speech therapists, so that teachers can concentrate more on teaching. In addition, we have been striving to retain surplus teachers when there were fluctuations of student-age population, maintaining a stable school environment."

Mr Yeung added, "While we will continue to enhance our support to teachers at the policy level, we hope that the school sponsoring bodies, incorporated management committees, parent-teacher associations and other stakeholders can respect and support teachers' front-line work at the school level, and thereby together we could nurture students to grow up healthily."

The EDB will implement the all-graduate teaching force policy in public sector primary and secondary schools in one go in the 2019/20 school year. In this regard, the respective ratio of graduate teacher posts in public sector primary schools and secondary schools will be increased from the current 65 per cent and 85 per cent across the board to 100 per cent. All teaching posts on the approved establishment of public sector schools will be graduate teacher posts. Aided schools may, taking into account their school-based circumstances, achieve full implementation of the policy in one go or in two

years. The new measure will incur an additional annual expenditure of around \$1.5 billion.

To cater for different school circumstances and needs, and to allow sufficient time for schools to arrange duties and hence ensure a smooth transition, aided schools may, in light of their own circumstances, fully implement the all-graduate teaching force policy in one go or in stages by the 2020/21 school year. Schools should establish a school-based mechanism to allow all serving non-graduate teachers holding a local bachelor's degree (or equivalent) who are willing to shoulder the duties of graduate teachers to be regraded as graduate teachers. Moreover, newly joined regular teachers appointed within the approved establishment from the 2019/20 school year onwards should possess a local bachelor's degree (or equivalent) and satisfy all the entry requirements and standing conditions set out for graduate teachers in the Codes of Aid.

With the implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy, all graduate teachers are required to support school development and cater for students' needs by shouldering more diversified professional duties, such as co-ordinating tasks in the areas of student support, learning and teaching, curriculum development or teacher professional development, so that teachers' professional capacity could be realised.

Aided schools should encourage serving non-graduate teachers whose current qualifications cannot meet the requirement for regrading to attain the recognised qualifications as early as possible, so that they may be regraded as graduate teachers for better career and promotion prospects. For serving non-graduate teachers without a recognised degree, or those who choose not to be regraded as graduate teachers of their own accord, they may be accommodated in the current posts in their serving aided schools.

Caput schools should make necessary arrangements to achieve full implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy by the 2020/21 school year.

The EDB set up the Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers in November 2017 to review and further promote teachers' professional development, which includes the drawing up of a timetable for establishing an all-graduate teaching force. The Task Force has also proposed a direction for the purpose of extensive consultation on relevant issues. In the course of consultation, stakeholders unanimously called for the early and full implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy to further raise the professional status of teachers and retain and attract talents. In view of this, the Government accepted the recommendation of the Task Force and the Chief Executive announced the initiative of the all-graduate teaching force policy in public sector primary and secondary schools in her 2018 Policy Address.