

Education Commission Chairman welcomes 2020-21 Budget

The following is issued on behalf of the Education Commission:

The Chairman of the Education Commission, Mr Tim Lui, today (February 26) welcomed the measures proposed by the Financial Secretary in the 2020-21 Budget.

Mr Lui said, "As the Chairman of the Education Commission, I am pleased to note the Government's continuous devotion of substantial resources to education and implementation of various measures to provide quality education and nurture talent. Education accounts for the biggest recurrent spending of the Government with an estimated expenditure of \$99.6 billion for 2020-21. This represents about one-fifth of the total estimated recurrent government expenditure.

"I am very glad to note that about \$150 million has been reserved for paying the examination fee for candidates sitting for the 2021 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination with a view to alleviating parents' financial burden. In addition, \$40 million is earmarked for subsidising short-term internships for undergraduates and postgraduates taking STEM programmes in local universities."

Mr Lui added, "In the past two years, the Government has introduced various new measures on education to further cater for the different needs of students. In addition, among the eight in-depth reviews proposed by the current-term Government, seven have been completed and some recommendations have already been implemented. On post-secondary education, the Government has also devoted additional resources which include the injection of additional resources into the Research Endowment Fund to strengthen research capacity and cultivate a research culture, and the provision of subsidies to strengthen the promotion of vocational and professional education and training. All these measures are being implemented and are beginning to take root. I believe their effects will manifest themselves over time.

"On measures responding to the novel coronavirus epidemic, I welcome the earlier announcement by the Education Bureau (EDB) of deploying existing resources to provide additional funding to schools to support their anti-epidemic work and pay for the related expenses. To alleviate parents' burden on children's learning, a funding of about \$900 million will be allocated from the Anti-epidemic Fund to be set up to increase the Student Grant of each recipient from \$2,500 to \$3,500 in the 2019/20 school year, benefiting parents of about 900 000 students."

He added, "I deeply believe that the EDB will maintain close communication with stakeholders and continue to enhance the quality of education in Hong Kong and nurture talent."