

LCQ11: Teacher wastage problem

Following is a question by the Hon Leung Che-cheung and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (October 27):

Question:

An education group has indicated that some schools have encountered a teacher wastage problem, which may affect the quality of teaching. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective teacher wastage rates of (i) kindergartens/kindergarten-cum-child care centres, (ii) primary schools, (iii) secondary schools and (iv) special education schools in the territory, in each of the past four school years and since the beginning of the current school year, as well as the relevant wastage rates of the schools in each District Council district;

(2) of the top three subjects with the highest teacher wastage rates in the last school year and since the beginning of the current school year, as well as their respective wastage rates; and

(3) whether it has assessed the impacts of teacher wastage on the quality of teaching, and what new measures are in place to retain teachers and maintain the quality of teaching?

Reply:

President,

Our reply to the questions raised by the Hon Leung Che-cheung is as follows:

1. For the past four school years, the wastage rates of teachers in local kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and special schools are as follows:

School year	Wastage rate of teachers (%) (Note 1)			
	Kindergarten (Note 2)	Primary school (Note 3)	Secondary school (Note 3)	Special school (Note 4)
2017/18	10.5	4.0	4.9	6.8
2018/19	12.3	4.6	4.9	8.5
2019/20	12.0	4.5	4.8	7.1
2020/21	10.2	4.5	4.8	5.4

Note 1: Wastage rates generally refer to the number of "drop-out teachers" as a percentage of the total number of teachers of the respective types of schools in the preceding school year. Wastage rates, "drop-out teachers" and the total number of teachers of the respective types of schools generally refer to the positions as at mid-September of each school year except as at mid-October for the 2020/21 school year. "Drop-out teachers" of kindergartens generally refer to the teachers who had been serving in a local kindergarten in the preceding school year but were no longer serving in any of the kindergartens in the school year concerned. "Drop-out teachers" of primary, secondary and special schools generally refer to the teachers who had been serving in a local school in the preceding school year but were no longer serving in any of the local schools (irrespective of whether primary or secondary schools) in the school year concerned. Teachers having changed from ordinary schools to special schools or from special schools to ordinary schools were also counted as "drop-out teachers" of respective types of schools.

Note 2: Local kindergartens also include kindergarten-cum-child care centres, but not special child care centres registered under the Social Welfare Department and non-local kindergartens.

Note 3: Local primary schools include government, aided, Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) and private schools but not special schools; local secondary schools include government, aided, caput, DSS, and private schools but not evening, special, international schools and day courses operated by private schools offering tutorial, vocational and adult education courses.

Note 4: Local special schools are aided schools offering educational services for students with more severe or multiple disabilities, excluding one special school operated under the English Schools Foundation.

The teacher information related statistics (including wastage rates) for this school year are under processing. Besides, this Bureau did not compile statistics about teacher drop-out by District Council districts and hence, we are unable to provide the related statistical figures.

(2) By first major school subject taught, the three subjects with the highest wastage rates of teachers in local ordinary primary and secondary schools in the 2020/21 school year are tabulated below respectively:

Primary school		Secondary school	
Subject	Wastage rate (%)	Subject	Wastage rate (%)
English Language	5.3	Design and Technology	10.8
Library Lesson	5.1	Ethics/Religious Education	6.9
Music	4.7	Integrated Science	6.3

Note: The above statistics only cover the relatively more popular school subjects taught and the relevance of which can be evaluated with subjects taken by teachers. In addition, as the curriculum design, arrangements of teachers' duties, etc. of kindergartens and special schools are different from that of ordinary primary and secondary schools, the teacher statistics by school subject taught is not applicable to kindergartens and special schools.

(3) Teachers might have various reasons for dropping out such as retirement, pursuing further studies, changing to other types of schools, taking up employment outside the teaching profession, leaving the post due to other personal reasons. According to the recent related statistics, the overall wastage rates of teachers in schools remain largely steady. Although the compilation of the latest teacher wastage rates of this school year are still underway, according to our observation, since the commencement of this school year, the operation of schools is considered smooth in general and schools have employed sufficient qualified teachers to conduct classes. Besides, with the declining of school-aged population, the demand for teachers would be reduced correspondingly.

For improving the quality of teachers, the Education Bureau will continue to strengthen teachers' training and professional development, including the implementation of the Professional Ladder for Teachers from the 2020/21 school year which enhanced the training content provided for newly-joined teachers, in-service teachers and aspiring teachers to be promoted to cover the topics of the Constitution, the Basic Law and teacher professional conduct. In addition, we have been organising a variety of talks, seminars, and on-site support to schools relating to local and non-local education policies, various themes in education, different learning aspects, professional growth of individual teachers, etc. to enhance the professional capacity of teachers.