[LCQ8: Use of e-textbooks and e-learning resources in schools](#)

     Following is a question by the Hon Cheung Kwok-kwan and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (February 27):

Question:

     It was pointed out in Report No. 71 of the Director of Audit published in October last year that in the 2016-2017 school year and on class-level basis, among the primary and secondary schools, only 24 per cent and 8 per cent respectively of them used e-textbooks, and 65 per cent and 66 per cent respectively of them used e-learning resources. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has formulated specific strategies and long-term goals for promoting the wider use of e-textbooks and e-learning resources by schools; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) given that as at April last year, the number of e-textbooks (49 sets) available on the recommended textbook lists of the Education Bureau (EDB) was far lower than that of printed textbooks (479 sets), whether the Government will consider launching a new round of the e-Textbook Market Development Scheme or taking other measures to promote the development and use of e-textbooks; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) whether it has studied if the use of e-learning resources by students has resulted in any improvement in their academic achievements and in their interest and confidence in learning, as well as how this affects the students' health; if it has studied, of the outcome; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether officials of the EDB conducted any overseas visit in the past five years to learn from the experience of other places in using information technology to enhance teaching and learning; if so, of the countries/regions visited and the experience gained; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

     The Education Bureau (EDB) launched the Fourth Strategy on Information Technology in Education (ITE4) in the 2015-16 school year to enhance the information technology (IT) environment such as hardware, resources and teacher training in schools. It enables schools to devise school-based plans for practising e-learning in consideration of their school contexts and development needs, so as to make good use of IT to enhance learning and teaching effectiveness. Schools are encouraged to promote e-learning by using

the right technology in teaching and learning at the right time when considering whole school planning and use of IT for teaching. The promotion of e-textbook development aims to provide schools with another option of quality learning and teaching resources in addition to printed textbooks. It should be stressed that as one of the many learning modes, e-learning, which is ever evolving and diversified, is open and flexible. There is no so-called best practice or standard which schools should follow.

The EDB values the views of the sector for improving the relevant work. The Steering Committee on Strategic Development of Information Technology in Education advises the EDB on the strategic direction, implementation and evaluation of integrating IT into education and the implementation of e-learning in schools, including the use of e-learning resources and e-textbooks. To improve the measures on supporting the needs of schools in the development of IT in education, the EDB continues to explore and enhance different strategies by maintaining close communication with the relevant stakeholders and making reference to the information gathered through different means such as school visits and questionnaire surveys. We will continue with the relevant work in order to understand the views of the stakeholders.

My reply to the question raised by the Hon Cheung Kwok-kwan is as follows:

(1) and (2) Teachers' professional capabilities of using e-learning resources to enhance learning effectiveness and the availability of quality e-learning resources already developed in the market are two crucial factors for promoting e-learning. On teachers' professional training, the EDB has been enhancing teachers' professional capabilities of using e-learning resources (including e-textbooks) in teaching various subjects through professional development programmes. In addition to continually strengthening relevant professional development programmes for teachers, the EDB will also form learning communities among schools for teachers to share their successful experiences and effective pedagogical practices in e-learning with each other, with a view to fostering a paradigm shift in the mode of teaching and enhancing the effectiveness of learning and teaching for the benefit of students.

The EDB launched the e-Textbook Market Development Scheme (EMADS) with the aim of facilitating and encouraging the participation of potential and aspiring e-textbook developers to develop e-textbooks for various subjects in line with the local curricula, and trying out a quality vetting and assurance mechanism for e-textbooks. At present, the submission of e-textbooks for review has become a regular arrangement which has been extended to all subjects. The publishers are in general familiar with the arrangement of the submission and publishing of e-textbooks, and have gained related experiences. The EDB continues to communicate with the publishing industry to improve the technical and functional design of e-textbooks so as to create favourable conditions for promoting the development and use of e-textbooks. Given that in principle the supply of e-textbooks is market driven, we have no plan to launch another round of the EMADS.

As stated above, e-learning is an open and flexible learning mode and there is no so-called best practice or standard which schools should follow. Moreover, e-learning measures are not necessarily more effective than conventional measures in every case. As such, schools are not compelled to follow any fixed standards or practices. In fact, schools should exercise their professional judgement in selecting and using suitable learning and teaching resources (including e-textbooks and other e-learning resources) that suit students' needs and school contexts so as to cater for learner diversity.

(3) The EDB launched the ITE4 so as to enhance interactive learning and teaching experience. To continuously enhance various support measures under the ITE4, we have been reviewing the progress and effectiveness of the relevant measures through different means such as school visits, questionnaire surveys and case studies. Schools hold a positive view towards e-learning and generally agree that it is conducive to strengthening the learning motivation and self-directed learning ability of students.

The EDB attaches great importance to students' health and has been promoting the information related to e-learning and health through joint efforts with various stakeholders. The framework on "Information Literacy for Hong Kong Students" was updated in 2016 to enable schools to incorporate information literacy into their curriculum so as to foster students' ability to use information with the correct attitudes, under which the issue on healthy use of the Internet is covered. Moreover, relevant professional development programmes and an information kit on e-learning are available for teachers. To assist schools in undertaking relevant parent education, we have produced video clips in collaboration with various government departments and non-governmental organisations. Through seminars, assistance has been given to parents on ways of helping their children develop good habits in using IT in their daily life and study, such as maintaining their own physical and mental health and not indulging in Internet surfing. Besides, a telephone hotline has been set up to provide individual support to parents, teachers and students in need. To further support teachers to develop students' proper attitude, we have produced the "Smart e-Master" Information Kit on e-Learning which contains information that promotes e-learning and health.

(4) Over the past five years, the EDB officials have visited places such as the Mainland, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Singapore and Finland to better understand their latest development of IT in education. Through attending relevant international conventions and exhibitions and visiting various organisations and schools, we have learnt from their experiences of promoting e-learning, including relevant curriculum planning, development of learning and teaching resources for teachers' reference and encouraging teachers to use these resources in teaching, and understanding how schools in different places made good use of various e-resources, such as tablet computers to facilitate interactive learning. From our observation, teachers in Hong Kong, as teachers of other places will select e-learning resources from various sources to cater for the learning topics and their students' learning needs. Taking into account the development needs of our schools, we will learn from the successful experiences in different places,

such as innovative pedagogical practices in e-learning, e-learning resources and the latest IT teaching tools and devices and share them with the education sector.