

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo meeting

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting this morning (May 29):

Reporter: Mrs Lam, does the report say that the Government is intending to, well, have an all-graduate teaching force in primary and secondary schools? So, does the Government have any timetable, and when is that going to happen? And if there is any rapid changes, would that affect the schools' management in some way or another? And the second question is about express rail. How would you assess the company's performance so far, in terms of transparency and do you think it's satisfactory that Mr Ma said something like that?

Chief Executive: On the XRL, I hope the public will appreciate that this is a major piece of infrastructure and in the course of commissioning there is a lot of preparatory work and testing work to be done, and so colleagues in the MTR Corporation are under extreme pressure to achieve that objective, and I want to assure you that we will work very closely, we means the Transport and Housing Bureau and also the two relevant departments – the Highways Department and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department. They will work very closely with the railway corporation to provide the needed information, the results of any investigation and to ensure that people have confidence in the operation of this railway.

About the all-graduate teacher objective, I understand that this is a long-standing aspiration of the teachers in Hong Kong. As you are aware, I attach a lot of importance to quality education in Hong Kong. At a recent public occasion, I said that the one single impression I had during my election campaign in interacting with the teachers is we should value Hong Kong's teachers more. So if our teachers have this common aspiration that they should be turned into graduate teacher positions, I would certainly accord importance to addressing this aspiration. But for the time being, this matter, together with other issues, relating to the professional development of teachers, is being considered by a task force set up after we came to office on July 1. So I will await recommendations from this task force, but I can assure you that we are very determined to improve quality education in Hong Kong, and we have set aside a recurrent expenditure provision of \$3.4 billion every year, so we would have that capacity to meet the needed improvements in the education sector.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)