

CHAPTER 14

EDUCATION GRADES

Background

14.1 The Marsh Sampson Commission appointed in 1963 to look into the overall needs of education in Hong Kong and the system for financing those needs made certain recommendations, among which were :

- (a) salaries and grades of teachers in both government and aided schools should be revised, and that scales for teachers in government and aided schools should be the same;
- (b) staff of the Education Department should be strengthened by the establishment of posts in a departmental grade to ensure stability and continuity of policy at an executive level; and
- (c) posts should be established to provide training and administrative experience for professionally qualified teachers recruited to the administration.

14.2 These recommendations were endorsed by a Government Working Party in 1964 but proved difficult to implement and in 1965, when a Salaries Commission was appointed to review the salary structure of the civil service, the salaries of the Education grades were reviewed but the structure was excluded because it was already the subject of a separate review being carried out on the recommendation of the Marsh Sampson Commission. When the 1971 Salaries Commission was appointed, the pay and structure problems of the Education grades were still unresolved and were the subject of consultation with the Senior Civil Service Council. The Commission decided that it would be improper to intervene while these consultations were in progress. Thus neither the 1965 nor the 1971 Salaries Commission was able to devise a structure and set pay scales which were acceptable to both staff and management.

14.3 In January 1972 a new structure, which was a much revised version of a previous structure known as the November 1970 proposals, was advocated as the best solution by Government, but this aroused serious objections from the Staff Side. Another structure was therefore suggested which met with general approval, although the conversion of salaries of serving civil servants to the Master Pay Scale and the pay scales of Certificated Masters remained major areas of dispute. In July 1974, following further lengthy consultations in the Senior Civil Service Council, changes in the pay scales and Details of Post were endorsed and action to implement the new grade structure with effect from 1st April 1972 commenced. This structure remains in force today.

14.4 In designing the existing structure two main considerations were taken into account. These were :

- (a) the increased costs resulting from the acceptance of the policy that teachers in subsidised schools, who formed the vast majority of the total teaching force, should not receive less remuneration than teachers in government schools; and
- (b) the requirement to pay close attention to the principle of the "the rate for the job" as it was seen at the time.

The first consideration tended to depress the government teachers' pay scales, particularly those of graduate staff in schools, and the second led to a proliferation of ranks for graduate and non-graduate staff in four separate streams, i.e. teachers, lecturers in the Colleges of Education and the Technical Institutes, the inspectorate and staff concerned with administration. Before 1972 the structure consisted simply of two streams, graduate and non-graduate, with the ranks in each stream broadbanded so that each covered a wide range of duties. This enabled management to deploy staff easily, whereas the existing structure inhibits the transfer of staff (though it prevents a dissipation of experience in each area of activity which could occur in a situation where too liberal an attitude towards movements of staff is adopted).

Representations

14.5 Comprehensive written representations from all grades of the Education Department indicate that there is widespread dissatisfaction at the way in which the implementation of the new grade structure worked out in practice. They claim that :

- (a) depending where they were at the time, they were reclassified into one of the four streams mentioned in paragraph 14.4 with little attention being paid to their interests or wishes;
- (b) once in a stream they were virtually tied to it for the rest of their careers; and
- (c) many of them had no choice but to retain their former scales on a personal basis because
 - (i) a large number of posts were downgraded and had a lower maximum than they had in the pre-1972 structure;
 - (ii) the implementation in 1974 was based on the 1972 establishment and there were not enough posts at the correct level to accommodate the staff satisfactorily.

These points were stressed when Staff Side representatives of the Education Department Consultative Council met the full Commission on 13th June 1979 and when representatives met the Secretary-General on 18th June 1979.

14.6 Representations from the Director of Education acknowledge that the existing structure is far from perfect; indeed in February 1979 he set up a Departmental Working Party "to consider fundamental aspects of the existing grade structure and to propose improvements that might be made in the light of experience and changes in educational policies since its implementation". The Working Party concluded its deliberations on 23rd March 1979. The Director considers that the modifications, of which we are aware, proposed by the Working Party are "a realistic indication of practicable improvements in the present pay and structure of the teaching grades", having regard to certain constraints not the least of which is cost. He has also put forward an alternative proposal which he accepts would require detailed examination. The Staff Side on the other hand have made it clear that they consider the Working Party's recommendations do not go far enough and leave many problems unsolved. They ask for a "blanket rectification" of the existing structure. Nothing less, in their view, will enable the staff of the Education Department to work happily and efficiently.

Blanket rectification

14.7 From the representations made to us "blanket rectification" would appear to mean a return to the pre-1972 structure and is seen by many as the easy and logical solution. In the time available to us we have been able to reach only one conclusion and that is that the existing structure has been tried and found wanting. It may be that there are too many grades and ranks or that there are too many streams and a return to a monolithic structure similar to that of pre-1972 is required, but we make no judgement at this stage. In our view the matter is so complex that only a major review involving consultation with all interested parties is likely to solve the problem, if, indeed, the problem is capable of solution. We therefore intend to undertake such a review and hope that all parties will actively participate in the consultative process and demonstrate their willingness to overcome the difficulties involved in arriving at an acceptable conclusion.

14.8 In the meantime we recommend no change to existing pay scales.

	<u>Existing</u>
Certificated Master	16 - 25
Certificated Mistress	16 - 25
Assistant Master	23 - 31
Assistant Mistress	23 - 31
Senior Assistant Master	32 - 36
Senior Assistant Mistress	32 - 36
Education Assistant	23 - 31
Senior Education Assistant	32 - 39
Assistant Education Officer	20 - 36
Education Officer	36 - 40
Senior Master	41 - 42
Senior Mistress	41 - 42
Principal II	43 - 45
Principal I	46 - 48
Assistant Education Officer (Administration)	26 - 36
Education Officer (Administration)	36 - 45
Senior Education Officer (Administration)	46 - 48
Assistant Inspector (Graduate)	29 - 40
Assistant Inspector (Non-graduate)	22 - 36
Inspector (Graduate)	35 - 43
Inspector (Non-graduate)	31 - 39
Senior Inspector	43 - 45
Principal Inspector	46 - 48
Assistant Lecturer II	18 - 30
Assistant Lecturer I	22 - 36
Lecturer (Graduate)	29 - 36
Lecturer (Non-graduate)	31 - 39
Senior Lecturer	35 - 40
Principal Lecturer	41 - 45
Teacher 1	22 - 35
Teacher 2	24 - 36
Teacher 3	28 - 38
Teacher 4	30 - 40
Teacher 5	33 - 41
Teacher 6	34 - 42
Head Teacher II	37 - 43
Head Teacher I	46 - 48
Vice-Principa1, College of Education	46 - 48
Vice-Principal, Technical Institute	46 - 48
Workshop Instructor II	18 - 25
Workshop Instructor I	23 - 31