

Appendix E

10 June 1994

The Right Honourable Christopher Patten
Governor of Hong Kong
Government House
Hong Kong

Dear Sir,

**Proposed New Grade of Primary School Master
in the Education Department**

We have been invited by the Administration to advise, under clause 1(b) of our Terms of Reference, on the proposal to create a new grade of Primary School Master in the Education Department.

BACKGROUND

2. At present, teaching posts (including school heads) in primary schools in the public sector - Government and aided - are filled by members of the non-graduate grade of Certificated Master/Mistress (CM), the basic entry qualification for which is a Teacher's Certificate issued by a Hong Kong College of Education, or equivalent. Members of the grade are also deployed to teach non-academic subjects (eg music, domestic science and physical training) in secondary schools. However, once posted to the secondary schools and promoted to higher ranks, they cannot revert to primary school teaching.

The 1989 Salary Structure Review

3. The CM grade was last reviewed by the Commission in the context of the 1989 Salary Structure Review, following which improvements and changes recommended by the Commission have been introduced, as follows -

- (a) to recognise the increased responsibilities and demands on the teaching profession and to encourage young people to take up primary school teaching as a career, the starting and maximum salaries of the first two ranks (Certificated Master/Mistress (CM) and Assistant Master/Mistress (AM)) and the starting salary of the third rank (Senior Assistant Master/Mistress (SAM)) have been raised by one point;
- (b) to encourage heads of primary schools to pursue further studies leading to a degree in primary education so as to cope with the increasing complexity of primary school management, the scale maxima of the SAM and Principal Assistant Master/Mistress (PAM) rank (the highest rank in the CM grade) have all been increased by three points for those who have obtained the relevant degree qualification;
- (c) to recognise the onerous and demanding duties of primary school heads as compared with officers of equivalent ranks deployed mainly on teaching duties in secondary schools, a responsibility allowance equivalent to one increment and 3/4 of an increment have been paid to heads and deputy-heads of primary schools respectively; and
- (d) the ranking of heads of primary schools has been changed to -
 - (i) PAM : 24 classes or more
 - (ii) SAM : 12 to 23 classes
 - (iii) AM : 4 to 11 classes

Recommendations of the Education Commission

4. To cope with the increasing complexity of primary school management and demand on teachers as a result of the introduction of various initiatives since 1990 to improve primary school education, the Education Commission (EC) recommended in its Report No. 5 (published in June 1992) that a separate graduate stream be created to provide teachers with higher professional and management skills in primary school education. The EC further recommended that as an initial target, about 35% or 6,000 of the primary school teaching posts should be filled by graduates by 2007.

5. The Administration has accepted the EC's recommendations and in the 1993 Policy Address, you announced that about 860 primary school teaching posts in Government and aided primary schools would be upgraded to graduate level between 1994 and 1997. According to the Director of Education, 180 such posts would be required in September 1994 to accommodate those serving

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teachers already in possession of a degree in primary school management, with the number rising to about 880 in September 1997.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSALS

6. Accordingly, the Administration proposes that a new degree grade of Primary School Master (PSM) be created in the Education Grades Group with the following structure and salary scales -

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Proposed Salary Scale (MPS)</u>
Assistant Primary School Master (APSM)	19 - 29
Primary School Master (PSM)	30 - 33
Headmaster II (HM II)	34 - 39
Headmaster I (HM I)	38 - 41

In determining the rank structure and salary scales of the new grade, reference was made by the Administration to the existing non-graduate grade of Certificated Master/Mistress (CM) and the graduate grade of Education Officer (EO) within the Education Grades Group.

7. The proposed PSM grade will have a four-tier structure similar to the existing CM grade. The entry qualification of the new grade is either a degree in a subject relevant to the primary school curriculum, plus a post-graduate Diploma/Certificate in Education or a Teacher's Certificate from a Hong Kong College of Education, or equivalent, or a Degree in Primary Education or Special Education. However, candidates with a degree in a subject relevant to the primary school curriculum but without a Teacher's Certificate or a post-graduate Diploma/Certificate in Education may also be considered for appointment but will enter at a lower salary point of MPS 17, if appointed.

8. The justifications for the proposed salary scales of the new PSM grade are as follows -

- (a) the entry point of the basic rank (APSM) is set at MPS 19, the same as the entry point for Assistant Education Officers (AEO) with a degree plus a post-graduate Diploma/Certificate in Education or a Teacher's Certificate;

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- (b) the pay maxima of the APSM and PSM ranks are set on par with those of the AM and SAM ranks in the CM grade to avoid the situation where the "graduate" teachers may carry a higher salary than that of their "non-graduate" school heads; and
- (c) on grounds of comparable responsibilities and complexity of work, the pay scales of HM II (MPS 34-39) and HM I (MPS 38-41) are set at the same level as those of Education Officer (EO) (MPS 34-39) and Senior Education Officer (SEO) (MPS 38-41) respectively. The overlapping pay scales for HM I and HM II are proposed on the grounds that the responsibilities for running a larger school and a smaller school are comparable.

9. In determining the proposed salary scales for the new grade, the Administration has taken the following factors into account -

- (a) better salary scales are required to recognise the higher qualification and qualities required, including leadership and drive;
- (b) the salary scales must be attractive enough to provide an incentive for serving non-graduate teachers to pursue studies either full time or part time to acquire the relevant degree in primary education and to encourage new degree graduates of good qualities to opt for a teaching career in primary school; and
- (c) it would not be appropriate to apply the salary scales of the EO grade directly to the new PSM grade because while both are graduate grades, they are deployed differently for teaching in secondary and primary schools respectively. Although primary school teaching and management can be a responsible and onerous task, it is not so to the same degree as for secondary schools.

10. As PSMs may be required to assume different roles with different levels of responsibilities, the Administration proposes that similar to the AMs (paragraph 3(c) above), those PSMs filling headship and deputy headship posts should be awarded a responsibility allowance equivalent to an additional increment and 3/4 of an increment respectively.

Implementation Plan

11. The 180 graduate posts to be provided in September 1994 will be allocated amongst Government and aided primary schools (on a ratio of 1:16) in the following order of priority -

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- (a) whole day schools with 12 classes or more;
- (b) bisessional schools with 24 classes or more;
- (c) schools that have joined the School Management Initiative; and
- (d) schools that have adopted Activity Approach.

12. A survey by the Education Department in 1993 indicated that there were some 740 serving primary school teachers with degrees. However, not all these degrees relate to primary school management and not all are recognised degrees from reputable institutes. For those primary school teachers with degrees which will qualify as acceptable qualification, they will be appointed, under normal circumstances, to the corresponding ranks in the new PSM grade (CM to APSM, AM to PSM, SAM to HM II and PAM to HM I). The normal one-year trial period under CSR 199(2) will be applied. In the years ahead, open recruitment will be launched for appointment to the basic rank (APSM) of the PSM grade.

13. The Administration proposes that in filling the graduate posts by suitable CM grade staff, priority should be given to the filling of senior posts in order to improve the instructional and managerial leadership in Government and aided primary schools as early as possible and to reduce staff problems arising from graduates serving under a non-graduate head. As a first step, heads and deputy heads of primary schools already in possession of the relevant degrees will be considered for transfer to the new grade. If sufficient heads and deputy heads cannot be selected to fill the graduate posts provided, eligible AMs and CMs teaching in Government and aided primary schools will be considered for transfer.

14. Upon joining the new grade, SAMs and PAMs will be offered the salary point equivalent to their existing substantive salary plus the responsibility allowance. The special conversion arrangement for these officers is in keeping with the established principle that no one should receive less take-home pay on conversion.

15. At present, officers of the CM rank can apply to teach in secondary schools. Once posted to the secondary schools and promoted to higher ranks, however, they cannot revert to primary teaching. Since these officers lack primary school teaching experience, they will not be considered alongside their counterparts in primary schools for transfer to the new PSM grade. Those who wish to join the new grade can apply for appointment at the basic rank (APSM) when open recruitment is launched.

Degree Graduates in Primary Education

16. The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) will take over the teacher training function from the Education Department's four Colleges of Education and Institute of Language in Education in September 1994. As the Education Commission's initial target is to convert only 35% of the primary school teaching posts into graduate posts by 2007, the HKIEd will continue to provide Teacher Certificate courses. The HKIEd is expected to start offering degree courses in September 1997 and will then start to play a leading role in supplying degree graduates in primary education to the new PSM grade and in ensuring that the 35% target is met in 2007. When the duration and contents of its degree course in primary education have been worked out by the HKIEd, the Administration will consider at which salary point HKIEd graduates should enter the PSM grade, and consult the Commission.

17. In the meantime, serving teachers in the CM grade can continue to pursue full time (two years) or part time (four years) courses at local tertiary institutions to acquire a degree in Primary Education.

Assessment of Staff Reaction

18. The Administration is of the view that since the proposed salary scales for the new PSM grade are in line with the recommendations in the Education Commission's Report No. 5, which is already widely known to members of the profession, a positive response can be expected. Additionally, non-graduate teachers in the CM grade are likely to be motivated to acquire the relevant degree qualifications for transfer to the new PSM grade.

COMMISSION'S VIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Need for the new grade

19. We note that the Administration has accepted the Education Commission's recommendations (in its Report No. 5) for the establishment of a graduate grade in the Education Department to be responsible for primary school teaching and management. Indeed, this decision was announced by you in your 1993 Policy Address. We would like to add our endorsement to this decision which, we think, is a step in the right direction in the further development of primary education in Hong Kong. Accordingly, we agree that the need for this new grade has been well established.

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Proposed rank structure and salary scales

20. Having regard to the main duties and responsibilities of the proposed new grade of PSM, we agree that the proposed rank structure for the grade as set out in paragraph 6 above is acceptable.

21. We note the Administration's argument for modelling the proposed salary scales for the PSM grade, more or less, in line with the existing salary scales for the EO grade rather than the CM grade, having regard to the higher qualification and qualities required of the graduate teachers in primary schools. However, we consider that the entry salary point of the basic rank (APSM) should be set at MPS 17 instead of MPS 19, with the provision that appointees to this rank who possess a post-graduate Diploma/Certificate in Education or a Teacher's Certificate will enter at MPS 19, in line with similar arrangements for appointees to the AEO rank. This arrangement should not, in our view, detract, in any way, from the original intention of the Administration of providing sufficient incentive to motivate serving non-graduate teachers in primary schools and to attract young degree graduates of good qualities to pursue a career in primary education. This flexible arrangement will also enable serving primary school teachers who already possess a relevant degree to enter, on conversion to the new PSM grade, at MPS 19 at the minimum.

22. On the basis of these considerations, we recommend that it would be more appropriate to set the entry salary point for the basic rank (APSM) of the new PSM grade at MPS 17, instead of MPS 19.

23. We have been given to understand by the Administration that at present, degree courses offered by our local tertiary institutions in Primary Education or Special Education are reserved for serving teachers who have acquired a Teacher's Certificate from a Hong Kong College of Education. When they graduate, therefore, they will enter the PSM grade at MPS 19. As regards holders of a degree in Primary Education or Special Education awarded by a British university, it is not immediately clear to us whether they are necessarily in possession of teaching experience recognised by the Education Department. We consider that if these graduates do not possess such experience, they should enter the PSM grade at MPS 17, rather than MPS 19 as proposed by the Administration.

24. We note that the Hong Kong Institute of Education is expected to start offering degree courses in September 1997 and that, in due course, when the duration and contents of its degree course in primary education have been worked out, the Administration will review the question of at which salary point HKIEd degree graduates should enter the PSM grade. We note that the Administration will consult the Commission after it has reached a firm view on this issue. We

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agree that this will be an appropriate approach and recommend that the opportunity should also be taken at that time for the Administration to review, in the light of operational experience, the rank structure and salary scales of the PSM grade as a whole.

25. Having regard to the responsibilities proposed for the individual ranks in the new PSM grade, we are satisfied that the proposed salary scales for the respective ranks are generally acceptable. We note, however, that there is a sizable differential between the maximum salary point of HM I (MPS 41) in the proposed PSM grade and that of Principal I (MPS 49) in the Education Officer grade. We note the Administration's view for setting the pay maximum of HM I at MPS 41 on grounds that the responsibilities of HM I as head of a primary school with 24 or more classes are more comparable to those of Senior Education Officer (MPS 38-41) as head of a secondary school of up to 14 classes or deputy head of a larger school, than to those of Principal II (MPS 40-44) and Principal I (MPS 45-49) in the Education Officer grade. However, we are concerned that this substantial pay differential may not necessarily reflect the full range of responsibilities of HM I in the proposed new grade. We recommend, therefore, that the Administration should undertake a separate review of this particular issue, after the creation of the proposed new PSM grade.

26. As for the Administration's other proposal that those PSMs filling headship or deputy headship posts in primary schools should be awarded a responsibility allowance equivalent to an additional increment or 3/4 of an increment, as appropriate, similar to the existing arrangements for AMs in the CM grade, we see no reason to object to it.

Overlapping scales

27. We note that there are overlapping scales in the proposed HM II and HM I ranks at MPS 34-39 and MPS 38-41 respectively. While we generally support overlapping scales where these can be justified on a functional need basis, our reservation in the present case is that the overlapping scales for the proposed PSM grade may create some internal relativity problems vis-a-vis the SAM/PAM ranks in the CM grade on one hand and the Principal II/Principal I ranks in the EO grade on the other. However, we have been assured by the Director of Education that there is no claim for equal treatment from the SAMs/PAMs because the entry qualifications for the CM grade and the new PSM grade are different and, that, being graduate primary school heads, HM IIs/HM Is are expected to play a more active role than their non-graduate counterparts in promoting primary school initiatives. Neither does the Director of Education think that there will be any repercussion on the EO grade, for the reason that its grade structure and salary scales are different from those recommended for the new PSM grade. Also, the

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two grades are differently deployed, respectively in secondary and primary schools. Thus, despite our reservation, we accept, on the strength of the Director of Education's assurance, that the proposed overlapping salary scales for the PSM grade may not be inappropriate.

CONCLUSION

28. In conclusion, we support the Administration's proposal for the creation of a new graduate grade of Primary School Master in the Education Grades Group under the Education Department, subject to -

- (a) the entry salary point for the basic rank (APSM) being set at MPS 17, with provision for appointees to this rank who possess a degree in a relevant subject and a post-graduate Diploma/Certificate in Education or a Teacher's Certificate from a Hong Kong College of Education or equivalent, to enter at MPS 19;
- (b) a separate review being conducted by the Administration on the differential between the maximum salary point of Head Master I (MPS 41) in the proposed Primary School Master grade and that of Principal I (MPS 49) in the Education Officer grade, after the creation of the proposed new grade; and
- (c) the rank structure and salary scales of the Primary School Master grade as a whole being reviewed again by the Administration, when it is in a position to determine an appropriate entry salary point for degree graduates from the Hong Kong Institute of Education joining the Primary School Master grade, likely to be in the year 2000.

Yours sincerely,

(Sidney Gordon)
Chairman
For and on behalf of
Members of the Standing Commission