

COMMUNITY SPORTS COMMITTEE
Pilot Scheme for Student Athlete Support

Purpose

This paper reports to Members the details and arrangements of the Pilot Scheme for Student Athlete Support (the Pilot Scheme) to be implemented in the 2013-14 school year.

Background

2. In the 2013 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced that the Government would cooperate with the Hong Kong Schools Sports Federation (HKSSF) to provide appropriate support to students from low-income families so that they can realize their sporting potential.

3. We have sent out an opinion survey to 1,043 HKSSF member schools through the Federation in March this year. Among the 378 respondents, 325 schools showed interests in joining the Pilot Scheme. When formulating the details of the Pilot Scheme, we have taken their opinions into consideration, such as allowing more flexibility on the deployment of allocation and minimizing the administrative work involved. Views of the Education Bureau and the Social Welfare Department have also been sought.

4. The Sports Commission endorsed the Pilot Scheme in April 2013 and confirmed that the target beneficiaries should be individual students, not schools or school teams. The HKSSF officially invited schools to submit applications for the Pilot Scheme for the 2013-14 school year on 18 June 2013. The information pack is at **Annex**.

Details of the Pilot Scheme

Aim

5. The Pilot Scheme aims to provide financial support to students from low-income families in pursuing their sporting goals, in particular, to participate in events organised by the HKSSF, such as inter-school sports competitions.

Target Beneficiaries

6. Primary 1 to Secondary 6 students who are recommended by the school principal as having the ability to represent their schools in HKSSF events are eligible to receive funding support provided that –

- (a) they receive Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA); or
- (b) they receive full or half grant from the Student Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA); or
- (c) their schools assess them as being financially needy.

Areas of Support

7. Each school may apply for a total grant of up to \$10,000 to provide support to the target students in three main areas, namely sports equipment, transport and school squad coaching fees.

8. Schools may decide on the amount of funding to be allocated to each area of support and the number of students to be supported, but the amount of support for each individual student must not exceed \$3,000 per year.

Funding and Administrative Arrangements

9. The Pilot Scheme is a school-based scheme open to applications from HKSSF member schools. Funding will be released at the end of the school year on a reimbursement basis. Schools may also opt for an advance payment of \$5,000 based on their needs.

10. Before the start of a school year, interested schools are required to submit a pro-forma to the HKSSF, which provides basic information on estimated number of eligible students and estimated expenditure per area of support.

11. At the end of a school year, each participating school will be required to submit a report summarising the utilization of the funds. The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and HKSSF will examine the report. Once the relevant criteria and requirements have been met, the HKSSF will reimburse the expense to schools.

12. We are currently devising a monitoring mechanism upon receipt of the year-end reports to ensure the proper use of funds with reference to the comments offered by the Independent Commission Against Corruption. As a prerequisite, we would check whether the school is a member of the HKSSF and whether any student receives a subsidy exceeding \$3,000. In addition, we would randomly select schools or beneficiaries for checking whether they had actually participated in the HKSSF events. The HAB and HKSSF may request selected schools to provide documents and records for auditing.

Estimated budget

13. Based on the results of the opinion survey and the advice from the HKSSF, we have earmarked \$5 million from the Arts and Sport Development Fund for the first year of the Pilot Scheme.

Latest Development

14. The HKSSF invited schools to submit applications for the Pilot Scheme for the 2013-14 school year on 18 June 2013. The deadline for application is 12 July 2013. As at 3 July 2013, we received 105 applications. We would conduct preliminary screening and vetting before announcing the application results by end of August 2013.

Advice Sought

15. Members are invited to note the latest progress of the Pilot Scheme.

Home Affairs Bureau
July 2013