

\$3m pilot plan for more adult evening classes

By STELLA LEE

EDUCATION officials are hoping to fund a \$3 million pilot scheme for adult evening matriculation classes to meet soaring demand although no specific allocation was made in the Budget.

There have been calls for the provision of government-run evening matriculation classes following a government manpower study which predicted a shortage of 21,800 people with Sixth Form level education next year, rising to 48,400 in 2001.

Assistant Director of Education Tse Kum-shing said officials would try to earmark funding for the scheme from the \$46.3 million allocated for adult education next year.

Mr Tse said there had been feedback from adult students that they wanted to continue their part-time studies at government-run centres after completing Form Five evening classes, the highest level at present on offer.

There are 1,840 government-run Form Five evening places charging about \$930 a year. Privately-run evening classes for adults cost up to several thousand dollars a year.

Mr Tse said officials had proposed a three-year pilot



Tse Kum-shing

scheme at four centres in the New Territories, Kowloon and Hong Kong Island, at an estimated \$1 million a year.

But the secretary for the Hong Kong Association for Continuing Education, Mervyn Cheung Man-ping, said the scale of the pilot scheme was too small in light of the projected manpower shortages.

He said many working adults completing government-run Form Five evening classes might be forced to switch to day schools or more expensive private evening schools in order to continue their studies.

Educationalists have also called for more Form Six places at day schools, but the manpower projection report said this would depend on suitable candidates.