

Information Note

Support for Schools with a Large Intake of Students of Lower Academic Ability

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide information on the additional resources and professional support currently provided by the Education Department (ED) to schools with a large intake of students of lower academic ability, as requested by Members at a previous LegCo Panel on Education meeting.

Support for schools with a large intake of students of lower academic ability

2. At present, additional resources and professional support are being provided to schools with a large intake of students of lower academic ability under the School-based Remedial Support Programmes, the School-based Curriculum Tailoring Scheme and the Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme. Additional clerical support and various types of professional support are also provided to these schools to help them cater for the needs of academically low achievers. Besides, intensive remedial teaching service is also provided by resource teaching centres.

School-based Remedial Support Programme

3. Under the School-based Remedial Support Programme (SBRSP), secondary schools which admit students in the bottom decile receive, according to a stipulated calculation formula, additional teachers and a recurrent grant to conduct supportive programmes for students in need. These programmes include intensive remedial teaching in the three major subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics as well as supportive measures for the development of learning skills.

School-based Curriculum Tailoring Scheme

4. Schools admitting two or more classes of academically low achievers (ALAs) at Secondary 1 level are invited to join the School-based Curriculum Tailoring Scheme. Each school joining the Scheme is provided with an additional teacher for developing school-based curricula for the ALAs.

Additional clerical support

5. Since September 1996, schools admitting one or more classes of ALAs at Secondary 1 level have been provided with funds for the provision of additional clerical service, thus relieving teachers of some of the non-teaching duties.

Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme

6. Under the Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme (IRTP), participating primary schools are provided with additional teachers and a recurrent grant to enhance remedial support for pupils who are weak in the three major subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics.

Professional support services

7. Professional support services are being provided by ED to schools in need. For instance, a central curriculum development support team has been set up since 1993 to provide on-site professional advice and learning facilitation measures for secondary schools with a large intake of Band 3-5 students. Training workshops and experience sharing seminars have also been organised for teachers teaching ALAs. For those academically weak students who are studying in primary schools not participating in the IRTP or in junior secondary schools not participating in the SBRSP, they may receive intensive remedial teaching service in the resource teaching centres operated by the ED.

Support for all schools

8. Apart from the support services offered specifically to schools with a large intake of students of lower academic ability, ED has been providing assistance to all schools in catering for the diverse learning needs of students. Some of the existing measures include:

- Providing Capacity Enhancement Grant to schools to relieve teachers' workload so that teachers can focus more on curriculum development and on catering for the diverse learning needs of students;
- Distributing sample learning tasks of Chinese language, English language and Mathematics subjects to primary schools. For wider dissemination, exemplars of school-based curriculum projects and teaching and learning resources for both primary and secondary schools are put up on the internet for teachers' reference;
- To help schools identify pupils with serious learning difficulties, an Observation Checklist is prepared for teachers teaching P1 pupils so that assistance can be provided to the needy pupils;
- Schools can also make use of the Hong Kong Attainment Test to assess pupils' achievement in Chinese, English and Mathematics at all levels from P1 to S3. In addition, the tests provide useful reference for diagnosing pupils' areas of strengths and weaknesses, identifying pupils for remedial treatment and monitoring the standards of pupils across years;
- Apart from arranging training courses on mixed ability teaching, on-line courses and self-learning packages are being developed for teachers to help them address the issue of student diversity;

- Officers of the Regional Education Offices provide different kinds of school-based support services to schools and promote best practices among schools through the building up of district networking; and
- To facilitate exchange of experiences among teachers, district teacher networks have been established since March 2000. The Hong Kong Education City website launched in August 2000 also serves as a collaborating platform for schools, institutions and education practitioners to exchange information on education resources, software and services.

Education Department
April 2001