

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(2)2606/04-05  
(These minutes have been  
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/HS/2/04

**Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to the Provision of  
Boarding Places, Senior Secondary Education and Employment  
Opportunities for Children with Special Educational Needs**

**Minutes of meeting  
held on Monday, 27 June 2005 at 10:45 am  
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung (Chairman)  
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP  
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong  
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP  
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, GBS, JP  
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
- Member absent** : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
- Public Officers attending** : Mr M Y CHENG  
Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (3)
- Mrs Betty IP TSANG Chui-hing  
Principal Assistant Secretary (School Administration &  
Support)
- Mrs Ruth LAU  
Principal Education Officer (Kowloon)
- Mrs Marry MA LO To-wan  
Commissioner for Rehabilitation, Health, Welfare and  
Food Bureau

Miss Ophelia CHAN Chiu-ling  
Assistant Director (Rehabilitation and Medical Social  
Services), Social Welfare Department

**Attendance by  
invitation** : Item I

Concern Group on the Provision of Boarding/Respite  
Service in Schools for the Physically Disabled

Ms TAM Yok-fung  
Member

Ms HO Bo-ching  
Member

Parent Sub-group of Schools for the Physically Disabled

Ms LAM Suk-yu  
Member

Ms LO Yip-heung  
Member

Hong Kong Association for Parents of Persons with  
Physical Disabilities

Ms CHIU Yee-ling  
Chairman

Ms CHEUNG Kwok-chun  
Pui Oi Parents

Hong Kong Special Schools Council

Dr Simon LEUNG  
Chairman

Ms Rita MANSUKHANI  
Honorable Secretary

Item II

Hong Kong Association for Specific Learning Disabilities

Mrs LAU LEE Man-ying  
Executive Member

Miss CHIU Wai-ki  
Development Officer

Focus On Children's Understanding in School

Mrs Katherine NICHOLS  
Chairman

Mrs Sheila LOK  
Member (Former Vice Chairman)

**Clerk in attendance** : Miss Flora TAI  
Chief Council Secretary (2)2

**Staff in attendance** : Mr Stanley MA  
Senior Council Secretary (2)6

Miss Sherman WOO  
Legislative Assistant (2)2

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- I. Provision of boarding places for children with special educational needs**  
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2040/04-05(01)]

Views of deputations

*Concern Group on the Provision of Boarding/Respite Service in Schools for the Physically Disabled*  
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2129/04-05(01)]

Ms TAM Yok-fung and Ms HO Bo-ching presented the views of the Concern Group on the Provision of Boarding/Respite Service in Schools for the Physically Disabled as detailed in its submission which was tabled at the meeting. They highlighted that the Concern Group urged the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) to review the mode, quality and cost-effectiveness of the provision of boarding places in special schools for students with physical

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disabilities (PD students) in the light of their needs and residential locations. To address the needs of PD students residing in the New Territories with long term boarding needs, EMB should consider the establishment of a small-scale boarding section with 8-10 places in the existing five special schools for PD students (PD schools) without a boarding section. Each of these small-scale boarding sections should reserve two places to cater for the short-term boarding needs of PD students.

*Parent Sub-group of Schools for the Physically Disabled*

2. Ms LAM Suk-yu described to the Subcommittee the difficult situations of two single parents in looking after their PD children. She pointed out that the cases of these two parents illustrated the importance of providing sufficient boarding and respite places in each PD school.

*Hong Kong Association for Parents of Persons with Physical Disabilities  
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2129/04-05(02)]*

3. Ms CHIU Yee-ling and Ms CHEUNG Kwok-chun presented the views of the Hong Kong Association for Parents of Persons with Physical Disabilities as detailed in its submission which was tabled at the meeting. They requested EMB to allocate resources for the five PD schools without a boarding section to operate a small-scale boarding section to cater for the needs of PD students residing in the New Territories. The Association suggested that EMB should review the mode and operation of boarding services in the light of the long-term boarding needs of PD students, and take the initiative to coordinate with the Social Welfare Department (SWD) to provide sufficient respite service to cater for the short-term boarding needs of PD students.

*Hong Kong Special Schools Council  
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2093/04-05(01)] (revised)*

4. Dr Simon LEUNG and Ms Rita MANSUKHANI presented the views of the Hong Kong Special Schools Council as detailed in its submission which was tabled at the meeting. The Council suggested that EMB should provide sufficient boarding places for PD students with long-term boarding needs, air-conditioning system in PD schools with a boarding section, and sufficient staff and facilities including nurses and sterilization rooms in special schools with a boarding section. The Council also requested EMB to brief the special education sector on the progress of its review on job-related allowances and on the Council's proposal for incorporating the existing responsibility allowance into the salaries of the staff concerned.

*Other submission received*

5. Members noted the submission from the Hong Kong Special School

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Boarding Care Staff Association [LC Paper No. CB(2)2040/04-05(02)].

Provision of boarding services on a regional basis

6. Referring to Appendix 2 of the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(2)2040/04-05(01)], Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong pointed out that as at 15 April 2005, the number of boarders in the two PD schools with a boarding section residing in Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, West New Territories, North New Territories and outlying islands were 33, 53, 28, 41 and 6 respectively. In view of the distribution of the PD students in the districts, Mr CHEUNG suggested that the Administration should consider the demands of parents and the long-term boarding needs of their PD children for the provision of care and education, and provide boarding places in two more PD schools which should be located in North and West New Territories respectively.

7. Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (3) (DS(EM)3) responded that the Administration would include the provision of boarding places in PD schools in its review of the provision and operation of special schools. He agreed that as the existing service had remained unchanged for some thirty years, it was the right time to review the provision of boarding places in PD schools in the light of changing circumstances and needs. He, however, pointed out that the range and quality of services provided in a small-scale boarding section would not be comparable to those provided in a normal boarding section.

8. DS(EM)3 agreed that the provision of boarding places on a regional rather than a territory-wide basis would benefit PD students and their parents residing in the New Territories. He, however, pointed out that as the distribution of PD children in various districts might fluctuate over time, there might be more vacant places in the PD schools which were selected to provide boarding places on a regional basis. Under these circumstances, Legislative Council (LegCo) Members and the Director of Audit should allow a reasonable number of surplus boarding places in these PD schools in future evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of the boarding service.

9. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong requested the Administration to provide boarding places for PD students on a regional basis as soon as practicable. He considered that the provision of boarding places only in two PD schools might be appropriate thirty years ago, but certainly did not match with the current population in North and West New Territories. He pointed out that the operation of small-scale boarding sections in other PD schools should aim to cater for the temporary boarding needs of PD students. In addition, it was understandable that a small-scale boarding section could not provide a comprehensive range of care and boarding services.

10. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that LegCo Members would appreciate

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that there might be more surplus places in selected PD schools when boarding services for PD students were provided on a regional basis and would allow some leeway in the number of surplus boarding places in the PD schools concerned.

11. Ms HO Bo-ching said that parents understood that the range and standards of services provided in a small-scale boarding section would be different. For example, the operation of the small-scale boarding section in a PD school in Sha Tin was funded by private donations, which were insufficient to support a full range of services as provided in the existing two PD schools with a boarding section. Ms TAM Yok-fung requested the Administration to provide a timetable for the provision of a boarding section in selected PD schools in the New Territories.

12. DS(EM)3 responded that the Administration would carefully and seriously consider the provision of boarding places on a regional basis as suggested by Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong. EMB would revert to the Subcommittee before the end of 2005 with a proposal on the provision of a boarding section in selected PD schools in the New Territories.

13. Ms MANSUKHANI said that the boarding service in the Princess Alexandra Red Cross Residential School was intended for PD students with long-term boarding needs, and did not include respite service for PD children with short-term boarding needs. She pointed out that for various reasons, many parents would not prefer to send their PD children to the respite services provided under the community support programmes for people with disabilities funded by SWD. She considered that EMB should liaise with SWD to improve the provision of respite services for PD students.

14. Ms MANSUKHANI highlighted that the provision of rehabilitation services to PD children was often carried out on a one-to-one basis. Apart from the duty of care, the responsible staff members should respect the right and dignity of PD students in taking the rehabilitative exercises. As such, sufficient manpower and facilities must be provided to ensure the quality and standard of rehabilitation services.

15. Assistant Director (Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services) (AD(RMSS)) acknowledged that many parents were reluctant to send their PD children to the respite services which were provided by subvented non-governmental organisations (NGOs) under the community support programmes for people with disabilities from 2002 onwards. These respite services included the "Holiday Care Service" which provided short-term day care service during holidays; the "Home Respite Service" which provided hourly charged day care service in the disabled person's home; and the "Extended Care Service" provided in the Day Activity Centre. Furthermore, PD students aged 15 or above could also be admitted to the residential home for the mentally

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handicapped/physically disabled subvented by SWD for temporary care. She added that some 50 PD students had made use of the respite services since August 2004.

16. AD(RMSS) shared the view of parents that respite services for PD students should better be provided in PD schools with a boarding section. She added that special schools with a boarding section operated either on a five-day or seven-day basis. Social workers were often involved in the coordination of respite services during Saturdays and Sundays for students attending various types of special schools which operated a boarding section on a five-day basis. She agreed that EMB and SWD should collaborate with NGOs and PD schools to improve arrangements for provision of respite services to PD children.

17. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung pointed out that parents had explained the urgency and importance of providing sufficient boarding places and quality support services for PD students on a regional basis, and SWD had agreed to collaborate with EMB on the arrangements for provision of respite services to PD students aged six to 15. He asked how EMB would respond to the demands of parents for improvements in the provision of boarding services which had largely remained unchanged during the past thirty years. He considered that EMB should exercise flexibility in the allocation of resources for special education.

18. DS(EM)3 reiterated that EMB would revert to the Subcommittee with its proposals by the end of 2005. He pointed out that given the fiscal deficits in the past few years, the Administration had to be careful and prudent in allocating resources among the competing priorities in various policy areas. He added that EMB would exercise flexibility in the provision of resources for special education.

19. Principal Assistant Secretary (School Administration & Support) (PAS(SAS)) said that EMB was exploring the feasibility of collaborating with NGOs to provide self-financed respite service for PD children in other special schools with a boarding section. For PD students who had long-term boarding needs but were unwilling to enrol in the two PD schools with a boarding section in Kowloon and Hong Kong Island, EMB was collaborating with sponsoring bodies of other special schools with a boarding section in the New Territories for assistance with a view to addressing their needs. She added that extending the operation of the boarding section of a special school from five days to seven days a week would require the provision of additional manpower and resources

20. Ms TAM Yok-fung requested EMB to consult parents in its review on the provision of boarding places for PD students. Ms HO Bo-ching pointed out that PD students were unable to protect themselves in the face of potential danger and should preferably be separated from children who were emotionally unstable or inclined to use force.

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21. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung asked about the direction of the Administration's review on the provision of boarding places for PD students. DS(EM)3 responded that the Administration would examine the long-term boarding needs of PD students residing in the East and West New Territories in the light of the current population and developments in the districts. Given the limited resources, the Administration would have to estimate the financial implications for the provision of a boarding section in PD schools at different locations in the New Territories. He hoped that LegCo Members would support the capital works proposals to be submitted to the Public Works Subcommittee for consideration in due course.

22. The Chairman and Ms Audrey EU said that LegCo Members in principle would support the Administration's proposals on provision of support and assistance to disadvantaged groups in the community. Ms EU hoped that EMB would give priority consideration to the special needs of PD students in education, instead of the cost-effectiveness in the provision of boarding places. DS(EM)3 stressed that the Administration had all along allocated adequate resources to special education.

Provision of air-conditioning to boarders

23. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung considered that given the difficulties of PD students who had to wear braces or thick protective garments, EMB should provide air-conditioning to the boarding section of PD schools. DS(EM)3 replied that subject to the availability of resources, EMB would explore the feasibility of providing air-conditioning to the boarding section of the special schools concerned. At the request of the Chairman, he undertook to provide an estimate of the costs incurred for members' reference.

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Follow-up

24. In summing up, the Chairman requested the Administration to consult parents in its review of the provision of boarding places for PD students and revert to the Subcommittee with improvement proposals by the end of 2005. He considered that the demands of parents were reasonable, and expressed appreciation that parents had volunteered to raise funds to support the operation of a self-financing small-scale boarding section in a PD school in Sha Tin. He also urged EMB to collaborate with SWD, parents and sponsoring bodies to work out the arrangements for provision of respite services for PD children as soon as practicable.

25. DS(EM)3 responded that EMB would consult parents in the review of the provision of boarding services for PD students and would submit the proposals to the Subcommittee for consideration by the end of 2005. He, however, added that the construction of a building for provision of boarding places would take a

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few years to completion.

**II. Educational needs of students with specific learning disabilities**

26. The Chairman informed the meeting that the Administration had indicated that it would provide a paper on the educational needs of students with specific learning disabilities (SLD students) after the meeting, which would incorporate the Administration's response to views and concerns of deputations expressed at the meeting.

Views of deputations

*Hong Kong Association for Specific Learning Disabilities  
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2093/04-05(02)] (revised)*

27. Mrs LAU LEE Man-ying presented the views of Hong Kong Association for Specific Learning Disabilities (the SLD Association) as detailed in its submission. In brief, the SLD Association suggested that EMB should establish a mechanism for early identification of SLD students in secondary schools, reinforce training on early identification and teaching of SLD students for pre-service and in-service teachers, and give priority to the needs of SLD students in implementing small class teaching.

*Focus On Children's Understanding in School  
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2040/04-05(04)]*

28. Mrs Katherine NICHOLS presented the views of the Focus On Children's Understanding in School (the Focus) as detailed in its submission. She highlighted that the Focus recommended that all pre-service and in-service teachers should be trained in identification and understanding of the learning needs of SLD students on a continuing basis. Each school should have an expert on appropriate pedagogies and support for SLD students and their teachers in learning and teaching. The Focus considered that early identification and intervention was crucial to support SLD students in learning.

Members' views and concerns

*Identification of and support for SLD students*

29. Miss CHAN YUEN-han said that she was a manager of a few primary and secondary schools. Referring to paragraph 1.1 of the submission of the SLD Association, Miss CHAN said that parents were dissatisfied that some 28% of students suspected to have SLD had waited for more than six months before their learning abilities were assessed by EMB's educational psychologists. She asked about the process involved in the identification of SLD students in schools.

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30. Principal Education Officer (Kowloon) (PEO(K)) responded that EMB, schools and teachers were well aware of the need to identify students with SLD and to provide remedial support as early as possible. For this purpose, EMB provided primary schools with the “Hong Kong Specific Learning Difficulties Behavior Checklist” (HKSpLDBC) for suspected cases to assist teachers in identification of SLD students at Primary One (P1) level.

31. PEO(K) then explained the learning needs of SLD students to illustrate the role of frontline teachers in identifying SLD students through their day-to-day observation and interaction with students in classes. She also highlighted the importance of providing timely intervention and remedial support to SLD students. PEO(K) added that in collaboration with the Department of Health (DH), EMB would monitor the progress of P1 and P2 students who were suspected to have SLD during early childhood education. If they showed no improvement at P1 and P2 levels, EMB would refer them to educational psychologists for appropriate assessment.

32. Miss CHAN Yuen-han said that teachers were already fully loaded with day-to-day teaching and administrative work in schools, and schools were not provided with sufficient resources to support SLD students in learning. She considered it unfair for teachers who had not received any training on identifying SLD students to take up the responsibility for the identification of SLD students at P1 level.

33. PEO(K) responded that the educational psychologists in EMB played a significant role in the design of curriculum and programmes to assist teachers in teaching and SLD students in learning. For instance, the result of incorporating the resource materials in the publication entitled “Fun with Reading and Writing” into the curriculum for SLD students at P1 and P2 levels from the 2002-03 school year in selected schools had been encouraging. The successful experiences and good practices would be disseminated to other schools for reference.

34. PEO(K) further said that under the present policy, children with special educational needs (SEN) including SLD students should, whenever possible, be placed in ordinary schools so that they received the fullest benefits of education from mixing and interacting with mainstream students in a regular school environment. As such, SLD students would learn with peers in mainstream classes and be free from any labeling. In the light of the whole school approach, parents would be taught on the development and learning needs of SLD students at various stages and other students in senior classes would be encouraged to assist and support SLD students in P1 and P2 classes in learning.

35. PAS(SAS) highlighted that EMB had all along emphasised the importance of early identification and timely intervention, co-operation among

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parents and schools, and the whole school approach to cater for SLD students in learning. She pointed out that under the new funding model which covered some 150 primary schools in the 2004-05 school year. Schools admitting students with SEN were provided with the Intensive Learning Support Grant and were requested to adopt a whole school approach to support every student with SEN, including those with specific learning difficulties.

36. PAS(SAS) further said that structured in-service teacher training comprising a 30-hour basic programme and a 90-hour development programme on special education had been arranged in the 2004-05 school year. In addition, EMB was inviting bids for the provision of a 30-hour training programme on SLD in the 2005-06 school year. Schools admitting SLD students would be required to send at least one teacher to receive the training on teaching SLD students. School-based professional support in the form of school visits, peer reviews and specialist advice would be provided to schools to assist teachers in curriculum design and assessment of SLD students. Schools and teachers were also encouraged to collaborate with parents to review and monitor the learning progress of SLD students.

37. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that the school sector and the community as a whole had not adequately recognised the diverse needs of SLD students over the years. Referring to paragraph 1.4 of the submission of the SLD Association, he considered that the identification of SLD students and provision of timely intervention in secondary schools had yet to start. In the circumstances, he asked how EMB would improve the situation.

38. PEO(K) responded that with the support of the Quality Education Fund, similar behaviour checklists for assessment of students' learning abilities and SLD observation checklist for teachers in secondary schools would be introduced in the 2005-06 school year. A set of guidelines and resources tools including a CD-ROM would be distributed to secondary schools to enhance teachers' understanding of the needs for early intervention and remedial support of SLD students. She added that with appropriate teaching pedagogies and peer support, SLD students were able to learn as good as other students in secondary schools.

39. PAS(SAS) supplemented that EMB would review the support for secondary schools with reference to the new funding model for primary schools students with SEN. In addition, EMB was also considering the implementation of various measures to enhance experience-sharing and dissemination of good practices among schools and teachers with the aim of upgrading teachers' skills and knowledge in teaching and supporting SLD students in schools.

*Number of SLD students*

40. Mrs Selina CHOW asked whether the Administration would agree to the

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estimate that some 10% school students had SLD, and if so, how it would assist SLD students to learn as good as other students in schools. She considered that if the estimate was accurate, it was impractical to expect frontline teachers to teach SLD students with individualised programmes under the current class sizes.

41. PEO(K) responded that according to the assessment conducted by EMB's educational psychologists, around 0.9% of P1 and P2 students (some 900-odds students) were identified as having SLD each year. She explained that the assessments were made on the basis of agreed criteria and standards for identification of SLD students. Students with less severe difficulties in learning or reading such as students with attention deficit were not classified as SLD students. EMB would provide professional support to schools and teachers in support of the teaching and learning of students with different levels of SLD.

42. Mrs Selina CHOW remarked that the number of SLD students would increase each year and EMB should provide schools with sufficient resources to cope with the increasing demands of SLD students in learning. She suggested that EMB should consider the establishment of special teams to assist schools in the provision of support to SLD students. PEO(K) reiterated that schools with SLD students were provided with various support including the Intensive Learning Support Grant, professional development programmes for teachers, and school-based professional support and advice, etc.

43. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that the number of SLD students identified by EMB was small, probably because of the existing criteria used to identify SLD students. He considered that individualised programmes tally with different levels of SLD should be devised for these students. He suggested that EMB should conduct a comprehensive review of the existing criteria and mechanisms for assessment and identification of students with SLD, with a view to estimating a more realistic number of SLD students in schools and working out the resources required for implementation of the necessary support measures for these students.

44. PEO(K) responded that she shared the view of Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung. She, however, said that given the resources constraints, EMB would have to prioritise the support measures to help students with more serious SLD first. She added that research indicated that teaching strategies effective in helping SLD students were also beneficial to other students with SEN. With appropriate support, teachers should be able to assist SLD students to learn effectively in classrooms.

45. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that the criteria adopted by EMB for identification of SLD students had apparently failed to meet the general expectation of the parents and the community as a whole. He considered that the Subcommittee should invite schools, principals, teachers and parents to express views on policies and strategies for the implementation of integrated education

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for students with SEN in schools.

46. The Chairman said that the Administration should be well aware that there were established practices and standards for identification of students with SLD and other SEN in advanced countries. He added that the Subcommittee should follow up the matter in the new session.

Follow-up

47. Mrs Selina CHOW considered that EMB should provide detailed information on its work on early identification of SLD students and provision of timely intervention in schools, as well as the support measures to assist teachers in teaching SLD students. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung considered that the Administration should review the criteria for identification and provide a more reliable estimate of the number of SLD students in schools. Miss CHIU Wai-ki of the SLD Association added that in view of the long waiting time for assessment to be made by EMB's educational psychologists, many parents had sent their children to practising psychologists in the private sector for an assessment on SLD.

48. The Chairman requested the Administration to respond to the views and suggestions of deputations and members expressed at the meeting. He added that if possible, the number of SLD students assessed by practising psychologists in the private sector should be included in the paper. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong suggested that EMB should provide the paper in September 2005 before the Subcommittee received views from deputations on the implementation of integrated education in schools at its next meeting. PEO(K) agreed. She, however, pointed out that EMB had no records on the number of SLD students assessed by practising psychologists in the private sector.

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**III. Any other business**

49. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:00 pm.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
20 September 2005