

For discussion on 22 January 2007

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

**Implementation of Integrated Education  
in Primary and Secondary Schools**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to update Members on the implementation of integrated education (IE) in public sector primary and secondary schools with the focus on resources provision, professional support, teacher professional development, support for parents in making school choices and allocation of places for mainstreamed skills opportunity schools.

**Background**

2. The Administration has provided information on the implementation of IE in public sector primary and secondary schools and the way forward vide LC papers: CB(2)1130/04-05(01), CB(2)186/05-06(01), CB(2)443/05-06(01), CB(2)1739/05-06(01), CB(2)2773/05-06(01) of 30 March 2005, 1 November 2005, 25 November 2005, 21 April 2006, 21 July 2006 respectively as well as the written response CB(2)375/06-07(01) of 14 November 2006.

3. The Administration is committed to implementing IE for students with special educational needs (SEN) who can benefit from education in ordinary schools. The concept of IE was first introduced to Hong Kong in the seventies. Initially, it took the form of special classes and special programmes in ordinary schools to cater for students with SEN. In 1997, we launched the IE programme with an emphasis on whole-school approach (WSA). Under this approach, schools are encouraged to develop an integrated education policy covering early identification and intervention, monitoring of students' learning progress, assessment accommodation, curriculum differentiation and adaptation

of teaching strategies, staff development and parental involvement. The objective is to enhance the effectiveness of support for students with SEN through improvement on the culture, policy and practices of the whole school. The ultimate goal is to enhance the capacity of schools and teachers in catering for student diversity.

4. The implementation of IE over the past decade has led to the involvement of a wider group of teachers and increased public awareness of IE, bringing about heightened parental expectations and increased pressure on schools and teachers. Against this backdrop, we have recently reviewed the implementation of IE in ordinary schools. Based on the consultations with the Task Force on IE<sup>1</sup> and concerned groups, and views collected from schools, frontline teachers and other stakeholders, we have come up with some consolidated views and improvement measures which were put forth in LC Paper No CB(2)2773/05-06(01) and discussed at the Sub-committee's meeting on 21 July 2006. In the ensuing paragraphs, we would recap the key issues and update Members on the latest position.

### **Students with SEN in ordinary schools**

5. Over the years, IE has been extended to cover hearing impairment (HI), visual impairment (VI), physical disabilities (PD), Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) with average intelligence, Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), speech and language impairment (SLI), Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD), and mild intellectual disability (ID).

6. Efforts have been made to facilitate early identification of students with SEN. Apart from encouraging parents to inform schools of their children's SEN, the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) has developed the teachers' observation checklists for ordinary schools to identify students with learning difficulties and speech problems as early as three months after they have entered P1. The Learning Achievement Measurement Kit developed to identify students with low academic achievement (which may reflect learning difficulties in good time) has recently been refined and extended to P6 level. For students who are identified to be two years behind the expected level, we

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<sup>1</sup> The Task Force, comprising representatives from schools councils, resource schools, parents' groups, government departments, NGOs and tertiary institutions, was set up by the EMB to advise on the implementation of IE and improvement measures.

would provide schools with additional resources to cater for these students' learning needs. For secondary students, we have made use of the Secondary School Place Allocation (SSPA) results to identify students in need of learning support. Secondary schools may also make use of the Pre-S1 Hong Kong Attainment Test results to identify individual S1 entrants' strengths and weaknesses in the three core subjects so that early intervention could be planned.

7. Schools may also refer suspected cases to the EMB for psychological, audiological or speech assessments to ascertain the SEN of these students and the educational support required.

### **Provision of resources for schools**

8. The concept of early identification and intervention is the guiding principle in education for students with SEN. As a logical sequel, if students at lower levels are adequately supported, there should be fewer students at the higher levels who still require the same degree of support as at lower levels. Besides, there should be differentiated levels of support based on students' different needs. The three-tier intervention model<sup>2</sup> is now practised in schools. Hence, the resources provision and support for schools should tie in with the need for early intervention and the three-tier intervention model.

9. We have been providing schools with the additional basic provisions to cater for students with diverse learning needs at both primary and secondary levels. These include additional teachers for remedial teaching, the Capacity Enhancement Grant, Primary School Master (Curriculum Development) posts, specialised teaching posts and student guidance personnel/school social worker. These basic provisions would enable schools to provide tier-1 support for students with mild and transient learning problems through quality teaching and pastoral care.

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<sup>2</sup> Tier-1 support refers to quality teaching in the classroom, an entitlement for all students. Teachers with initial teacher training should be able to deliver some form of differentiated teaching in the classroom in handling early signs of learning difficulties which would only require slight adjustment of the routine. This will help students at risk to catch up with learning and avoid worsening of their conditions. Tier-2 support means 'add-on' intervention for students identified with persistent learning difficulties of various types. Tier-3 support targets at students who need intensive support and special accommodation due to severe disabilities. The number of students requiring such intensive support should be relatively small.

10. For the tier-2 add-on support for students with persistent learning difficulties, we currently provide the Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme (IRTP)<sup>3</sup> and New Funding Mode (NFM) (\$10,000 per student with SEN) in primary schools, which enable them to have additional teachers to facilitate small group learning and pull-out programmes. In the 2006/07 school year, 292 primary schools have adopted the NFM and 357 the IRTP. In secondary schools, we used to have the School-based Remedial Support Programme (SBRSP) and the School-based Curriculum Tailoring Scheme (SBCTS), which provided additional teachers for schools with more academically low achievers. Starting from the 2006/07 school year, these two programmes will be replaced in phases by a new initiative<sup>4</sup>, under which additional teachers would be provided for secondary schools with more Territory Band 3 and bottom 10% S1 to S3 students. As at September 2006, 380 additional teachers have been provided for 169 schools under this initiative. At senior secondary levels, students who still need tier-2 support will be catered for by the diversified new senior secondary curriculum and the Diversity Learning Grant under the new senior secondary academic structure.

11. For the tier-3 support, there is the IE Programme<sup>5</sup> and the \$20,000 per student with severe SEN under the NFM in primary schools and the IE Programme for secondary schools. Additional support for both primary and secondary schools with hardcore cases and a larger cluster of students with SEN would be provided on a need basis in the form of support from resource schools, secondment of resource teachers from the EMB on a short term or part-time basis, or a time-limited programme fee for the provision of teaching assistant to provide intensive support to some hardcore cases.

12. We understand that secondary schools are expecting more resources specifically targeted at students with SEN although most of them are covered under the initiative for academically low achievers mentioned in Paragraph 10 above. We plan to review the implementation of the NFM in primary schools in the 2007/08 school year and in the light of the experience in primary schools,

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<sup>3</sup> Additional resource teachers and recurrent grants are provided to facilitate schools to provide intensive remedial teaching in one or more of the three core subjects.

<sup>4</sup> Under this initiative, the class to teacher ratios will be improved from 1:1.3 to 1:2 in the case of one full class of bottom 10% students and to 1:1.6 for one full class of other Band 3 students.

<sup>5</sup> Under the IE Programme, an additional CM teacher is provided to schools with five or more students with a disability. A teaching assistant is also provided once the school admits eight or more students with a disability. In the 2006/07 school year, 44 primary schools and 37 secondary schools are under this Scheme.

we may explore the feasibility of extending the NFM approach to secondary schools to further strengthen the implementation of WSA.

### **Enhanced professional /specialist support**

13. Apart from resources, schools are in need of professional and specialist support to build up their capacity in catering for students with SEN. We have provided a wide range of professional/specialist support to schools at school, teacher and student support levels.

#### *Educational psychology service*

14. All public sector primary and secondary schools are supported by Educational Psychologists (EP) who are employed by service providers either under an outsourced Educational Psychology Service (for primary schools) Scheme or a School Support Scheme (for secondary schools), apart from the central pool of EPs in the EMB. The EPs provide psychological assessment for students with learning and/or psycho-social adjustment difficulties, and consultation services for the school management, teachers and parents with regard to support measures. We would conduct an evaluation of the present outsourcing mode of EP service later this year and explore with the tertiary institutions to the feasibility to expand their training capacity to meet the increasing service demand.

#### *Speech therapy service*

15. With increased public awareness and better identification process, more students with SLI have been identified in primary schools. To address the increasing need for early support in this respect, there has been the phased provision of the Enhanced Speech Therapy Grant<sup>6</sup> as from the 2006/07 school year. With the Grant, primary schools may employ their own Speech Therapists (ST) or procure school-based ST services. For the first phase this school year, 267 primary schools have been provided with the Grant. Others will continue to be served by the STs in the EMB. A language disability addressed early in the primary school years will normally not persist on to the

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<sup>6</sup> The Grant comprises a basic provision of \$2,500 per class per annum and a top-up provision of \$3,000 per capita with a cap at \$60,000 per annum for students with moderate or severe SLI.

secondary school years. Still, the STs or multi-disciplinary team from the EMB will provide the necessary school-based consultative service to SLI students in secondary schools. We will review the effectiveness of the Grant at the end of the 2008/09 school year before considering its way forward and expanding its scope to include secondary schools.

#### *Student guidance service*

16. With effect from the 2006/07 school year, the provision ratio of student guidance teachers (SGT)/officers (SGO) or student guidance service (SGS) grant of ordinary primary schools has been enhanced from one per school with 24 classes or more to one per school with 18 classes or more. For primary schools with 5-17 classes, they will each be provided with a 0.5 SGT/SGO/SGS grant. With the improved provision and under the full-time stationing mode, the student guidance personnel will be able to help promote inclusive culture and be more readily accessible to teachers for consultation and assistance in handling students with problems.

#### *Enhanced advisory service for schools*

17. Starting from the 2006/07 school year, we have assigned to each primary school a Special Education Support Officer (SESO) from the EMB as a resource person to help schools promote the inclusive culture and to help develop the school-based policy for education of students with SEN. They pay regular visits to schools, at least three times a year, to discuss with teachers their concerns and to see that WSA is being implemented in an effective way. Up to January 2007, their first round of visits covered nearly all public sector primary schools. They conduct case conferences, provide on-site support for difficult cases, meet with parents, help schools draw up staff development plans and advise schools on resources deployment. The SESOs will also identify good practices in schools for professional sharing.

18. We are planning to extend the consultative and advisory visits to about 50 secondary schools with hardcore or clustered cases of SEN, possibly starting from the second term of this school year. Depending on the feedback and manpower consideration, we may consider the coverage in the coming years.

### *School network support*

19. All along, students with VI or HI attending ordinary secondary schools are provided with specific support services from special schools. The Resource Support Programme for VI students consists of on-site learning support and production of Braille materials while the Enhanced Support Service for HI students focuses on remedial teaching and language development.

20. In addition, we will increase the number of resource schools and enhance their capacity in supporting and networking ordinary primary and secondary schools with SEN students through teacher empowerment, on-site support, and sharing of experience and resources. We have plans to arrange short-term intervention/attachment programmes in special schools cum resource centers for some students with severe emotional and adjustment difficulties on a need basis, with a view to providing temporary relief for and transferring the necessary skills to the ordinary schools concerned.

21. As mentioned at the last Sub-committee meeting, additional support for students with SpLD will also be provided by the Jockey Club Learning Support Network funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club and led by the University of Hong Kong in collaboration with the EMB. The project consists of research work, development of assessment tools and resource kits, teacher and parent training, and school-based/district-based support. It covers both primary and secondary students.

### **Teacher professional development**

22. Equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills required is the first step towards effective teaching and handling of students with SEN, which in turn will inculcate in them an attitude of accepting student diversity, leading to an inclusive culture in schools. To this end, a range of teacher training courses on special education are being offered to school heads and teachers. These include:

- (a) a 120-hour course on ‘Catering for Diverse Learning Needs’ for in-service teachers by the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd);
- (b) a 42-hour course on SpLD for English and Chinese language teachers and teachers who are interested in the education and support for students with SpLD;
- (c) a 60-hour course on ‘Teaching Students with ASD’;
- (d) starting from the 2006/07 school year, special education training has been included in the professional development course for new and aspiring school heads, with focus on their leading role in cultivating an inclusive culture in school and adopting WSA approach; and
- (e) thematic seminars/workshops on special education organized on a regular basis to keep teachers abreast of the latest developments in catering for students with SEN.

23. In the 2005/06 school year, over 500 teachers have participated in the above training programmes, and over 12,000 teachers have attended the seminars/workshops. Besides, a 30-hour core module on SEN entitled “Understanding and Managing Diversity” has been introduced in the Bachelor of Education Programme of the HKIEd since the 2005/06 school year.

*Enhanced training framework*

24. To tie in with the three-tier intervention model, we have planned a 5-year teacher training framework with training targets, starting from the 2007/08 school year, to further enhance teachers’ capacity in supporting students with SEN in ordinary schools. The details of the training framework have been given in LC Paper No. CB(2)2773/05-06(01) presented to the Sub-committee at its meeting on 21 July 2006. To recap, the training framework will include :

- (a) a 30-hour basic course on principles and theories of curriculum, assessment and teaching strategies to cater for students with SEN;
- (b) a 90-hour advanced course consisting of core and elective modules;
- (c) thematic courses (around 40 to 60 hours) on certain types of SEN such as autism and SpLD;
- (d) a 2-day workshop for school heads to enhance their leadership on promoting WSA to IE in school;
- (e) a 2-day course on understanding SEN and basic handling skills organised for teaching assistants who support teachers in special education; and
- (f) a 10-hour school-based training on special education for schools with a large cluster of students with SEN.

25. We are also exploring with the teacher training institutes the possibility of including the elements of SpLD in the refresher courses for language teachers. The Jockey Club Learning Support Network mentioned above aims to train up 5,000 primary school Chinese language teachers and equip them with the knowledge and skills on catering for the needs of students with SpLD in 5 years' time from the 2006/07 school year.

26. Our targets are that in the five-year period starting from the 2007/08 school year, at least 10% of the teachers in a school will have completed the basic training, at least three teachers per school will have completed the advanced training, and at least one teacher per school will have completed the thematic training on each of the SEN types of their students. The training framework will provide diverse training opportunities with provision of supply teachers where necessary.

## **Support for parents in making school choices**

27. We reckon that parents should be adequately informed of the education services provided by individual schools for students with SEN so that they could make informed school choices. In this respect, we are now compiling a guide on IE for parents, which will help them better understand, inter alia, the appropriate ways to cater for their children's SEN and how to choose a suitable school for them. There will be due emphasis on home-school cooperation in mapping out the learning needs and outcomes of their children. The guide is expected to be ready by the end of 2007.

28. For prospective parents seeking admission to P1 for their children in the current Primary One Admission exercise, we have scheduled 8 briefing sessions in mid-January to better facilitate them in making school choices at the Central Allocation Stage. We would attempt to further enrich the future edition of Primary School Profile by encouraging schools to provide more information on SEN support such as teacher training and support strategies. Parents can also have easy access to information on SEN services in general, including the list of schools offering IE Programme or adopting NFM, on the EMB webpage.

29. On S1 admission, parents may also find the list of secondary schools joining the IE Programme on the EMB webpage. We would provide additional information on education for students with SEN in secondary schools in the SSPA Additional Notes for Parents to facilitate primary teachers to advise parents on school choices. Briefings will be arranged for student guidance personnel of primary schools in April/May on the current SEN support services in secondary schools so that they would be better equipped in providing advice and counseling service to parents of SEN students in their choice of secondary schools. Secondary schools would be urged to indicate their teacher training profile and support measures in the respect of SEN in the future edition of the Secondary School Profile.

30. Should a student with SEN be assessed to require special arrangement for school admission, our school support officers, EPs and also the student guidance personnel of individual schools would provide advice to the parents on the proper schooling for the child.

31. To better cater for the needs of students with SEN on transfer to another school, we will put in place an arrangement to ensure that schools would timely transfer their SEN data to the recipient schools (with the prior consent of parents) so that the recipient schools can provide the required support in good time. A circular would be issued to remind schools to transfer the student data to the recipient schools within one month after their admission. In the case of P6 students, our SESOs will, during their third round of visits to primary schools in May/June, remind schools again to get the reports ready for transfer upon the students' confirmation of their registration with the secondary schools so as to allow the recipient secondary schools to have sufficient time to plan ahead. We will monitor the situation again in September each year.

### **Allocation of places to the mainstreamed skills opportunity schools**

32. At present, there are three mainstreamed skills opportunity schools which mainly admit students with severe learning difficulties. These schools have a class size of 30, which allows a better teacher to student ratio.

33. To facilitate their admission of the target students, a much larger quota is reserved for discretionary places (up to 80% of the total S1 places available). The remaining places together with the unfilled discretionary places will be allocated through central allocation under the SSPA System. These schools serve all SSPA nets and characteristics of these schools are highlighted in the SSPA Secondary Schools List to facilitate parents to make school choices.

### **Advice sought**

34. Members are invited to note the progress of implementation of IE in primary and secondary schools.

Education and Manpower Bureau  
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