

For discussion on 17 March 2006

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

In the report *The New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education – Action Plan for Investing in the Future of Hong Kong (the Action Plan)* published in May 2005, the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) undertook to consult the education sector on specific issues requiring further development which includes provisions for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

2 Since then, EMB has held a series of consultative meetings with schools, teachers, parents and professional bodies to solicit feedback on proposals covering a viable academic structure, curriculum design, learning outcomes, assessment mechanism, support measures and exit pathways for students with SEN, in particular the intellectually disabled. Having taken into account the feedback, EMB issued a consultation document *Action for the Future – Further Consultation on Career-oriented Studies and the New Senior Secondary Academic Structure for Special Schools* in January 2006 which among others proposes the way forward for the implementation of the new senior secondary (NSS) academic structure and curriculum framework for special schools, and the way ahead for post-school opportunities for a three-month consultation up to 24 April 2006. Annex I summarises the proposals for the new senior secondary academic structure and curriculum framework for special schools for quick reference.

3. We would like to seek views of all stakeholders on the principles for development and implementation issues of the NSS academic structure and curriculum framework for special schools.

Education and Manpower Bureau

March 2006

New Senior Secondary Academic Structure for Special Schools

Position

The overarching objective of special education is to enable students with special educational needs (SEN) to maximise their potential to the fullest extent possible, achieve as much independence as they are capable of, and become well-adjusted individuals and contributing members of the community. The present consultation deals with the academic structure and curriculum framework for special schools.

2. Under the new academic structure, all students, including those with SEN, will be provided with six years of secondary education. To ensure that students with SEN will reap the benefit of the extended years of learning, EMB is carrying out a comprehensive review (the Review) of existing special education services. As an integral part of the Review, EMB has commissioned a study by local and overseas experts, known as *A Study of the Effectiveness of Special Schools (the Study)* to assess whether existing resources in special schools have been effectively deployed to support and enhance students' learning. The present consultation document has taken into account the comments of *the Study* in relation to learning and teaching.

Curriculum and Assessment

3. The same curriculum framework should govern student learning, with adaptation to suit students of different learning characteristics and needs. Students with SEN who are intellectually capable of pursuing the ordinary curriculum will aim at achieving the same curricular objectives for NSS, and be assessed in the same way as other students but with appropriate assessment accommodation. For students with intellectual disabilities (ID), the NSS academic structure aims to prepare them for transition to work and adult life through providing extended years of learning. The proposed NSS(ID) curriculum framework enables teachers to locate the needs of students in a continuum of Core, Electives and Other Learning Experiences. Students with SEN who can pursue COS courses will be provided with COS courses that suit their abilities and needs.

4. For students with ID, the Individualised Education Programmes should form the

basis for curriculum planning, target setting, classroom practices, inter-disciplinary problem-solving and home-school cooperation.

Professional Development Programmes

5. Various professional development and capacity building plans will be put in place to support special schools in implementing the proposals contained in this document.

Exit Pathways

6. With the introduction of the NSS(ID) curriculum and COS for students with SEN, there is a need to review the contents of existing training courses of the post-school institutions to ensure smooth articulation with the NSS curriculum. A longitudinal study and employment surveys would be considered to evaluate the effectiveness of the NSS academic structure for special schools.

Resource Considerations

7. Study findings reveal that the overall resource allocation to Hong Kong's special schools, human, financial and capital, is good by world standards. The real challenge lies in resource management. Any further allocation of resources will have to be tied to clearly defined curriculum targets and expected student learning outcomes. In view of the diverse abilities and needs of students in special schools, EMB will consider introducing more flexibility in resource deployment while schools should map out school-based strategic plans to fully utilise the flexibility to maximise the benefit of school education to students with SEN. There is also an emerging role of special schools as professional centres to support ordinary schools in the implementation of integrated education.

8. Currently, the Government recovers 18% of the school fee at secondary level. In the new academic structure, senior secondary students in both ordinary and special schools will pay the same level of school fee which will remain at 18% of the total unit cost of secondary education. In computing the average unit cost, the cost of both ordinary and special schools will be aggregated. On boarding provision, in view of the significant difference between the fees for hostels under the Social Welfare Department

and the boarding section in special schools, there is scope for a gradual and phased increase in boarding fee. In planning for NSS, EMB has taken into account the change in demand for boarding places and infrastructure for special schools.

The Way Forward

9. The key to successful implementation of the proposals is the concerted effort of all stakeholders. EMB will continue to consult extensively through various channels with a view to collecting feedback and suggestions that would help charting the way forward for the “334” reform.

**Education and Manpower Bureau
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