

**Subcommittee to study issues relating to the provision of
boarding places, senior secondary education and
employment opportunities for children with special educational needs**

**Proposed Arrangements for Students with Special Educational Needs
under the New Senior Secondary Education**

This note outlines the major considerations and the proposed arrangements for students in special schools under the new senior secondary education (NSS).

The proposed guiding principles

- Children with special educational needs (SEN) should enjoy six years of secondary education under the concept of “one curriculum framework for all” just as children in ordinary schools.
- Students with SEN but are capable will follow the academic mainstream structure, curriculum and assessment modes as their counterparts in mainstream schools.
- Other students with SEN in special schools (including mentally handicapped (MH) students) will take non-mainstream curriculum. To these students, adaptation to the curriculum contents, teaching methodologies and assessment are necessary to help them strengthen their generic skills and appropriate learning in the Key Learning Areas according to their individual needs.

The academic structure

- EMB is committed to providing 6-year secondary education for ALL students. Arrangements for the secondary education for different types of special schools are set out below:

School for the visually impaired

- The school for the visually impaired offering mainstream curriculum up to junior secondary level has a long history of successful integration of its students in mainstream schools at various class levels. It is proposed that its existing academic structure remains unchanged.

Schools for the hearing impaired

- Hearing impairment creates learning difficulty that may cause serious delay in language acquisition, even though the students are intellectually sound. To enable them to build a solid foundation before proceeding to the 3-year senior secondary education, consideration is being given to retaining 10 years of basic education for these students.

Schools for the physically disabled

- The learning of the severely physically disabled is frequently disrupted by various therapies, medical attention and hospitalisation. Hence, they will need a longer time to cover the basic education curriculum. To enable them to build a solid foundation before proceeding to the 3-year senior secondary education, consideration is being given to retaining 10 years of basic education for these students.

Schools for social development

- Students in schools for social development have emotional and behavioural difficulties that are transient in nature. They should be re-integrated into ordinary schools when deemed capable of effective learning in mainstream schools. It is proposed that their academic structure be 3 years of junior secondary education and 3 years of senior secondary education.

Schools for the mentally handicapped

- Students in MH schools have various degrees of mental development. These schools do not follow the basic education curriculum of mainstream schools. It is proposed that students in MH schools should enjoy 6 years of

secondary education, as their counterparts in mainstream schools. The staffing and resource provision will be consistent with the requirements of the non-mainstream curriculum.

- Post-school placement is important for MH students and the interface for support service between education, vocation and rehabilitation will be further explored to serve the long-term interest of these students.
- At the systemic level, benchmarking assessment to gauge learning outcomes at various key stages will be established to pave the way for accreditation of vocational competence for MH students.

Hospital School

- The Hospital School caters for hospitalised children up to junior secondary level in 17 hospital-units. Under the new academic structure, EMB will explore the possibility of extending its service to senior secondary students who are hospitalised for a prolonged period of time.

The curriculum

- Students with SEN and deemed capable should follow the ordinary school curriculum and sit the same examinations as other students. With the introduction of COS, students with SEN, like other students, will be able to choose among a range of subjects that develop their interests and abilities under the NSS.
- Though MH students are not prepared for sitting the future HKDSE, the 6-year secondary education should be more functionally oriented and reflect age-appropriate learning with more focus on communication, independent living, vocational training and employment opportunities. Language proficiency and numeracy will also be important focus areas.

- In special schools, Individual Education Programme (IEP) based on individual learning objectives set against the generic skills and relevant KLAs at the basic education level should be a major element of student learning. Parents' involvement in the IEP design will also help the sharing of common vision on improved learning between schools and parents.
- It is essential that MH students of different capacities should have individual education programmes and assessment criteria specifically tailored by teachers and specialist staff in consultation with parents.

Pathways to further studies and training

- Different pathways and exit points to further studies or training leading to recognisable qualifications for employment will be further explored for students who will not pursue an academic curriculum leading to HKDSE.
- Opportunities for diversified post-secondary courses will be explored with service providers such as Vocational Training Council (VTC) and other NGOs serving these students.
- EMB will also work in collaboration with the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau (HWFB), Social Welfare Department (SWD) and VTC to provide different pathways to cater for the specific needs of these students. Moreover, EMB will explore with VTC and SWD the introduction of Vocational Exposure Programme for special school students and the interface arrangements for these students to receive training and to proceed to adult life under the proposed reform of academic structure.

Advice Sought

Members are requested to note the proposals above and comment on the way forward.

**Education and Manpower Bureau
April 2005**