

For information on 22 June 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**

Boarding Services for Students with Special Educational Needs

Purpose

This paper is to update Members on the latest developments of the two new boarding sections for students with physical disability (PD) and the proposed residential respite service for persons with disabilities aged under 15.

New Boarding Sections for Students with PD

2. The Administration has provided information on the boarding services for students in special schools vide LC Papers CB(2)687/05-06(01) of 16 December 2005, CB(2)1107/05-06(01) of 17 February 2006 and CB(2)1123/06-07(01) of 26 February 2007. To recapitulate, the objective of boarding service in special schools is to cater for the long-term boarding needs of students with severe disabilities and to facilitate them to receive school education during school days. In response to Members' concern about the provision of boarding service for PD students in the New Territories (NT), we have planned to build two new 60-place boarding sections, one each in the NT East and NT West Regions. The aim is to extend and redistribute the boarding service to schools for students with PD in the NT.

Latest Position of the Two New Boarding Sections

3. The new boarding section in the NT East Region will be set up at Jockey Club Elaine Field School, The Spastics Association of Hong Kong in Tai Po. The project has been awarded Category B status and scheduled to be upgraded to Category A status in mid 2008. Should everything go smoothly, works are scheduled to start in late 2008 for completion in the 2010/11 school year.

4. The new boarding section in the NTW Region will be attached to Hong Kong Christian Service Pui Oi School in Tuen Mun. As Pui Oi School does not have sufficient space for the project, a site at Area 16 of Tuen Mun, which is about three to five minutes' drive from Pui Oi School, has been identified for setting up the new boarding section and the School's secondary section; while the primary section remains in the existing premises. The project has also been awarded Category B status. However, the School and parents strongly requested and Members supported that the secondary and primary sections should be located in the same site for effective management and deployment of staff. This means that Pui Oi School will have to be reprovisioned to a new site big enough to accommodate the three sections (i.e. the secondary, primary and boarding sections). A site search was earlier carried out with the assistance of the Lands Department and the Planning Department. An additional site nearby the site at Area 16 of Tuen Mun has eventually identified for possible provision.

5. The possibility of accommodating the whole school (i.e. the three sections) at the two sites is being explored. However, very strong justifications will be needed for the project to include the reprovisioning of Pui Oi School given its premises being in operation for only about 10 years and its school improvement programme being completed in recent years. If it is to proceed with this option, the project will have to start afresh and its completion will have to be deferred for at least two years should everything go smoothly.

Residential Respite Service

6. The Administration is fully aware of parents' concern on residential respite service for persons with disabilities aged under 15. In response to the letters of the Chairman of this Sub-committee regarding the issue, the Chief Secretary has earlier replied that the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food will examine whether it is possible to enhance or extend the existing services to help fill this service gap with existing resources. The Health, Welfare and Food Bureau and the Social Welfare Department will explore feasible service options in meeting the residential respite service needs.

7. As explained in the Chief Secretary's reply, some special schools provide boarding services for the objective as stated in paragraph 2 above. However, the provision of residential service for persons with disabilities under 15 is to meet the need of their parents and/or carers. The orientation of this service is different and should not come from the education system. It is by nature a social service.

Advice Sought

8. Members are requested to note the contents of this paper.

Education and Manpower Bureau
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
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