

For discussion on 12 June 2008

Legislative Council Panel on Education

**Progress of Support Measures for
Non-Chinese Speaking Students including Ethnic Minority Students**

Purpose

At the meeting held on 29 February 2008, the Administration was requested to –

- (a) provide periodic updates on the progress with the development of a supplementary guide to the Chinese Language curriculum for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students and the provision of relevant teaching and learning resources including textbooks;
- (b) track and advise the number of NCS students at different key stages of education including P6, S1, S5, S6/S7 and university; and
- (c) advise the number of Government bureaux and departments accepting the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) (Chinese) qualification for appointment to civil service posts.

Separately, the Administration has been asked to report on the support for NCS students with special educational needs.

2. This paper follows up the above items. It also updates Members on other educational support measures for NCS students, including ethnic minority students, reported in February 2008 [LC Paper No. CB (2)1180/07-08(05)] where appropriate.

Development of a supplementary guide to the Chinese Language curriculum for NCS students

3. Given the vastly different backgrounds, expectations and needs of the NCS students, we appreciate the need for rendering additional support to schools in the form of the “*Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for NCS Students*” to supplement principles, strategies and recommendations for implementing our Chinese Language curriculum framework in the learning context of the NCS students. This Supplementary Guide aims to serve the needs of the NCS students, but without confining them to a simpler Chinese Language curriculum with pre-set lower benchmarks.

4. Consultation on the Supplementary Guide took place between January and March 2008, during which we met with and received feedback from various stakeholders, including school heads and teachers, tertiary scholars, school councils, education bodies, non-government organisations (NGOs) and ethnic minority groups.

5. On the whole, there was general support for the Supplementary Guide and its four recommended curriculum approaches or teaching/learning modes (i.e. Immersion in Chinese Lessons; Transition/Bridging; Learning Chinese as a Second Language and Integrated Use of the Above Approaches). Taking into consideration all the suggestions received, we will fine-tune and elaborate the description for the respective modes, covering in more concrete terms the learning contents, typical learning sequences and exemplars on successful practices for the different modes.

6. In developing the Supplementary Guide, we are taking into account research findings as well as local, Mainland and overseas experiences in teaching Chinese to NCS students. We will expand references to these experiences and strengthen the discussion on theories and applications related to second language acquisition in the finalized Guide.

7. We aim to finalise the Supplementary Guide for uploading by the third quarter and distribute the hard copies before the end of 2008. Together with other support measures being put in place, the

Supplementary Guide can be flexibly implemented in schools in the 2008/09 school year. Continual evaluation and review will be conducted during implementation for further refinement through informed practice.

8. The public welcomed the on-going development of curriculum resources in support of the Supplementary Guide. However, there was concern over the lack of specially designed textbooks for NCS students. Given the various language and cultural backgrounds, learning needs and aspirations among the NCS students, we consider it more effective to make use of a variety of resources embracing both print and non-print materials rather than one single set of one-size-fits-all textbooks. Hence we will provide quality teaching materials through adapting Quality Education Fund projects on teaching materials for Chinese Language developed in Hong Kong school settings. We will also continue to collect and enhance other school materials in developing exemplars for reference and adaptation by schools. Our aim is to enable all schools admitting NCS students to teach Chinese Language more readily and effectively in meeting different student aspirations. We aim to have the first set of such resources disseminated in a year's time. In view of the schools' most urgent needs, initially these learning materials will be organised to support mainly the mode of Learning Chinese as a Second Language, starting with easier materials at the entry point of learning. The materials will be expanded progressively to support readily the other three modes. At the same time, we are adapting a series of existing Chinese Language learning and teaching materials to suit the needs of NCS students at various proficiency levels. These existing learning and teaching materials to be adapted are briefly described in **Annex 1**.

9. On the assessment tools and benchmarks for NCS students in learning the Chinese Language, we are also currently launching a collaborative study on Chinese language standards of NCS students with the assistance of tertiary institutions. Upon the completion of the study towards the end of this year, we shall proceed with the development of internal assessment tools that would help provide feedback on Chinese Language learning by NSC students and would in turn facilitate the teaching process.

Number of NCS students

10. The Education Bureau (EDB) has, beginning from the 2006/07 school year, started to collect information on students' ethnicity and spoken language at home from Primary 1 to Secondary 7 through the annual Student Enrolment Survey. The number of NCS students in public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools by grade in the 2006/07 and 2007/08 school years based on the information collected is set out at **Annex 2**. Based on the available figures so far, though there are possible errors in the provision of data especially in the initial years of collection as some schools may take time to get familiar with the new survey items introduced only since the 2006/07 school year, there does not appear to be any apparent trend of net wastages across the levels below Secondary 5. We will continue to monitor the movement of NCS students across the levels, and consider enhancement of our data collection methodology so as to facilitate the tracking of students down to individual level.

11. Net wastage between Secondary 5 and 6 can be expected under the current academic structure for senior secondary education. Of the 225 NCS studying in Secondary 5 in the 2006/07 school year, 212 sat for the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination in 2007, with 73 having met the minimum requirements for admission to Secondary 6. Regarding Secondary 7, we have traced that 23 NCS students sat for the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) 2007. Latest information reveals that six out of them have been admitted to first-year undergraduate programmes of the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions for the 2007/08 school year.

12. We will continue to keep track of the above statistics and monitor the rate of articulation to further education among the NCS students. We believe that, with the significant step taken by the UGC-funded institutions to consider alternative qualification(s) in Chinese Language for the Joint University Programmes Admissions System applicants under specified circumstances since the current cycle (i.e. for admission in 2008), the aspiration for higher education of those NCS students studying in our local schools and are prepared to learn the Chinese Language can be addressed.

Alternative Chinese Language qualification(s) for appointment to civil service posts

13. Most civil service non-graduate grades set Level 2 in English and Chinese Languages in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination as entry requirements for appointment while some civil service grades set a higher standard at Level 3 in these language subjects, having regard to the job requirements. All government bureaux and departments accept Chinese Language results in International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) / GCSE / General Certificate of Education 'Ordinary' Level (GCE 'O' Level) for appointment to civil service posts. Grade C and D results in Chinese Language in IGCSE / GCSE / GCE 'O' Level are accepted as comparable to Level 3 and Level 2 respectively in the Chinese Language results in Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination for civil service appointment purpose.

Support for NCS students with special educational needs (SEN)

14. The Government has been providing ordinary public-sector schools with additional support and resources to cater for the needs of students with SEN, including NCS students. On top of the existing resources and support provided for schools to implement integrated education, starting from the 2008/09 school year, the Government will introduce a new Learning Support Grant to public-sector secondary schools to further strengthen their SEN support. The funding arrangements for the learning support grant under the New Funding Mode for primary schools will also be enhanced.

15. It is a common practice for developed countries to provide support and remedial services for newly arrived non-local students, including those with SEN, to help them adapt to the local education system. Likewise, we encourage NCS children with SEN to study in public sector schools and learn the two official languages of Chinese and English, with a view to facilitating their integration into the Hong Kong community. It should be noted that studying under the local education system does not mean that the NCS students are forced to learn in Chinese at all cost. Although most schools in Hong Kong adopt Chinese as the medium of instruction, there are also quite a number of English-medium schools which NCS students may seek admission, if the NCS

students concerned (some of whom may not have English as their mother tongue) could indeed learn better in English. For instance, among 18 designated schools for NCS students which have enrolled students with SEN, 11 are either English-medium schools or are offering English-medium classes serving some 70 students with SEN (including 22 NCS students with SEN). There are other English-medium schools which are not designated schools but which, like the 18 designated schools, are provided with additional resources for supporting SEN students such as the New Funding Mode or Integrated Remedial Teaching Programme. These schools provide various kinds of support services for their students including small group teaching, after school tutorial classes, individual and group guidance, Chinese learning support programme, remedial support groups for students with specific learning difficulties, English learning support, etc.

16. In addition to the above, there are other education opportunities outside the public school sector for NCS students with SEN. Fifteen English Schools Foundation (ESF) Schools and 38 international schools are providing alternatives for NCS students who have their own language and /or curriculum preferences. They provide choices in an open market, with minimum intervention from the Government. For international schools, although they are operated on a self-financing basis in the commercial market, they, like the ESF schools, should provide equal opportunities for all students in terms of student admission, teaching curriculum and assessment, etc.

17. ESF, which receives some subvention from the Government, is operating a special school and learning support classes in its primary and secondary schools for NCS students with SEN. To help ESF schools address the demand of students with SEN on their waiting list, we have exceptionally provided ESF with an additional provision of \$2 million starting from the 2006/07 school year, which has enabled ESF to operate three additional learning support classes with a provision of 21 new school places for students with SEN. We are exploring the possibility of further enhancing the provision of school places and support for NCS students with SEN in the ESF system.

Alternative Chinese Language qualification(s) for admission to Secondary Six

18. There have been concerns on whether the GCSE (Chinese) examination results could be released earlier to tie in with the Secondary 6 Admission Procedure. In this regard, we have understood from relevant examination authorities overseas that they have genuine difficulties advancing the release of examination results just for Hong Kong.

19. Notwithstanding the above, we have put in place transitional arrangements for the last three cohorts of Secondary 5 students in the 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 school years seeking admission to Secondary 6 using these Chinese Language qualifications. Specifically, we have invited public sector schools to accept alternative Chinese Language qualification(s) under the Secondary 6 Admission Procedure and to make conditional offers to those applicants under specified circumstances at each stage of the Procedure pending the release of the relevant examination results, provided that the applicants have, except for the Chinese Language, fulfilled all the admission requirements and have attained equal or higher points compared with their counterparts.

20. Understandably some schools have their school-based admission criteria under the Secondary 6 Admission Procedure while others adopting the Chinese medium in learning and teaching of the content subjects may consider the Chinese proficiency attained under the alternative Chinese Language qualification(s) inadequate for pursuing studies at sixth form. Against this background, it is encouraging that more than 80 public sector schools spreading over all districts have responded positively so far. The list of schools willing to make conditional offers, including four designated schools offering Secondary 6 classes, will be finalized and included in the Careers Guidance Handbook for Secondary 5 Graduates to be issued to every graduate in late July 2008.

Designated Schools

21. We will step up our focus support to schools admitted with the NCS students by increasing the number of designated schools from 19 in the 2007/08 school year to 22 in the 2008/09 school year and eventually

to a total of 25 in the 2009/10 school year. In selecting the additional designated schools, we will take into account the spread of the NCS students in the districts among other considerations such as the schools' experience and competence in handling the learning diversity of NCS students, etc. Upon finalising the details, we will announce before the summer vacation the additional designated schools for the 2008/09 school year together with the revised arrangements for disbursement of the special grant as explained below.

22. Starting from the 2008/09 school year, the special grant for designated schools, currently set at \$300,000 per school per annum, will become a recurrent grant. This will enable schools to have better planning for school-based support measures to help their NCS students overcome learning difficulties, particularly in the learning of the Chinese Language, and to facilitate the students' smooth integration into the community. The grant will also be suitably enhanced for individual designated schools with larger intake of NCS students.

Others

23. The other support measures put in place for the NCS students such as the professional training programmes for Chinese Language teachers in primary schools with NCS students, summer bridging programmes etc. as reported in February 2008 (LC Paper No. CB(2)1180/07-08(05)) will continue. Regarding the Chinese Language Learning Support Centres, as we will increase the number of the designated schools to 25 within two school years from the 2008/09 school year, the number of the Centres to be required will be assessed accordingly.

24. It is the Government's policy to facilitate early integration of NCS students, notably the ethnic minority students, into the local education system and the wider community. We will continue to work closely with the stakeholders to address the needs of the NCS students, and to monitor the effectiveness of the various support measures.

Education Bureau
June 2008

**Brief Descriptions of a Series of Learning & Teaching Materials to be
Adapted by the Education Bureau
for Non-Chinese Speaking Students
(as listed in paragraph 8)**

1. Hong Kong Chinese Lexical Lists for Primary Learning

《香港小學學習字詞表》

An album of multiple lists on Chinese lexicons, including Chinese characters, words and phrases, appended with idiomatic expressions, classical wordings, terms and proper nouns, loan words and proper names commonly found in Hong Kong. Information on recommended graphemes, Cantonese and Putonghua pronunciation will be provided.

2. Courseware on Chinese Characters Writing

《點畫流形：漢字書寫學習軟件》

Courseware with multiple learning paths on Chinese characters writing can be used in class teaching or self-access learning. On-line search engine will be provided with information on recommended graphemes, Cantonese and Putonghua pronunciation and word formation. A worksheet generator will be included in the programme to help teachers in their work on exercise design.

3. Courseware on Simplified Chinese Characters

《通繁達簡：簡化字學習軟件》

Courseware with multiple learning paths on Simplified Chinese characters recognition. Information on recommended graphemes, Cantonese and Putonghua pronunciation will be provided. A

worksheet generator will be included in the programme to help teachers in their work on exercise design.

4. Courseware on Traditional Chinese Characters

《從簡入繁：繁體字學習軟件》

Courseware with multiple learning paths on Traditional Chinese characters recognition. On-line search engine will be provided with information on recommended graphemes, Cantonese and Putonghua pronunciation and word formation. A worksheet generator will be included in the programme to help teachers in their work on exercise design.

5. Language Learning Software on Traditional Chinese Virtues

《致知達德：小學中華傳統美德語文學習軟件》

Learning software on Chinese moral values and virtues listed in the curriculum guide. A collection of traditional Chinese sayings on moral values will be provided with animations on stories on the origin with Cantonese, Putonghua and English sound-tracks. Sample thinking questions will be included to help teachers in learning activities design.

**Number of Non-Chinese Speaking Students in Public Sector and
Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) Primary and Secondary Day Schools
by Grade in 2006/07 and 2007/08 School Years**

Grade	School Year	
	2006/07	2007/08
P1	913	1011
P2	911	1065
P3	839	1006
P4	757	954
P5	606	825
P6	477	722
P1-P6	4503	5583
S1	691	804
S2	609	706
S3	547	642
S4	341	556
S5	225	325
S6	120	136
S7	100	103
S1-S7	2633	3272

Notes

- (1) Figures refer to the position as at September of the respective school years.
- (2) Figures have included NCS students studying in all DSS schools, some of which do not offer the local curriculum. Therefore, some NCS students studying at S5 and S7 in the 2006/07 school year did not participate in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) and Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) respectively in 2007. Similarly, some NCS students studying at S5 and S7 in the 2007/08 school year may not participate in the HKCEE and HKALE respectively in 2008.