

For discussion on 12 January 2009

## **Legislative Council Panel on Education**

### **Education for Non-Chinese Speaking Students**

#### **Purpose**

This paper briefs Members on the progress of various support measures, in particular the measure related to the learning and teaching of the Chinese Language, for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students.

#### **Learning and teaching of the Chinese Language**

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

2. Given the vastly different ethnic backgrounds, family expectations and durations of residence in Hong Kong of the NCS students, we appreciate the need for rendering additional support in the form of a supplementary guide to the Chinese Language curriculum designed by the Curriculum Development Council of Hong Kong. This curriculum framework provides a flexible and robust Chinese Language curriculum framework applicable to all primary and secondary school students for schools' adaptation in accordance with the aptitude of students, including NCS students, to cater for their holistic and personalised development while facilitating them to build a good foundation in the Chinese language.

3. The "*Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for NCS Students*" (hereafter the Guide) was released in November 2008 and distributed to schools in December 2008, followed shortly by a briefing session for teachers on the contents of the Guide and relevant packages of teaching materials. Teacher professional development programmes on curriculum and pedagogy strategies as recommended in the Guide will commence in mid-2009. The current programmes for supporting Chinese Language teachers, detailed at

Annex A, will continue with the programme content to be aligned with the recommendations of the Guide.

4. To enhance the effectiveness of Chinese Language learning of NCS students, we have recommended schools with intakes of NCS students to adopt this Guide. Together with other support measures being put in place, schools are at liberty to adopt the Guide in the current school year, taking into account their own situations. Evaluation and review of the Guide will be conducted on a continual basis for further refinement through informed practice from schools.

5. As affected by their mother languages, NCS students are likely to encounter difficulties in learning Chinese graphemes, tones, vocabulary, classifiers, word order, etc. To overcome these hurdles, we have provided in the Guide specific learning and teaching strategies in the following aspects: to develop spoken language through imitation, to separate the teaching of recognition and writing of characters, to employ reading materials according to students vocabulary and psychological development, to integrate reading with writing, to provide language learning context, peer learning, etc.

6. Our strategy of providing a supplementary guide to the Chinese Language curriculum has been widely accepted over the past two years on sound pedagogical grounds. It should be noted that the Guide, which includes four curriculum modes namely “*immersion in Chinese Language lessons*”, “*bridging/ transition*”, “*specific learning purposes*” and “*integration*”, caters for the diverse needs and aspirations of NCS students as second language learners at different stages of development. The Guide also addresses the needs of all schools, regardless of their number of NCS intake, with flexible adoption of the four different curriculum modes. An “alternative Chinese Language curriculum” will limit the range of learning opportunities of NCS students with different needs.

#### *Learning materials and teaching reference materials*

7. To further support the teaching and learning of the Chinese Language, our effort continues to cover three main areas, viz distribution of learning materials covering both the primary and secondary levels to

schools and NCS students; development of a series of packages of teaching reference materials for NCS students learning the Chinese Language; and development of assessment tools to support assessment for learning by schools.

8. As reported to the Panel in June 2008, we are collecting teaching materials developed by designated schools for reference and adaptation so as to develop various sets of learning materials covering both the primary and secondary levels for distribution to schools with intakes of NCS students. The materials will be expanded to incorporate more learning and teaching principles and strategies progressively. The packages of teaching reference materials for NCS students learning Chinese Language will be launched in series in 2009 and 2010, with a view to providing NCS students with various learning paths on character graphemes, pronunciation, recognition as well as reading and writing.

9. Details of the above-mentioned learning materials and packages of teaching reference materials and the proposed schedule for distribution are at Annex B.

#### *Assessment tools*

10. As reported earlier, we are developing assessment tools for schools to assess NCS students' Chinese Language standards. This is part of the deliverables of a collaborative study on Chinese language standards of NCS students conducted by the University of Hong Kong. It will take a year from now for the research team to complete the collaborative study on language standards based on the 2008-fall collection of student data. Upon completion of this study in 2009, we will proceed with the development of the assessment tools, which is expected to complete in 2010. Meanwhile, teachers are being prepared through on-going professional development programmes on how to conduct assessment for learning to provide spontaneous feedback to students, including NCS students.

#### **Designated Schools**

11. We have stepped up our focused support to schools with 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 to 25 in the 2009/10 school year. We have not set a ceiling for the number of designated schools. In selecting additional designated schools, we will take into account the spread of NCS students in the districts among other considerations such as whether schools admitting a critical mass of NCS students have the experience and capability to take care of NCS students, and whether they are ready to partner with the Education Bureau (EDB) to develop supporting teaching materials for these students and share their experiences with other schools admitting NCS students, etc.

12. In fact, the provision of focused support is not confined to designated schools. Every year, all schools in the territory are invited to take part in various school-based support services offered or commissioned by EDB. Teaching Chinese to NCS students has been one of the focuses of such support. Schools can participate in those school-based support services which best suit their developmental needs. By the 2008/09 school year, a total of 20 non-designated schools have received similar support services as those rendered to the designated schools.

13. To promote cross-sector collaboration in supporting schools, we have commissioned, in the 2008/09 school year, the University of Hong Kong to provide a two-pronged service, i.e. 3-year on-site support to 8 secondary schools (including 6 designated and 2 non-designated schools) and the development of a learning network for 16 non-designated secondary schools admitting NCS students.

14. Starting from the 2008/09 school year, we have turned the annual special grant for designated schools to a recurrent grant and increased the amount according to the number of NCS students in the respective designated schools. In this regard, we wish to clarify that our provision of special grant to designated schools is in line with the spirit of the special measures referred to in Section 49 of the Race Discrimination Ordinance (Cap 602). Moreover, our centralised support approach, i.e. focused support to designated schools with the provision of special grant to identify means to help NCS students, will not constitute direct or indirect discrimination against NCS students under Section 4 of the Ordinance.

15. There have been concerns over the adequacy of the special grant as it is not disbursed on a per capita basis. We provide this special grant to each designated school with a view to identifying good practices for sharing among schools admitting NCS students. Individual designated schools have developed programmes or sets of teaching materials pitched to be used by respective groups of NCS students of comparable competencies or levels. Since these resources are needs-driven and level / class-specific with users not confined to individuals, the adoption of the present mode of multiple-tier rate, instead of per capita mode, is commensurate with our intention of providing the special grant and can better meet the genuine needs of students concerned.

### **Aspirations of NCS students for higher education**

#### *Alternative Chinese Language qualification(s) for admission to Secondary(S) 6 and Universities*

16. In view that some NCS students, in particular those who have a late start in learning the Chinese Language or have not been given ample opportunity to study the local Chinese curriculum, may prefer to attain alternative Chinese Language qualification(s), we have, starting from 2007, administered the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) (Chinese) Examination in Hong Kong through the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority.

17. The University Grants Committee-funded institutions have, starting from 2008, provided further flexibility for acceptance of alternative Chinese Language qualification(s) for application under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS). For admission to S6, with more NCS students sitting for the GCSE(Chinese) in 2008, we are mindful of the need to rationalize the S6 Admission Procedure to tie in the different dates of release of results of HKCEE and GCSE(Chinese), the latter being an overseas examination. In 2008, public sector schools were invited to accept alternative Chinese Language qualification(s) under the S6 admission and to make conditional offers to eligible applicants under specified circumstances pending the release of the relevant examination results. More than 80 public sector schools spreading over all districts responded positively to our request. With such

encouraging results, we will make this a requirement under the S6 Admission Procedure.

18. There have also been concerns over the academic performance of the NCS students in local public examinations. For the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) 2008, 316 S5 NCS students studying in public sector schools and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) sat for the examination. Among these candidates, 124 met the minimum requirements for S6 admission in the 2008/09 school year and as revealed from the provisional figures of the Student Enrolment Survey, 84 NCS students out of the 124 are in fact studying in S6 in public sector and DSS schools, i.e. the 2008/09 school year.

19. Among the 24 NCS students studying in S7 of public sector and DSS schools who sat for the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) in 2008, 10 have received offers under the JUPAS with 6 finally accepted the offer.

20. Over 200 NCS students who have completed S5 or above are currently taking degree/diploma or certificate courses offered by Vocational Training Council and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. The above figure is by no means comprehensive as other post-secondary institutes providing accredited self-financing sub-degree/degree programmes are still compiling their enrolment data.

21. While bearing the well-being of NCS students in mind, we would like to emphasise that many variables are affecting students' performance. The learning effectiveness of students not only hinges on the learning and teaching in schools, but is also affected by the extent of family support, the learning motivation of individual students, the length of time students have settled in Hong Kong, the background of the students, etc. It would be over-simplified to correlate students' academic results with just their non-Chinese speaking background. It would be undesirable to draw conclusions on the effectiveness of our educational support measures for NCS students from these academic results alone. We have started to collect information on students' ethnicity and spoken language through our annual Enrolment Survey since the 2006/07 school year. It would require detailed analysis into the data collected over a period of time before meaningful observations could be made. That said,

we would consider conducting a research study on the academic performance of NCS students. The result findings may help shed lights on the effectiveness of the various types of support measures which have been introduced since the 2006/07 school year.

## **Others**

22. In addition to the support services mentioned above, we see the need to reinforce after-school support services for NCS students through the establishment of more Chinese Language Learning Support Centres. In 2008/09 school year, there are a total of 8 Centres operating at different locations. The number of NCS students admitted to the Centres has increased from 250 to 326, including 42 students from non-designated schools. The other support measures put in place for the NCS students such as the summer bridging programmes will continue.

## **Way forward**

23. It is the Government's policy to facilitate early integration of NCS students into the local education system and the wider community. We are concerned about the education for NCS students and have been refining various support measures introduced to ensure that the support can be delivered in a more coherent way to facilitate their learning and teaching. The relevant information including the comprehensive "NCS Parent Package – your Guide to Education in Hong Kong" with translation in 4 major ethnic minority languages is being distributed to parents at the Maternal & Child Health Centres and has been provided to the non-governmental organizations for reference. The Hindi translation will also be ready for distribution soon. It takes time for the measures to take root and create a sustainable impact on students. We would continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the various measures and take into consideration the views of different stakeholders.

Education Bureau  
January 2009

**Training Programmes / Professional Development Opportunities Available to Teachers of Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) Students**

<b>No</b>	<b>Planned Date</b>	<b>Programme Name</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Organiser</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
1.	January 2009 to continue in 2010	Professional Development Course for Primary Chinese Language Teachers – Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment of NCS Students	All primary school teachers teaching Chinese Language to NCS students	Commissioned to The Hong Kong Institute of Education	8 weeks (full-time course)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To enhance teachers' professional knowledge and skills, help them grasp effective curriculum and teaching strategies and cater for different learning needs of NCS students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 courses in 2009, each for 30 teachers.</li></ul>
2.	To start from June 2009	Course/ workshops on <i>Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for NCS Students</i> and its package materials	All primary and secondary school teachers teaching Chinese Language to NCS students	EDB	6-9 hours per course/ workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To enhance teachers' understanding on use of the Supplementary Guide.</li><li>• To enhance teachers' practical knowledge and skills on using a series of package teaching reference materials.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3-4 courses/ workshops, each for 30 teachers.</li></ul>



No	Planned Date	Programme Name	Target Group	Organiser	Duration	Objectives	Remarks
3.	2008/09 s.y.	10 Briefing sessions/ workshops on thematic basis for teachers organised by the Chinese Language Learning Support Centre for NCS students	All secondary teachers in schools with NCS students	Commissioned to Hong Kong University (HKU)	3 hours per session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To enhance teachers' professional competence on teaching strategies and resource development for the teaching of NCS students.</li> <li>• To enrich the language awareness of teachers and knowledge on careers development for NCS students in Hong Kong.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thematic basis</li> <li>• Teachers can attend any session, if interested</li> </ul>
4.	On going	Teacher Training Programmes for in-service Chinese Language Teachers in Primary schools with NCS students	All primary school teachers teaching Chinese Language to NCS students	Commissioned to the Hong Kong Polytechnic University	30 hours for each course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To enhance the pedagogical practices and teaching strategies of Chinese Language teachers in primary schools which have admitted NCS students.</li> <li>• To develop resource packages to facilitate these teachers.</li> </ul>	4 courses already held with 109 teachers enrolled; (60 from designated schools and 49 from non-designated schools).

No	Planned Date	Programme Name	Target Group	Organiser	Duration	Objectives	Remarks
5.	On going	Sharing sessions	Teachers from schools of the Support Network, with teachers from other schools also invited	EDB	Normally 3 hours per session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To facilitate sharing on school-based Chinese curriculum development/ planning or on topics relevant to learning and teaching strategies for teachers of NCS students.</li> </ul>	Normally one to two sessions per year
6.	2008/09 s.y. to 2010/11 s.y.	University-school Support Programmes for supporting secondary schools in the teaching and learning of Chinese for non-native learners	All secondary school teachers teaching Chinese Language to NCS students (with priority given to the designated schools)	Commissioned to HKU	Normally 2 to 3 hours per session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide various thematic topics like development of school-based teaching strategies of Chinese Language, understanding the tactics of NCS students in the learning of Chinese characters, curriculum design, usage of teaching material, catering for diversity of NCS students, and etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tentatively 8 sessions per year</li> <li>Teachers can attend any session they are interested</li> </ul>

**Scheduled Development of  
Learning and Teaching Materials in Support of the Implementation of  
Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum  
for Non-Chinese Speaking Students**

(2008 - 2010)

**Delivered Items****2008**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
16 Dec 2008 (dispatched to schools & saleable to the public)	Path to Moral Excellence: Primary Chinese Language Learning Software on Traditional Chinese Virtues (致知達德, bilingual version)	To help students learn traditional Chinese language through 51 traditional stories from the Chinese classics based on moral values and virtues
16 Dec 2008 (dispatched to schools & saleable to the public)	From Traditional to Simplified Characters: Simplified Chinese Character Courseware (通繁達簡, English version)	To help students master graphemes and pronunciation of simplified Chinese characters
16 Dec 2008 (dispatched to schools & saleable to the public)	From Simplified to Traditional Characters: Traditional Chinese Character Courseware (從簡入繁, English version)	To help students master graphemes and pronunciation of traditional Chinese characters commonly-used in Hong Kong

**Forthcoming Items****2009**

<i>Schedule (Tentative)</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Path to Mastery of Chinese Characters: Courseware on Chinese Character Writing (點畫流形, bilingual version)	To help students master the information and have the basic knowledge of Chinese character writing and word formation

1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Lexical Lists with English explanations for Fundamental Chinese Learning in Hong Kong Schools (to be uploaded with multiple search and also printed)	To help students master a basic vocabulary for daily use and further enrichment through reading and writing
1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	1 <sup>st</sup> set of Adapted School Learning Materials for primary and secondary students (Part 1 to be uploaded)	To help teachers select and adapt Chinese Language materials for classroom teaching
2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	1 <sup>st</sup> set of Adapted School Learning Materials for primary and secondary students (Part 1 to be printed and Part 2 to be uploaded)	- Ditto -
3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	1 <sup>st</sup> set of Adapted School Learning Materials for primary and secondary students (Part 2 to be printed)	- Ditto -

## 2010

<u>Schedule</u> (Tentative)	<u>Deliverable</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> set of Adapted School Learning Materials for primary and secondary students (Part 1 to be uploaded)	To help teachers select and adapt Chinese Language materials for classroom teaching
2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> set of Adapted School Learning Materials for primary and secondary students (Part 1 to be printed and Part 2 to be uploaded)	- Ditto -
3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> set of Adapted School Learning Materials for primary and secondary students (Part 2 to be printed)	- Ditto -
4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Assessment tool on Chinese Language Standards for NCS Students developed on the basis of authentic research to be completed in 2009	To help teachers gauge students' progress and standards as well as to establish the necessary threshold for immersion in Chinese Language lessons