

For information  
on 8 June 2009

**Panel on Education**  
**School Leaving Arrangements for Students**  
**Studying in Schools for Children with Intellectual Disability**

**Purpose**

This paper briefs Members on the school leaving arrangements for students studying in schools for children with intellectual disability (ID schools).

**Existing Arrangements**

2. Students studying in ID schools (ID students) and mainstream schools have different learning needs. Since the mental age of the ID students varies within a narrow range, ID schools have to tailor curricula, support services and learning progression to suit individual students' learning needs and characteristics. Specifically, these schools will set learning targets for each student based on his abilities and draw up for him an Individualised Education Programme, which will be subject to regular review and refinement in the light of the student's progress.

3. In the past, ID schools offered six-year primary and four-year junior secondary education for ID students. In the 2002/03 school year, the Education Bureau (EDB) launched a two-year Extension of Years of Education (EYE) Programme for students after their junior secondary education. Children with intellectual disability are generally admitted to ID schools at the age of six, and based on the above structure, these students will leave school at the age of 18. When the students are approaching the school leaving age, schools will arrange post-school placement for their students for vocational training or rehabilitation services. Such placement includes the skills centres, sheltered workshops, day activity centres, etc, and these are run by the Vocational Training Council, the Social Welfare Department and other organizations.

4. With regard to the school leaving arrangements for ID students, all along we have a mechanism that handles exceptional cases with flexibility, including allowing ID schools to apply for extension of stay on behalf of students who are absent from school for a long period due to health or other reasons. In addition, we also allow schools to let individual students extend their stay by making use of the vacancies in the approved classes, provided that the admission of new students is not affected. The sector is well-versed and closely follows the school leaving arrangements that have been implemented for years. In every school year, ID schools will submit to the EDB a list of students who have applied for an extension of stay when reaching 18. The EDB will process the applications flexibly on the merits of individual cases,

enabling a certain number of students to extend their study each year. In this school year, the EDB continues to follow the established procedures in handling school leaving arrangements for ID students.

### **Arrangements under the New Senior Secondary Academic Structure**

5. Under the New Senior Secondary (NSS) academic structure to be implemented in the coming school year, we will provide 12 years of education, including six-year primary, three-year junior secondary and three-year senior secondary education for ID students. Regarding the implementation details, like other schools, ID schools will start to operate Senior Secondary One (SS1) classes under the NSS academic structure in the 2009/10 school year and progress up to SS3 year by year. In other words, students in S3 lower classes in this school year will progress to SS1 in the next school year as the first cohort of students under the NSS academic structure.

6. Before the full implementation of the NSS academic structure at all levels in the 2011/12 school year, arrangements for students at other levels under the existing academic structure will remain unchanged. Specifically, students who are currently in S3 upper classes will progress to the first year of the EYE Programme while the first year students of the EYE Programme will proceed to the second year in the next school year. For students who are currently in the second year of the EYE Programme, they will leave school at the end of this school year. The schools will make school leaving arrangements for these students as mentioned in paragraph 3.

### **The Way Forward**

7. As stated in the report entitled “Career-oriented Studies and the New Senior Secondary Academic Structure for Special Schools” published in 2006, under the NSS academic structure, ID students who are absent from school for a long period due to health or other justifiable reasons can apply for an extension of stay just as the current practice. Nevertheless, after listening to the views of different stakeholders, we understand that parents of ID students and ID schools are concerned about the arrangements on the application for extension of stay. As such, we have agreed with the Hong Kong Special Schools Council that a review on the school leaving arrangements for ID students will be conducted upon the implementation of the NSS academic structure in the 2009/10 school year with a view to establishing a mechanism for the smooth processing of applications for extension of stay.

8. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.