

For Information

Legislative Council Panel on Education

School-based Professional Support Programmes Financed by the Education Development Fund

Purpose

This paper reports the progress of the School-based Professional Support (SBPS) Programmes financed by the Education Development Fund (the Fund) in the 2008/09 school year and outlines the way forward.

Background

2. In July 2004, the then Education and Manpower Bureau set up the Fund with a grant of \$550 million as approved by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council. With a view to providing differentiated school-based professional support for building their capacity in taking forward the education reform initiatives, the Fund supports the implementation of five SBPS Programmes among schools. They are: (i) University-School Support Programmes; (ii) School Support Partners (Seconded Teacher Scheme); (iii) Principal Support Network; (iv) Professional Development Schools Scheme; and (v) Collegial Participation in External School Review.

3. The Advisory Committee on the Education Development Fund, set up in September 2004, and whose membership comprises frontline teachers, principals, academics and community members, is tasked to advise the government on the management and administration of the Fund in financing the Programmes. The implementation of the Programmes is also monitored by the School Development Key Group, a cross-divisional working group within the Education Bureau. We also conduct annual evaluation surveys and regular school visits to collect the views of participating schools on the support services they receive.

4. The SBPS Programmes have been gaining popularity over the years. Save in the first year of implementation in 2004/05 school year in which the participating schools accounted for 24% of the total school population, about 40% schools participated in the Programmes in each of the four school years that followed. A breakdown of the number of schools supported by Programmes in the 5-year period since 2004/05 is set out at **Annex I**.

5. We have submitted an Information Paper to inform members of the progress of the implementation of the Programmes up to the 2007/08 school year.

Progress Update

6. A brief account of the five Programmes and the progress of their implementation in the 2008/09 school year is at **Annex II**. The demand for the support services under the five Programmes remains high over the years, with an increase in the number of on-site support services from 530 in 2007/08 to about 550 in 2008/09. Major changes that have been introduced in 2008/09 under the five Programmes are summarized below:

- (i) For the University-School Support Programmes, 162 services were contributed by the seven newly commissioned projects, including two new projects specifically designed to serve the pre-primary sector.
- (ii) For the School Support Partners (Seconded Teacher Scheme), 70 local seconded teachers were recruited on a part-time basis for the implementation of the partnership projects which are related to the New Senior Secondary Curriculum and small-class teaching initiatives. Another 51 Mainland teachers were on an exchange basis providing consultancy services to about 200 secondary, primary and pre-primary institutions.
- (iii) The Principal Support Network has extended its scope of service to include the enhancement of the leadership quality of the school middle managers.
- (iv) 16 Professional Development Schools have been rendering support to 48 partner schools on a much wider range of curriculum subjects as well as the implementation of integrated education and Liberal Studies.
- (v) Since the second cycle of the External School Review has started only in February 2009 and has been confined to the primary schools, the number of serving principals and experienced teachers invited for the Collegial Participation in External School Review Programme remains on the low side in this school year as compared to the past years.

7. By the end of the 2008/09 school year, the five-year initial period for implementing the Programmes will be completed. In 2008, we have

commissioned a consultant to undertake a review to, among others, evaluate the effectiveness of the Programmes in helping schools connect and implement the various elements of the education reform; and to assess and track improvements brought about through the Programmes at school level.

8. The external review affirms the effectiveness of the Programmes in building capacity among participating schools and teachers in taking forward the education reform initiatives. There are beneficial impacts on teachers in various areas such as building up their collaborative culture, self-reflection, enhancement of teaching strategies and assessment for learning. Teachers have positive views on priorities setting, with increased confidence and professionalism to take forward the education reform. The effect is particularly significant among teachers who were directly involved in the Programmes.

9. The review recommends that it is worthwhile to continue the implementation of the Programmes with suitable enhancements where applicable to equip and create a critical mass of teachers with the capacity to take forward the new education initiatives. A continuation of differentiated professional support is assessed to be crucial, especially in the coming critical years when the pre-primary sector is in great need of external support to help upgrade the quality of their services, and the major education initiatives of NSS and small-class teaching begin their full implementation in the secondary and primary schools respectively.

The Way Forward

10. Financially, from 2004/05 to the end of the 2008/09 school year, the Fund will have allocated a total of \$310 million to support about 2 700 services to schools. It is anticipated that as at the end of the 2008/09 school year, the Fund will have a balance of \$301 million, including an estimate of \$60 million interest accrued since 2004.

11. Given schools' continual support needs as supported by the review, the Fund will have to carry on its mission to sustain and support teachers' professional development grounded in the paradigm that focuses on job-embedded and collaborative learning with continual access to the external collegial support provided by the Programmes. We would extend the Programmes to the second phase that will last for a period of four years from the 2009/10 school year up to 2012/13. The balance of the Fund should adequately cover the estimated expenditures incurred from the Programmes over the four-year period.

12. Besides, to enhance the impacts of the Programmes among participating schools, various improvement measures will be introduced in the second phase of the Programme implementation. A summary of the measures is highlighted in **Annex III**.

13. In the coming phase of implementation of the Programmes, we will implement the following major strategies:

- (a) To pursue a strategic planning to help set up learning circles within or among schools, so that they may sustain the creation of knowledge base, and the collaborative and collegial culture;
- (b) To continue to take steps to help schools set up mechanism to sustain the development of relevant practices within schools; and
- (c) To identify the strategies and appropriate modes of future support to schools, e.g. whether school-based support should concentrate on those more challenging schools; how to enhance the collaboration and knowledge building / retention within EDB to play the support role, etc.

14. We will conduct a study by 2011, findings of which will shed light on the need for topping up the Fund to finance further Programmes and the strategic direction for taking forward the school-based structured support in the years ahead.

Advice Sought

15. Members are invited to note the progress of the SBPS Programmes and the way forward for the Fund in financing the Programmes.

Education Bureau
June 2009

Number of Schools provided with School-based Professional Support (SBPS) Programmes

	2004/05 School Year			2005/06 School Year			2006/07 School Year				2007/08 School Year				2008/09 School Year			
	Sec	Pri	Sp	Sec	Pri	Sp	Sec	Pri	Sp	PPI *	Sec	Pri	Sp	PPI *	Sec	Pri	Sp	PPI *
Number of schools provided with SBPS services	165	108	10	228	216	20	218	246	21	-	170	220	15	48	170	196	14	87
Total Number of Schools ^	462	664	62	469	613	62	473	561	61	1015	469	537	60	989	466	515	60	998
Percentage of schools provided with SBPS services	35.7%	16.3%	16.1%	48.6%	35.2%	32.3%	46.1%	43.9%	34.4%	-	36.2%	41.0%	25.0%	4.9%	36.5%	38.1%	23.3%	8.7%
Total	283			464			485				453				467			

* PPI stands for pre-primary institutions which include kindergartens and kindergarten-cum-child care centres

^ Figures from Controlling officer's Report

Points to note:

2007/08 School year

- Completion of two pilot projects and the temporary suspension of the SSP(Liberal Studies) project under the SSP Scheme by the 2006/07 school year
- Completion of one Univeristy-School Support Programmes, namely, Variation for the Improvement of Teaching and Learning Project, by the 2006/07 school year
- A decrease in the number of Collegial Participation in External School Review (ESR) conducted in view of the completion of the first School Development and Accountability cycle in the 2007/08 School Year

2008/09 School Year

- The second cycle of ESR will start in secondary and special schools from the 2009/10 school year, and thus there is no Collegial participation in ESR for secondary and special schools for the 2008/09 school year

Progress of Implementation of the School-based Professional Support Programmes

Part I: Implementation details of the five Programmes in 2008/09 are summarized in the tables below:

I. University-School Support Programmes (USP)

Strategy	Universities with a proven track record of offering support programmes are commissioned to provide a diversified mode of support services to cater for the schools' developmental needs through connecting research-based pedagogies with classroom practices.
Progress of Implementation (2008/09)	<p>Nine projects are financed by the Fund in 2008/09. They are:</p> <p><u>Programmes carried forward</u></p> <p>(1) Quality School Improvement Project (2004-2009) <i>(Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research, Faculty of Education, The Chinese University of Hong Kong)</i></p> <p>(2) Partnership for Improvement of Learning & Teaching Project (2004-2009) <i>(Centre for University and School Partnership, Faculty of Education, The Chinese University of Hong Kong)</i></p> <p><u>Newly Commenced Programmes</u></p> <p>(3) Quality School Improvement Project (2008-2011) <i>(Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research, Faculty of Education, The Chinese University of Hong Kong)</i></p> <p>(4) Professional Development Network for Knowledge Building in Schools (2008-2011) <i>(Centre for Information Technology in Education, Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong)</i></p> <p>(5) Preparing students for the New Senior Secondary Liberal Studies: A school-based approach to</p>

	<p>enhancing enquiry learning at Key Stage 3 (2008-2010)</p> <p><i>(Department of Mathematics, Science, Social Science and Technology, Faculty of Languages, Arts and Sciences, The Hong Kong Institute of Education)</i></p> <p>(6) Support for Transition to the Implementation and Leadership of Liberal Studies (2008-2010)</p> <p><i>(Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education, The Chinese University of Hong Kong)</i></p> <p>(7) Supporting Secondary Schools in the Teaching and Learning of Chinese for Non-native Learners (2008-2011)</p> <p><i>(Centre for Advancement of Chinese Language Education and Research, Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong)</i></p> <p>(8) Empowering Early Childhood Institutions in Implementing Effective School-based Curriculum (2008-2011)</p> <p><i>(Centre for Early Childhood Research and Development, Department of Early Childhood Education, The Hong Kong Institute of Education)</i></p> <p>(9) School Improvement Project for Early Childhood Education (2008-2010)</p> <p><i>(Centre for University and School Partnership, Faculty of Education, The Chinese University of Hong Kong)</i></p>
No. of Beneficiaries	➤ In 2008/09, 113 secondary schools, 61 primary schools, 12 special schools and 39 pre-primary institutions benefited from “the Programme”.
Accumulative Expenditure (9.2004 to 4.2009)	\$173M

II. School Support Partners (Seconded Teacher Scheme) (SSP)

<p>Strategy</p>	<p><u>SSP(Local)</u></p> <p>Experienced frontline teachers are seconded, by invitation, on a full-time or part-time basis to provide peer support to teachers in other schools on various theme-based or key learning area projects and to establish platforms for professional sharing.</p> <p><u>SSP(Mainland)</u></p> <p>Under the “Mainland-Hong Kong Teachers Exchange & Collaboration Programme”, Mainland expert teachers have been invited to work alongside local school teachers on various areas such as curriculum design and collaborative lesson planning and to share professional ideas and research outcomes so as to enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching in Hong Kong schools.</p>
<p>Progress of Implementation (2008/09)</p>	<p><u>SSP(Local)</u></p> <p>In 2008/09, seconded teachers were mainly recruited on a part-time basis for the implementation of the partnership projects, such as theme-based learning networks, preparation for the New Senior Secondary Curriculum and the catering for learner diversity and support to small class teaching, etc.</p> <p><u>SSP(Mainland)</u></p> <p>A series of professional sharing activities were organised for the participating schools in 2008/09. Newsletters and resource materials on exemplary learning and teaching were compiled and dispatched.</p>
<p>No. of Beneficiaries</p>	<p><u>SSP(Local)</u></p> <p>In 2008/09, a total of 70 local primary and secondary seconded teachers participated in various SSP projects.</p> <p><u>SSP(Mainland)</u></p> <p>In 2008/09, a total of 51 Mainland teachers, financed by the Education Development Fund, were seconded under the Mainland-Hong Kong Teachers Exchange & Collaboration Programme, providing services to 22 secondary schools, 56 primary schools and 48 pre-primary institutions.</p>

Accumulative Expenditure (9.2004 to 4.2009)	\$76.3M
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III. Principal Support Network (PSN)

Strategy	Experienced principals are seconded, by invitation, to provide collegial support for partner principals. Network clusters are formed for interactive professional sharing among principals, with a view to enhancing their leadership skills through various modes of professional exchange activities.
Progress of Implementation (2008/09)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pilot study on Middle Managers Learning Community was initiated in 2008/09. It was targeted for supporting middle managers, in particular the deputy principals of primary schools, by means of talks and workshops on specific themes related to leadership, school administration and team building, ➤ The programme designed to facilitate principals and teachers to share their experiences in helping students with special educational needs was further strengthened. ➤ Series of talks delivered by outstanding experts, business and community leaders under the Education Leadership Programme were organized to stimulate principals to examine their work from different perspectives.
No. of Beneficiaries	In 2008/09, 23 partner principals from secondary, primary and special schools participated in the one-to-one intensive collegial support network. An average of 90 principals participated in each of the 7 seminars of the Education Leadership Programme held.
Accumulative Expenditure (9.2004 to 4.2009)	\$5.8 M

IV. Professional Development Schools (PDS) Scheme

Strategy	Schools with exemplary practices in learning and teaching and a good sharing culture are designated as PDSs. Each PDS will form a network with two or three partner schools focusing on specific pedagogical themes to foster an interactive collaborative culture and enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching through various exchange activities.
Progress of Implementation in 2008/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ In 2008/09, there were 16 PDSs, including 10 primary schools, 5 secondary schools and 1 special school.➤ The areas for professional sharing covered a wide range of subjects, including Chinese, English, Mathematics, General Studies, Liberal Studies and Integrated Education.
No. of Beneficiaries	In 2008/09, 48 partner schools, including 15 secondary, 31 primary and 2 special schools benefited from the scheme.
Accumulative Expenditure (9.2004 to 4.2009)	\$15.0M

V. Collegial Participation in External School Review (ESR)

Strategy	Experienced serving principals and teachers are invited to engage in the ESR of other schools as external reviewers to enhance their understanding in the school self-improvement processes and to strengthen the professional competency of the ESR team.
Progress of Implementation (2008/09)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ In 2008/09, a total of 82 external reviewers had completed the refresher training course on the second cycle of ESR.➤ The implementation of the second cycle of ESR started in February 2009 for 78 primary schools while that for secondary schools will commence in 2009/10.
No. of Beneficiaries	As at 3.6.2009, the Bureau had invited 73 external reviewers from 73 primary schools to participate in the second cycle of ESR.

Accumulative Expenditure (9.2004 to 4.2009)	\$2.5 M
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Part II : Overall Assessment on the Impacts on Schools

1. Participation in the School-based Professional Support Programmes (“the Programmes”) had beneficial impacts on teachers’ views on priorities setting, professionalism and confidence to take forward the education reform. Apparently, through participation in the Programmes, teachers’ views were more aligned with the education reform agenda.

2. Participants had positive evaluation of their involvement in various Programmes. For example, under the Principal Support Network, both the seconded and partner principals were learning from each others; teachers of Professional Development School also benefited from seeing how other schools tackled problems encountered in learning and teaching; there is improvement in capacity and capability of teachers of schools participating in the School Support Partner Scheme by learning through their exposure to various successful or experimental pedagogies / methods in other schools.

3. The positive impact was more apparent for teachers who were involved in Programmes, as compared with those who were not, especially in the assessment for learning, and readiness for self-reflection and improvement. Teachers developed a habit of reflection and collaboration through participating in the Programmes. They are more confident in coping with the changes and new challenges brought about by the education reform.

4. The collegial support provided by the Programmes widened the exposure of the teachers and enhanced their professional knowledge and skills through reviewing of teaching practices and access of external knowledge.

5. Both the teachers and schools as a whole had benefited from support services provided by experienced experts from their university partners, bringing to their schools new ideas and new teaching methods. The process of ‘practicalising theories’ results in changes of teachers’ attitudes and behaviour as well as school culture, beneficial to learning and teaching and student learning outcomes. The projects under USP also helped teachers to implement the education reform initiatives such as reading to learn and project learning. Teachers are more aware of the use of assessment to inform learning.

6. Schools’ participation in the Programmes had beneficial impacts on students’ learning outcomes.

**Improvement measures to the Programmes
as from 2009/10 school year**

I. Strengthening of the five SBPS Programmes

University-School Support Programmes(USP)

1. While the external review and the post-implementation review of the Programme display positive impact of the Programmes in the participating schools in general, the external review nonetheless notes that large scale programmes can be a hindering factor if there is an inadequate supply of quality experts with limited capacity to provide timely and appropriate steer to the large team of external supporters to schools. To address the concern and to strengthen the impact of the USP,

- (a) we will keep the scale of the USP Programmes to a manageable level so that a critical mass of external supporters led by the university experts can effectively synergise and help teachers practicalising theories;
- (b) for the new batch of USP which extends to the 2010/11 school year, we have kept the scale at a reasonable size and will continue to keep in view the development and take timely intervention;
- (c) we will request the academia to consolidate project outcomes and establish sharing networks to disseminate good practices to other schools.

School Support Partners (Seconded Teacher Scheme) (including the “Mainland-Hong Kong Teachers Exchange and Collaboration Programme”)

2. The positive impacts of the Scheme are recognised by the participating principals / teachers and their parent schools. The external review also identified enhanced capabilities of school personnel concerned in serving as internal agents in schools to create and sustain the conditions which quality learning and teaching takes place. The following improvement measures may be introduced:

- (a) The Scheme may be further expanded to facilitate the delivery of services on priority themes such as district / theme-based support for the NSS curriculum for secondary schools, catering for learner

diversity and use of appropriate teaching strategies under the small class context in primary schools.

- (b) Under the “Mainland-Hong Kong Teachers Exchange and Collaboration Programme”, the scope of the support services may be extended to incorporate different themes in the professional collaboration projects while more professional sharing activities may be organised to allow non-participating schools to have opportunities to share their experiences and achievements with Mainland teachers.

Principal Support Network (PSN)

3. SBPS Programmes have a beneficial impact on schools and teachers in taking forward the education reform. However, as evidenced from the indicators used in the external review and compared with the benchmark data, there are areas where the participation in the SBPS Programmes does not seem to have the desired impact on principals. There is also strong research evidence confirming the influence of leadership on school effectiveness and school improvement. To enhance the effectiveness of PSN on principals’ professional development, the mode of support for the PSN can be modified from the one-to-one pairing of principals to an expanded network of principals forming a professional learning community. These networks can also be extended to middle managers and deputy heads of primary schools.

Professional Development Schools (PDS) Scheme

4. As evidenced from the external review, while the Network proves beneficial, the effectiveness of the Network depends very much on the active participation of the partner schools and appropriate pairing of PDS and partner schools. In this connection, greater efforts would be made to motivate the participation of partner schools and take early remedial actions to address problems encountered by teachers of partner schools in participating in activities organized by PDS. To ensure appropriate pairing of schools under the PDS Scheme, further considerations would be given to factors such as school background and locations. Apart from providing support to partner schools, some of the PDS could take the lead to form a network with a greater number of partner schools on specific themes.

Collegial Participation in External School Review

5. The external review and our on-going review affirm the benefits of the ESR and there are strong evidences showing that school personnel by serving as external reviewers would broaden their exposure, and foster a collaborative

and reflective culture conducive to the enhancement of professional capacity. We will step up the participation of more school personnel in the External School Review to enhance their understanding of the school self-improvement processes.

II. Strengthening quality assurance and managing expectation of the schools

6. As reflected from the external review, schools' understanding and identification of the most suitable SBPS Programmes is vital to the success of the support services. To further improve the matching of the needs of schools with appropriate support services, measures will be strengthened to align the expectations of the service providers with individual needs and priorities of the schools.

7. Schools will be urged to plan ahead with the teachers involved before the submission of their applications while the service providers should pay school visits to the partner schools soon after the allocation of services, preferably in June and July, to allow early identification of possible mismatches of expectations. In the unlikely case of the existence of insurmountable difficulties, the participating schools will be allowed to opt out of the allocated SBPS Programmes before the commencement of the school year.

8. The involvement of other sections of the Bureau, in particular the Regional Education Offices (REO), in the SBPS Programmes would continue and be strengthened. Current practice of consultations and coordination in the exercise for the allocation of the SBPS Programmes will continue and be enhanced to help schools identify the most appropriate support services and the effective use of resources without duplication of effort.

III. Reinforcing the impact of SBPS Programmes

9. The quality of experts assigned to support schools is also a critical success factor, as opined by most principals and teachers in the external review. In this respect, the monitoring of the SBPS Programmes, in particular the quality and performance of the service providers should be stepped up.

10. In order to enhance the impact of the SBPS programmes, schools may opt to extend their support services for another school year in consultation with the service providers to reinforce the impact on teachers and develop a critical mass to sustain cultural change.

11. Seminars and workshop sessions which promote the effective application of professional knowledge and a sharing culture will be organised on

a regular basis for professional dialogue among teachers. Valuable professional insights from education practitioners will be collated in the form of booklets, newsletters or DVDs for publicity. The SBSS website will be further enhanced for the sharing of resource materials as well as for the dissemination of good practice.

IV Responding to schools' diverse needs

12. The pace and scale at which support will be provided to schools should be driven by the identification of school requirements and priority of the education reform initiatives. To address the schools' concerns and support needs, priority themes will continue to be explored and reviewed at regular intervals, and new series of support services introduced at appropriate times.

13. The needs and expectations of principals and teachers, as far as school-based support services are concerned, vary considerably from school to school, though quite a number of teachers prefer support services more geared towards solving day-to-day learning and teaching problems. A study on the balance of the SBPS Programmes and the school-based curriculum support services provided by the different divisions of EDB should be taken.