

For discussion
on 14 February 2011

Legislative Council Panel on Education

Provision of School Places in South Lantau

Purpose

At the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Education held on 13 December 2010, Members discussed the school net arrangements in Islands District under the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System and requested the Administration to provide further information about –

- (a) the existing number of local and non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students in South Lantau;
- (b) the projected number of these students in the next five years; and
- (c) the number of school-age children in South Lantau who have not been enrolled in schools.

This paper sets out the Administration's response and provides further information on provision of public sector school places in South Lantau.

Provision of Public Sector Secondary School Places in Islands District

2. It is Government's policy to provide sufficient public sector school places for all eligible school-age children. Under the SSPA System, the territory is divided into 18 school nets in line with the district administration boundaries. The Government is planning and providing public sector secondary school places on a territory-wide basis to ensure that there are sufficient public sector secondary school places across the territory so that the overall supply meets the demand in Hong Kong. Sufficient Secondary 1 (S1) places are provided to meet the demand of the students in the Islands District.

3. As regards whether there is a need to set up a public sector secondary school in the South Lantau, the sustainability of the school and whether a balance could be maintained in the demand and supply of school places in the district are key considerations. Under the New Academic Structure, public sector secondary schools require at least three classes at each level to offer a broad and balanced curriculum with combinations of subject electives to suit students' preference. Based on the Government's latest population projection, the student population of Islands District would remain fairly stable in the coming few years. With reference to the enrolment statistics from Primary One to Primary Six (P6), we expect that the number of P6 students in South Lantau participating in the SSPA System is projected to be around 50 annually in the coming 6 years. Furthermore, by making reference to the pattern of parental choices and allocation results in SSPA 2010, it is projected that only around 65% or 33 P6 students in South Lantau would enroll in secondary schools in the Islands District.

4. Analysis of the enrolment figures for the last 5 cohorts of S1 students of ex-New Territories Heung Yee Kuk Southern District Secondary School (SDSS) in Mui Wo reveals that P6 students in Mui Wo, Bui O and Peng Chau who had selected and enrolled at S1 in the ex-SDSS constituted an average of 36%, 10% and 6% respectively of the S1 enrolment of the school. With such low proportion of P6 students in South Lantau pursuing secondary education in the area, it is unlikely that all P6 students in South Lantau would choose and eventually enroll in the proposed school at the SDSS premises.

5. As a matter of fact, there are still about ten vacant classrooms in the public sector secondary schools in Islands District, which are available for meeting any growth in the demand for secondary school places in the district. In deciding to operate a new secondary school in Mui Wo, its capability for sustainable development is a key consideration. Based on the population projection and pattern of parental choices in the past SSPA results, it is insufficient to justify the setting up of a new public sector secondary school in South Lantau at this stage.

Number of local and NCS students in South Lantau

6. There are two public sector primary schools in South Lantau and the existing number of local and NCS students studying in the schools concerned in the 2010/11 school year is set out at Table 1 below for Members' reference.

Table 1 - Number of local and NCS students in public sector primary schools in South Lantau in the 2010/11 school year

	School	Number of students (Based on enrolment figures as at November 2010)													
		Local							NCS						
		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	All	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	All
South Lantau	Mui Wo School	16	16	16	14	21	21	104	10	10	16	6	5	4	51
	Bui O Public School	3	7	3	10	13	7	43	18	11	14	13	16	17	89
	Total	19	23	19	24	34	28	147	28	21	30	19	21	21	140

7. The Education Bureau has all along attached great importance to the educational needs of the students in South Lantau. To cater for the needs of NCS students, three primary schools and one secondary school are serving as designated schools for NCS students in the Islands District, including Po On Commercial Association Wan Ho Kan Primary School at Tung Chung, Bui O Public School at South Lantau, Northern Lamma School on Lamma Island and Buddhist Fat Ho Memorial School at Tai O. The purpose of assigning designated schools is to strengthen focused support to schools, with a view to facilitating the development of supporting teaching materials and school-based support programmes for NCS students and the sharing of good practices and professional experiences with other schools admitting NCS students. There is no ceiling on the number of designated schools and we will, in the light of the distribution of NCS students in various districts and having regard to other relevant factors, increase the number of designated schools where necessary.

8. Apart from the two public sector primary schools, there is an international primary school in South Lantau. According to the provisional results of the 2010/11 Student Enrolment Survey, the school had 211 primary students in total as at mid September 2010 and for nearly all of the students (99% or 209 in number), Chinese was not their usual language. Between 2008/09 and 2010/11 school years, the school had about 22 P6 students on average. We understand that the majority of its P6 students pursuing secondary education in Hong Kong have chosen international schools or Direct Subsidy Scheme schools.

9. Given that the background, family expectation and duration of stay in Hong Kong vary greatly among NCS students, they have different learning needs and expectation of their education. We would arrange public sector secondary school places for individual students if they have such needs.

Projections of school-age population in Islands District in the next five years

10. For Members' reference, the projections of school-age population aged 6-11 for primary level of education and aged 12-17 for secondary level of education for Islands District for the coming five school years from the 2011/12 to 2015/16 school years are at Annex. Based on the projections of school-age population for Islands District, it is projected that the number of children aged 6-11 would decrease slightly from 9 800 in the 2010/11 school year to 9 100 in the 2013/14 school year and then start to rebound in the 2014/15 school year. As for the school-age children aged 12-17 residing in Islands District, it is projected that the number would drop gradually by 1 700 (or 15%) between the 2010/11 and 2015/16 school years. It is worth noting that the planning and provision of public sector secondary school places is on a territory-wide basis. According to the latest projections on the demand and supply, we expect that there will be sufficient public sector secondary school places to meet the projected demand in the coming few years.

11. For Islands District as a whole, we have also examined the latest projections and noted that the demand and supply of public sector primary school places is fairly stable. For secondary school level, the projections reveal that there will be surplus secondary school places in the

territory, including Islands District, up to 2016/17 school year.

Number of school-age children in South Lantau who have not been enrolled in schools

12. The Education Bureau does not have the figure for school-age children in South Lantau who have not been enrolled in schools. With regard to the concerns of the residents in South Lantau on the educational needs in the district, we would keep an open mind on the views and suggestions expressed. We would continue to closely monitor the demand and supply of school places in the Islands District to ensure that there is an adequate provision of public sector school places.

**Education Bureau
February 2011**

**Projected School-age Population Aged 6 - 11 and 12 - 17
in Islands District, 2010/11 - 2015/16 School Years**

Age Group	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
6 - 11	9 800	9 500	9 300	9 100	9 400	9 800
12 - 17	11 700	11 600	11 400	11 200	10 400	10 000

Notes:

- (1) Population belonging to age groups 6 - 11 and 12 - 17 are considered appropriate for primary level (P1 - P6) and secondary level (S1 - S6) of education under the "3+3" new senior secondary academic structure respectively.
- (2) Figures refer to the projected number of children aged 6-11 and 12-17 residing in the Islands district. The projected figures should not be taken as the projected number of students attending schools in the district concerned. The latter would be affected by the prevailing distribution of school places, demand for school places and parental choices. Besides, there could be under-aged or over-aged students at primary and secondary levels. Hence, the actual number of students in the Islands district could be different from the projected number of school-age children.
- (3) The projections of school-age population are compiled based on the population projections released by the Census and Statistics Department in July 2010, and the district population projections released by the interdepartmental Working Group on Population Distribution Projections in December 2010. These two sets of projections have taken into account a number of factors and assumptions. Amongst those assumptions, of particular relevance are those related to newly-arrived children from the Mainland and babies born in Hong Kong to Mainland women. This is because the actual numbers of such children/babies who would arrive or settle in Hong Kong are difficult to predict. Any deviations of the assumptions from the actual situation may render the projected figures different from the actual figures. Furthermore, district population projections would be affected by changes of housing development plans and thus may be different from the actual figures.
- (4) Figures refer to the position as at September of the respective school years.