

For discussion on 14 March 2011

**Legislative Council Panel on Education
Progress of Support Measures for
Non-Chinese Speaking Students**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the progress of support measures for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students and the steps forward to strengthen our efforts in supporting the learning and teaching of NCS students in mainstream schools and in enhancing the articulation opportunities of NCS students to facilitate their integration into the community.

Progress of support measures

2. The Government is committed to facilitating NCS students to adapt to the local education system and early integration into the community. While NCS parents are encouraged to send their children to mainstream schools like their local counterparts, we fully understand the difficulties of NCS students, particularly in their learning of the Chinese language, and have thus implemented a series of support measures to facilitate their adaptation to the local curriculum, specifically addressing their learning of the Chinese language in this regard. The support measures cover three main aspects, i.e. development of the Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for NCS students (“the Supplementary Guide”) with tailor-made teaching and learning materials for both teachers and students; assisting designated schools in developing school-based measures and accumulating teaching experiences for dissemination to other schools admitting NCS students;

and provision of after-school support for NCS students to help them reinforce what they have learnt during lessons. The progress of the support measures is summarized at the Annex. In the course of implementing and refining the support measures, we would continue to take into consideration the views of stakeholders in order to ensure that the measures can be delivered in a more coherent way to facilitate the learning and teaching of NCS students. In light of the latest concerns expressed about the support to NCS students, we would put in place additional measures targeted at facilitating and encouraging the early immersion of NCS students in the local school system, with specific emphasis on the support for the learning of the Chinese language and enhancing the opportunities for post-secondary education and employment for NCS students.

Learning and teaching of the Chinese Language

3. Since the introduction of the Supplementary Guide¹ in December 2008, schools have been adopting the modes and approaches as recommended in the Guide by taking into account their own situations to cater for the diversified needs and aspirations of NCS students as second language learners at different stages of development. With reference to the Supplementary Guide, teachers are making suitable adaptations to the school curriculum, by using the various teaching and learning materials which have been disseminated to schools by batches since June 2009 and participating in the on-going teacher workshops exploring effective pedagogic strategies under the Supplementary Guide. Through accumulation and review of informed practices from schools, the Supplementary Guide will be evaluated and enriched with a view to progressively expanding and enhancing the quality of the learning and teaching materials which pitch at different learning levels and can lead to

¹ The Guide includes multiple curriculum modes of “immersion in Chinese Language lessons”, “bridging / transition”, “specific learning purposes” and “integration”.

multiple exits for NCS students.

4. Focusing on the need to help NCS students in the learning of the Chinese language, we have, as an initiative in the 2010 Budget, piloted a 3-year project of After-school Extended Chinese Learning for NCS students, through injection into the Language Fund. In 2010/11, 62 non-designated schools have been provided with funding in the range of \$0.05 to \$0.3 million, depending on the number of NCS students enrolled for the project (including those not studying in the same school), and have put in place diversified extended Chinese learning programmes to strengthen after-school support for about 2 300 students, i.e. about half of the NCS students in non-designated schools. Another 10 schools are in the process of critically assessing the needs of their NCS students for similar support after school or during the long vacation/ summer holiday and are prepared to participate in the project within the current school year.

5. Since it is of crucial importance that teachers need to have a good knowledge of their students' specific difficulties in learning Chinese graphemes, tones, vocabulary, classifiers, word order, etc. so as to facilitate them to learn the language effectively, we have also worked on the development of assessment tools which serve the purpose of providing spontaneous feedback to NCS students in their learning of the Chinese language. As pledged, two sets of assessment tools were uploaded in December 2010 for trial use by school. These assessment tools are designed in the learning contexts of the NCS students in Hong Kong, covering a full range of dimensions, processes and levels of learning Chinese to meet different needs. The assessment tools will be refined after further experimental trials in more schools with adequate NCS intakes before dissemination to schools by end-2011.

Alternative Chinese qualifications for further studies

6. In the light of the above and coupled with the support measures being implemented, we will continue to encourage NCS students who are able to attain Chinese proficiency comparable to their local counterparts to take the Chinese Language paper in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE), in which standards-referenced reporting, with descriptors indicating the specific standard the candidate has achieved, will be adopted. For NCS students who have started late in learning the Chinese Language or have not been given the opportunity to learn the local Chinese Language curriculum², they may choose to sit for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (Chinese) (GCSE (Chinese)) Examination, the result of which is an internationally recognised qualification and has been accepted as an alternative Chinese qualification for consideration for admission to University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions through the Joint Universities Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS) since 2008.

7. Alongside the implementation of the support measures, the number of NCS students sitting for GCSE (Chinese) has increased to 170 in 2010, as compared with 10 in 2007 when the examination was first administered in Hong Kong for NCS students. Out of these 170 students, 143 have attained the alternative Chinese qualification³. Referring to those NCS students studying in Secondary 7 of public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools who sat for the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE), while 10 out of 24 have

² Specifically, these students include those who:

- (i) have learned Chinese Language for less than 6 years while receiving primary and secondary education; or
- (ii) have learned Chinese Language for 6 years or more in schools, but has been taught an adapted and simpler curriculum not normally applicable to the majority of students in our local schools.

³ A Grade D or above attained in GCSE (Chinese) is considered as satisfying the corresponding subject result requirement at Level 2 in the HKCEE.

received offers under the JUPAS in 2008, 20 out of 56 NCS students have received offer in 2010. Separately, about 250 NCS students are taking full-time locally accredited self-financing degree or sub-degree programmes.

Pilot scheme on Workplace Chinese Language

8. While acknowledging that the above alternative Chinese qualification will continue to be an avenue to address NCS students' aspirations for further study under the New Academic Structure, we are aware that there are opinions that GCSE (Chinese) is considered too simple in terms of its design for employment purposes. To further support NCS students who could not attain any acceptable level in terms of Chinese proficiency under the HKDSE to meet the workplace or trade-specific requirements, we intend to conduct a pilot scheme on Workplace Chinese Language for NCS students, by capitalising on the experience of the courses on Workplace Chinese Language funded by the Employees Retraining Board from 2008 to 2009 and the pilot Vocational English Enhancement Courses being developed by the Vocational Training Council for implementation in 2011/12.

9. Based on our initial discussions with relevant parties, the programmes of the proposed scheme will be designed to be trade-specific to be pegged at Levels 1 to 3 of the Qualifications Framework with validation by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ). The content would cover the four dimensions of language application with due emphasis on the needs of the trade including, where applicable, Putonghua. Bearing in mind the purpose of the scheme to enhance students' employability, the programmes will be delivered to schools with funding from the Education Bureau. It is worth noting that the proposed programmes are not meant

to substitute the formal Chinese Language curriculum and should be conducted after school and/or during holidays at the liberty of participating schools.

10. We would map out the details of the pilot scheme on Workplace Chinese Language taking into consideration the views of different stakeholders; the development of the general curriculum framework and design guide, specific curriculum, learning and teaching packages and assessment schemes; validation of the proposed programmes by the HKCAAVQ; development of a quality assurance mechanism to be mapped out; and delivery of the courses for participating schools.

Way Forward

11. We would continue to evaluate the effectiveness of various support measures as mentioned above by taking into consideration the feedback from schools, NCS parents and students and views of different stakeholders.

Education Bureau

March 2011

Update of Progress of Support Measures for NCS Students

Designated Schools

- The Education Bureau (EDB) has been inviting schools to become “designated schools” and providing these schools with additional resources and focused support to enhance the learning and teaching of NCS students.
- The objective of providing focused support in the “designated schools” is to facilitate schools’ accumulation of experiences and development of expertise in the learning and teaching of NCS students so that these schools may serve as the anchor point for sharing experiences with other schools which have also admitted NCS students through a support network formed for all NCS students in the local schools to benefit from the arrangement.
- The number of “designated schools” has been increased from 15 in the 2006/07 school year to 28 in the 2010/11 school year. Besides, starting from the 2008/09 school year, we have turned the annual special grant of \$300,000 for the “designated schools” to a recurrent grant to assist them in implementing school-based support measures, and have raised the ceiling of the grant to \$600,000 depending on the number of NCS students in the respective “designated schools”.

Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for NCS Students

- This Supplementary Guide supplements principles, strategies and

recommendations for implementing the Chinese Language curriculum in the learning context of NCS students. This Supplementary Guide was distributed to schools with a series of packages of learning and teaching materials in December 2008. Two full sets of learning and teaching materials, covering both primary and secondary levels, were uploaded to the EDB website, with printed copies in the form of textbook distributed to schools and NCS students in September 2009 and September 2010 respectively. Feedback so far suggests that teachers generally find the Supplementary Guide useful in augmenting their teaching resources and apt for the needs of their students.

- Currently, schools are making adaptations to the curriculum to pitch it at the learning levels appropriate to the desired exits amongst the multiple pathways available. In tandem, teacher professional development programmes on curriculum as well as pedagogy and strategies are being conducted and will continue. Evaluation and review of the Supplementary Guide will be undertaken on a continual basis for further refinement by means of informed practices from schools through curriculum development visits. To follow up, an evaluation study will be conducted in the 2011/12 school year, i.e. upon the full implementation of a key learning stage.

Training Programmes for Chinese Language Teachers in Primary Schools

- Training programmes for Chinese Language teachers commissioned to tertiary institution will continue. All teachers teaching the Chinese Language to NCS students, irrespective of whether they teach in “designated schools” or “non-designated schools”, can join these programmes.

After-school Support in Chinese Learning

- The Chinese Language Learning Support Centre (Centre), commissioned to the University of Hong Kong, has provided remedial programmes after school hours or during holidays for NCS students, particularly those who have a late start in learning the Chinese Language. The number of designated venues for the Centre has been increased from 5 in the 2007/08 school year to 11 in the 2010/11 school year with an enrolment of 482 students. The Centre also assists in the development of teaching resources and organisation of professional development workshops to render support to teachers of NCS students.

Summer Bridging Programmes

- Starting from summer 2007, the 4-week Summer Bridging Programmes originally confined to incoming NCS Primary 1 entrants have been extended to cover NCS students proceeding to Primary 2, Primary 3 and Primary 4 in order to help them consolidate what they have learnt at Key Learning Stage 1 and to prepare for their transition to Key Learning Stage 2.

Measures to Address the Aspirations of NCS Students for Higher Education

- We have administered the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) (Chinese) Examination in Hong Kong since 2007 for students who wish to attain alternative Chinese Language qualification(s).
- Starting from 2008, the University Grants Committee-funded

institutions have provided further flexibility for acceptance of alternative Chinese Language qualification(s) including GCSE (Chinese) for application under specified circumstances under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System. This is a significant step taken by the institutions to address the aspirations for higher education of those NCS students who study in our local schools.

- Moreover, starting from 2010, eligible school candidates sitting for the GCSE (Chinese) Examination are charged an examination fee level on par with the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (Chinese) or the future Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (Chinese).

Information for NCS Parents

- To facilitate the NCS parents in understanding the local education system, NCS Parent Information Package, explanatory pamphlets on the Primary One Admission and Secondary School Places Allocation systems, notes for parents to complete the application forms for Primary 1 and Secondary 1 admission, support measures for NCS students, the executive summary of the Supplementary Guide and the leaflet on Fine-tuning of Medium of Instruction, have been translated into major ethnic minority languages for their easy reference.
- To facilitate those NCS parents who may wish to communicate in major ethnic minority languages, interpretation service is provided when conducting briefing sessions. For daily enquiries, telephone conferencing among the enquirer, EDB and CHEER, the translation centre for NCS population funded by CMAB has been offered since

July 2010.

- A dedicated website (<http://www.edb.gov.hk/ncs>) is provided for NCS parents to understand our services for them.