

**Progress Report on the Motion on
“Reviewing the education policy for ethnic minority students” at
the Legislative Council meeting held on 8 and 9 February 2012**

Purpose

At the Legislative Council meeting held on 8 and 9 February 2012, the motion on “Reviewing the education policy for ethnic minority students” moved by Hon Abraham SHEK and amended by Hon Tanya CHAN and Hon Starry LEE was carried. The wording of the motion carried is at the Annex.

2. This progress report sets out the actions taken by the Administration for Members’ consideration.

Enhancing support in primary and secondary schools

3. We have undertaken specific deliverables of stepping up the support to non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students at primary and secondary levels, which include inter alia expanding the network of schools supporting NCS students, formulating modalities of school-based support for schools admitting NCS students and strengthening the evidence-based feedback loop supporting NCS students, upon having a dedicated staff support at the directorate level within the Education Bureau to review and oversee the implementation of services for NCS students in local mainstream schools.

Expanding the network of schools

4. We would expand the network of schools supporting NCS students having regard to the NCS student population of the schools admitting NCS students which will affect the extent to which they can provide an environment for immersion in the Chinese Language. Coupled with restructuring the platform for sharing practices and experiences on the development and adoption of appropriate teaching pedagogies among schools admitting NCS students, more schools, in addition to the existing designated schools, would be involved in gearing up for the implementation of the Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for NCS Students, which includes four curriculum modes of “immersion in Chinese Language lessons”, “bridging/transition”, “specific learning purposes” and “integration” to cater for the diversified background,

needs and aspirations in academic study and career pursuit of NCS students. In this sense, schools admitting NCS students would generally be working on the basis of the Supplementary Guide to meet the needs of NCS students in learning Chinese as a second language.

Empowering NCS students to attain different learning targets

5. We take heed to motivate NCS students at relevant learning stages of development leading to multiple pathways while bearing in mind that an alternative curriculum and assessment with pre-set simpler contents and lower standards for NCS students will only limit NCS students' learning opportunities and development, as suggested in some research findings that given the support and empowerment, the learning outcome of some NCS students can be on par with that of local students. We are examining the desirability of NCS students' participation in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (Chinese) Examination, which some NCS students consider as having a relatively simpler content vis-a-vis their Chinese proficiency, as an alternative Chinese qualification and the possibility of giving NCS students the option of sitting for relevant overseas examinations with financial assistance, with reference to the different designs and relevant requirements for Chinese proficiency of these overseas Chinese examinations, the related support to schools / students in terms of teacher training and provision of teaching and learning materials, etc., so that when enhancing assessment for learning, we may facilitate NCS students to cross over to different levels in the learning process in primary and secondary education to realise their potentials.

Support modalities

6. To tie in with the expansion of the network of schools supporting NCS students as mentioned in paragraph 4 above, we would formulate different modalities of school-based professional support and kick-start a longitudinal study on the modalities of school-based professional support and NCS students' performance in learning the Chinese language, with a view to evaluating the efficacy of the support for NCS students with diverse learning abilities. We will also take the opportunity to put in place a framework for objective and evidence-based assessment of the effectiveness, cost-effectiveness and viability of the support measures and evaluation of the support modes and measures for schools and to enhance the relevant data bank to strengthen the evidence-based feedback loop for supporting NCS students.

Promotion of early adaptation

7. There is the consensus to continue with encouraging NCS parents to send their children to local kindergartens¹ so as to promote an early exposure to an immersed Chinese environment for NCS children to smooth their progression to mainstream primary schools. We have taken concrete moves in these two months to enhance school-based professional support services to kindergartens with a view to rendering assistance to teachers in designing teaching and learning activities to facilitate children's acquisition of Chinese in an authentic environment. A naturalistic and holistic approach to language learning and an integrated learning and teaching approach to create a stimulating and language-rich environment to provide children with authentic, meaningful and developmentally appropriate language learning experiences through try-outs, exploration and interpersonal interactions are considered essential and conducive to help children including NCS children develop their Chinese language skills and social communication skills at kindergartens.

8. We have accorded due priority to the aspect of "offering support to NCS children" when inviting kindergartens in April 2012 to apply for the support services in the 2012/13 school year. We have also solicited expertise from the tertiary sector through the "University-School Support Programmes" to partner with kindergartens for promoting whole-child development including NCS children. These measures aim at accumulation of effective strategies and diversified modes to support NCS children in the learning of the Chinese language.

9. Besides, to further arouse NCS children's interest in learning Chinese, we have recently, through the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research², invited proposals to organise district-based projects / programmes to motivate NCS children to learn Chinese through fun activities such as drama, creative art, etc.. The pilot run of these district-based projects / programmes in districts with relatively more NCS children such as Yuen Long, Kwai Chung & Tsing Yi, Kwun Tong, Yau Tsim & Mong Kok, etc. would start in July 2012.

10. As regards parent education, we would continue to organise parent

¹ Kindergartens, kindergartens-cum-child care centres and schools with kindergarten classes are referred to as "kindergartens".

² The Standing Committee on Language Education and Research a Committee advises the Government on language education issues.

briefing sessions on school admission dedicated for NCS parents in districts with relatively more NCS residents. In view of the positive response at previous sessions, we have planned to invite kindergartens and schools which have accumulated experience in supporting NCS students to disseminate key messages to parents at the upcoming briefings, Support Services Centres for Ethnic Minorities funded by Home Affairs Department, radio programmes, Maternal and Child Health Centres through promotion videos and in the newspapers for ethnic minority groups, etc.

Teacher empowerment

11. On teacher empowerment, while we have planned to enrich the content of the seminars / workshops on learner diversity particularly on NCS children's learning of Chinese and young children development in the case of kindergartens, we would also continue with curriculum development visits to schools and focus group interviews with frontline teachers so as to collect more information and good practices on catering for learner diversity for organising more experience sharing sessions in the 2012/13 school year. In tandem, more structured programmes including teaching and learning materials tailor-made for NCS children in kindergartens would be developed to make the learning and teaching of Chinese more interesting and tangible for NCS children.

Other support measures

Early identification of NCS students with special educational needs

12. To enhance the reliability of the assessment results, educational psychologists have been empowered to raise their cultural awareness in assessing a child's educational needs, and make adjustments where appropriate in addition to the consideration for the child's background, life experience and language ability, etc.. We have also developed a checklist to identify students with learning difficulties. This checklist can help schools observe students' learning and arrange assessments for students as soon as possible, if deemed necessary.

Career guidance

13. At the Education Expo held on 12-13 May 2012, relevant information to enhance NCS students' competitiveness in the workplace, especially the

rolling out of the first batch of courses of a pilot scheme on Workplace Chinese Language with programmes pegged at Levels 1 to 3 of the Qualifications Framework in July 2012, the setting up of new youth college by the Vocational Training Council offering 240 additional places among which about 120 are estimated to cater for NCS students, etc. have been disseminated at the dedicated information counter to cater for the needs of individual NCS students. Positive responses have been received.

Conclusion

14. We are now collecting views from stakeholders particularly schools admitting NCS students. We aim to report further the progress of the implementation of the above support measures to the Legislative Council Panel on Education in end-2012.

Education Bureau

May 2012

**Motion on
“Reviewing the education policy for ethnic minority students”
moved by Hon Abraham SHEK
at the Legislative Council meeting
on 8 and 9 February 2012**

Motion as amended by Hon Tanya CHAN and Hon Starry LEE

That education is the key to success and the future of our next generation; while the Equal Opportunities Commission (‘EOC’) already published ‘Education for all: the Report on the Working Group on Education for Ethnic Minorities’ (‘the Report’) in July 2011, highlighting how the mainstream education system has let down ethnic minority students who are mostly from low-income families and putting forward various recommendations to the Government on addressing their learning needs, the Government has not yet proposed any concrete measures on following up the implementation of the EOC’s recommendations in the Report and offered any additional support to the 14 000 ethnic minority students in Hong Kong; in this connection, this Council urges the Government to review its education policy for ethnic minority students, so as to address their concerns, particularly the admission and assessment procedures of schools, the available choices of designated schools and mainstream schools, learning support for pre-primary ethnic minority students and provision of an alternative Chinese Curriculum and Qualification, so that ethnic minority students can enjoy equal access to quality education, which is pivotal not only to such students’ pursuit of further education and employment, but also to Hong Kong maintaining its competitiveness; the relevant initiatives should include:

- (a) implementing a separate Chinese curriculum assessment scheme especially for ethnic minority students to help them meet the requirements of further education and vocational training;
- (b) providing pre-primary educational institutions with additional resources and relevant support to encourage the admission of ethnic minority students;
- (c) enhancing the training for teachers who teach Chinese as a second or foreign language;
- (d) designing suitable assessment schemes for adoption by schools to facilitate early identification of ethnic minority students’ special needs, so

- that they can receive appropriate education;
- (e) launching a study to monitor the learning progress of ethnic minority students to enable the Government to review their needs and the effectiveness of their education, and establishing a database for systemic data collection and analysis, so as to facilitate the formulation of an education policy and the provision of support which meet the needs of ethnic minority students;
 - (f) increasing intake quotas, providing a positive learning environment and adequate support to meet the demand of ethnic minority students with special educational needs;
 - (g) enhancing the career guidance and vocational training services for ethnic minority graduates;
 - (h) enhancing public awareness of the importance of cultural diversities and ethnic integration, so as to create a better learning environment for ethnic minority students; and
 - (i) developing teaching materials and providing parental education.