

**Panel on Education
Subcommittee on Integrated Education**

Issues arising from meeting on 8 July 2013

The Education Bureau is requested to provide information on:

- (a) the number of primary schools, secondary schools and post-secondary institutions that have duly provided barrier free access and facilities at their premises;
- (b) the number of primary schools, secondary schools and post-secondary institutions where barrier free access and facilities, or alterations for the provision of such facilities, have not been provided at their premises; and
- (c) the timetable, if any, for the schools in (b) above to carry out the necessary works for the provision of barrier free access and facilities at their premises.

Response

The Education Bureau (EDB) is committed to providing quality education to students with special educational needs (SEN). Apart from providing ordinary schools with additional resources, professional support and teacher training, we are also concerned about the construction of school premises and the facilities provided to meet the genuine needs of the students with SEN to facilitate their learning under a favorable environment.

Schools constructed after 1997 are in compliance with the prevailing requirements promulgated by the Buildings Department on barrier free access to facilitate access to school buildings and facilities by persons with disabilities. In the 2012/13 school year, out of the 852 ordinary schools in Hong Kong, 227 of them were completed after 1997 and they complied with the above standards. As for schools built before 1997, subject to technical feasibility, EDB has installed in their premises barrier free facilities such as

lifts, accessible toilets, ramps, etc. for use of persons in need through the second and subsequent phases of the School Improvement Programme.

When major alteration or improvement works are carried out in schools, EDB will install in their premises the barrier free facilities in need as far as possible and in accordance with the latest requirements on barrier free access and other established criteria, and consider factors such as technical feasibility, urgency for such facilities, availability of alternative measures to solve the inaccessibility problem, and availability of funding.

Furthermore, under EDB's established mechanism for upgrading school infrastructure, schools may carry out repair and improvement works on their school facilities according to their needs in the context of the annual major repair/alteration programme, including the provision of barrier free facilities such as lifts, accessible toilets, ramps, etc. To facilitate the learning of the students with SEN and their participation in school activities, schools can also apply for the Top-up Fund from EDB to procure special furniture and equipment or carry out minor conversion work such as construction of ramp, conversion of toilet or tailor-made desks and chairs for students with physical disability.

In sum, the design and structures of the some 800 public sector ordinary schools built at different times in the past posed some constraints for full implementation of the prevailing standards regarding barrier free access, and EDB does not keep statistics on the barrier free facilities of individual schools. However, EDB would, through the above channels, continue to install or improve the facilities to facilitate access to buildings and for use by persons with disabilities as far as possible.

At the post-secondary level, under the principle of institutional autonomy, post-secondary institutions in Hong Kong can determine how to deploy their resources to assist students with SEN. We understand that all eight UGC-funded institutions would provide barrier free access and facilities for students with physical disabilities (e.g. lifts, ramps, toilets for the physically disabled, etc.). Some self-financing institutions also provide

barrier free access and facilities to support the students with physical disabilities.

Education Bureau
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