

For information

**Legislative Council Panel on Education  
Subcommittee on Integrated Education**

**Response to Views and Suggestions  
Gathered by Members During School Visits**

**Purpose**

At the Subcommittee's request, this paper sets out the Administration's response to views and suggestions on the implementation of integrated education (IE) gathered by Members during their visits to two ordinary schools on 18 and 21 March 2013 respectively.

**Response to Views and Suggestions**

Challenges and manpower issues faced by teachers

2. Currently, the Administration is adopting a dual-track mode in delivering special education services. Subject to the assessment and recommendation of specialists and with the consent of parents, students with severe or multiple disabilities are admitted to special schools for intensive support services. Other students with special educational needs (SEN), most of whom can cope with mainstream curriculum, may enrol in ordinary schools. As ordinary and special schools serve different student groups, the teacher-to-student ratio and supporting facilities in these two types of schools are different, hence direct comparison between the two is not appropriate.

3. The Whole School Approach (WSA) to IE currently implemented in Hong Kong is in line with the global trend in the development of IE. Schools have also expressed support for IE. The Administration is aware of the various challenges faced by ordinary schools in catering for students with SEN. To facilitate schools to implement IE, the EDB has been providing schools with additional resources, professional support and teacher training on top of regular subvention. Furthermore, we also encourage schools to cater for students' learning needs by adopting a 3-Tier Intervention Model.

4. To nurture the healthy development of students (including those with SEN), the EDB has been promoting a WSA to guidance and discipline that calls for the concerted efforts of all teaching staff, student guidance personnel, school social workers and educational psychologists (EPs), etc. Apart from the implementation of a positive and active discipline

strategy in the classroom, preventive, remedial and developmental guidance programmes/activities are also provided. Through positive discipline, personal growth education, as well as structured individual and group training, students learn to observe discipline and develop their abilities in exercising self-control, emotion management and conflict management.

5. To assist teachers in their guidance and discipline work, we provide regular training and on-site support, including enhancing teachers' skills in classroom management. Regarding classroom management strategies, the class teacher is advised to design suitable class-teacher periods, class meetings and class/inter-class activities so that students are taught how to be caring and appreciative towards one another through discussions and activities. Class teachers may also make good use of various guidance strategies to enable students to learn how to respect and support one another and hence foster a caring and inclusive school culture.

6. The EDB has launched a pilot project in 30 public sector primary schools on the enhancement of support services for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in the 2011/12 school year, with a view to developing and trying out a school support model for early intervention of students with ASD. Under this project, assistance is rendered to students with ASD to enable them to acquire the appropriate skills in communication, socialisation and emotion management. The experience gathered and strategies employed will be recommended to and shared among all local primary schools in the 2013/14 school year. Besides, the EDB commissioned in the 2011/12 school year some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide after-school and/or Saturday group training for students with ASD in public primary and secondary schools that had a relatively larger intake of such students.

7. As regards students with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders (AD/HD), the EDB published a "Development of Executive Skills Resource Package" in the 2009/10 school year for primary schools to strengthen the executive skills of students with AD/HD through school-based group training programme. For secondary schools, the EPs of the EDB are currently developing a "Coaching Programme on Executive Skills" to help students with AD/HD enhance their self-management ability.

8. To relieve teachers' pressure in catering for students with severe SEN, for some hardcore cases, we will consider providing the schools with a time-limited grant for employing teaching assistants to help the students establish daily routines. For individual students with more severe emotional and behavioural problems as well as adjustment difficulties, subject to the consent of parents and the students themselves, schools or social

workers may refer the students for admission to schools for social development through the Central Co-ordinating Referral Mechanism to receive intensive support and guidance services.

9. We are aware of teachers' concern about the staffing issue. Over the past decade, the EDB has incessantly sought to strengthen the manpower of secondary and primary schools. Our efforts are made not only to help enhance the quality of education, but also enable teachers to enhance the support for students with SEN. In fact, the teacher-to-student ratio has improved from 1:20.4 to 1:14.4 and from 1:18.2 to 1:14.5 in primary schools and secondary schools respectively in the current school year as compared with the 2002/03 school year.

#### Additional Resources

10. In support of schools to implement IE, the EDB has been providing them with various additional resources, including the Capacity Enhancement Grant, the Learning Support Grant, the Enhanced Speech Therapy Grant, the Integrated Education Programme, the Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme, and provision of additional teachers for schools admitting Territory Band 3 and bottom 10% junior secondary students. Schools may flexibly deploy these resources in accordance with their own needs to hire additional teachers, teaching assistants or professional services (such as school-based speech therapy services and social skills/attention training groups services, etc.) to render support for students with SEN and relieve teachers' workload with regard to, among others, assisting in the implementation of individual education plans and performing related clerical duties.

11. The EDB has also made available a Top-up Fund for schools. If necessary, schools may apply for additional cash grant to purchase special furniture and equipment (such as Braille, CCTV magnifier and FM System) or carry out minor conversion works (such as building ramps and converting toilets) for students with disabilities to cater for their learning needs.

12. To tie in with the launch of the New Senior Secondary (NSS) Academic Structure, the EDB has allocated additional resources, including the Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant and the Diversity Learning Grant, to help schools cater for student diversity.

13. Regarding students who need Tier-1 support, teachers may make adaptations in curriculum and teaching for academic subjects that require more abstract and complicated thinking. To that end, the EDB provides additional teachers for schools admitting Territory Band 3 and bottom 10% students to give room for teachers to meet the learning needs of the students. The Curriculum Development Institute of the EDB also provides school-based professional support to help secondary schools develop school-based curriculum having

regard to the learning characteristics of their students. To cater for the different learning needs of students, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) offers candidates with a choice of papers either at elementary or advanced level, in the English Language and Mathematics of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSEE). Applied Learning subjects of the senior secondary curriculum are also specifically designed to cater for students' diverse learning needs and interests.

#### Early Identification, Early Intervention and Professional Support

14. It is a long-standing Government policy to support children with SEN through early identification and early intervention. The EDB implements the Early Identification and Intervention of Learning Difficulties Programme for Primary One Pupils in all public sector primary schools every year. Under the programme, teachers make use of the "Observation Checklist for Teachers" and the "Hong Kong Specific Learning Difficulties Behaviour Checklist (for Primary School Pupils)" to identify as early as possible Primary One students with learning difficulties and arrange for early intervention. For students whose learning progress remain unsatisfactory after intervention or those who have severe learning difficulties, they will be further assessed and provided with support services by EPs. The EDB has also provided the "Teachers' Observation Checklist for Identifying Speech and Language Impaired Students in Primary Schools" to facilitate teachers to early identify primary students with speech and language impairments and refer them to school-based speech therapists or the EDB for assessment and treatment if necessary.

15. Through the above mechanism, schools may refer students with severe or persistent learning difficulties to EPs or other professionals for assessment. For cases referred to EPs in the 2011/12 school year, about 80% were assessed within two months and about 90% within five months. For the rest, more time was needed due to some specific circumstances. For example, there were cases whose parents requested to defer the assessment and cases in which the assessment was suspended as the students involved needed to undergo medical treatment. Starting from the 2008/09 school year, the EDB has been extending progressively the School-based Educational Psychology Service (SBEPS), so that more schools are provided with the comprehensive support service. In the 2012/13 school year, 530 public sector primary and secondary schools are receiving SBEPS, covering about 60% of all public sector schools. It is anticipated that SBEPS will cover all public sector schools by the 2016/17 school year.

16. Apart from EPs' services, the professional staff of the EDB pay regular visits to schools to advise on school policies, IE support measures, teaching strategies, resource deployment, home-school co-operation, etc. Communication with and support for teachers are also strengthened through these visits. Furthermore, the EDB organises seminars,

workshops, talks and experience-sharing sessions for principals and teachers, and conducts relevant training courses for teaching assistants.

17. The EDB provides various school-based support services on catering for students' learning diversity and assist teachers in acquiring effective pedagogy. These services include language teaching support, school-based curriculum development for key learning areas, Principal Support Network, Seconded Teacher Scheme, Mainland-Hong Kong Teachers Exchange and Collaboration Programme, Scheme to Support Schools in Using Putonghua to Teach Chinese Language Subject, Professional Development Schools Scheme and University-School Support Programmes, etc.

18. In addition, the EDB has invited schools with rich experience in IE implementation to serve as Resource Schools in order to develop support network and share good practices. This provision was regularised in the 2009/10 school year. At present, there are 13 Resource Schools on WSA (five secondary schools and eight primary schools), offering services such as school-based support as well as experience sharing in implementing IE and support strategies. There are also 12 Special Schools cum Resource Centres, of which seven provide short-term attachment programmes.

19. The EDB has worked in cross-sector collaboration with tertiary institutions in developing assessment tools and diversified teaching materials for use by specialists, teachers and parents with a view to helping them support the students more effectively.

### Teacher Training

20. The EDB attaches great importance to enhancing the professional capacity of teachers in catering for students with SEN. Starting from the 2007/08 school year, the EDB has been providing serving teachers with structured training courses on supporting students with SEN pitched at Basic, Advanced and Thematic levels (BAT Courses). The EDB expects each ordinary school will have a certain number of teachers who have completed the relevant training. In this connection, we have been encouraging schools to arrange for teachers to attend the courses with reference to the training targets. Schools are required to have at least 10% to 15% of their teachers completing the Basic Course, at least three to six teachers completing the Advanced Course and at least three to six teachers completing the Thematic Courses (with at least one teacher completing the course(s) under each category as far as possible) by the end of the 2014/15 school year. The above training targets are set to strike a balance between teachers' training needs and the manpower required for school operation. As a matter of fact, at the end of the 2011/12 school year, about 7 000 teachers in public sector ordinary primary schools had received training in special education (i.e. successfully completed training of 30 hours or more in the BAT Courses or other relevant

courses recognised by the EDB), representing about 40% of the total number of teachers in public sector ordinary primary schools. As for secondary schools, over 4 000 teachers had received training in special education, accounting for about 16% of the total number of teachers in all public sector secondary schools.

21. To strengthen principals' capacity in leading the implementation of IE, apart from organising workshops for serving principals from time to time, the EDB has also incorporated topics such as catering for student diversity and spearheading IE implementation in the Preparation for Principalship Course for Aspiring Principals and induction programme for newly-appointed principals.

22. In addition to commissioning tertiary institutions to offer structured BAT courses for teachers, the EDB has also provided teachers with short-term training activities on various topics and in different forms, including seminars, workshops, exchange sessions on good practices and experience sharing sessions, etc. Schools may also invite the EDB staff to provide on-site training, such as thematic talks, for their teachers. In short, depending on their development needs and operation, schools may arrange for their teachers to participate in appropriate training activities to enhance their professional capacity in catering for students with SEN. Moreover, local teacher education institutions have incorporated "supporting students with SEN" or relevant topics in their pre-service teacher training programmes. This arrangement helps enhance the pre-service and serving teachers' professional knowledge in special education.

23. The EDB has been actively encouraging schools to adopt the WSA in supporting students with SEN, and the student support teams in schools to co-ordinate the planning and implementation of school-based IE policy and measures. This mode of operation is becoming more sophisticated. Student support teams may also work out measures to assist supply teachers in catering for students with SEN.

#### Public Examination Arrangements

24. The majority of the candidates with SEN sitting public examinations are no different from ordinary candidates in terms of intellectual abilities, and both groups have been taught the same NSS curriculum in schools. Hence, it is fair to assess the performance of both groups in the HKDSEE against the same criteria. Notwithstanding that, without compromising the fairness of the examinations, candidates with SEN may apply for special examination arrangements to fully display their learning outcomes in public examinations. Such special examination arrangements include but not limited to extension of examination duration, provision of special examination papers, use of special aids for reading papers and answering, and exemption from certain questions or papers for specific subjects. In the light

of individual circumstances, the HKEAA also allows candidates with SEN to read examination papers and answer questions during public examinations with special aids, such as screen readers, computer for typing answers to examination questions, and scribe, etc.

25. In the HKDSEE 2013, the HKEAA made special examination arrangements for 1 208 candidates with special needs. Applications for such special examination arrangements are vetted by the Committee on Special Needs Candidates (the Committee) or the Task Group on Special Examination Arrangements for Candidates with Specific Learning Disabilities (Task Group). Members of the Committee and the Task Group consist of the HKEAA's representatives, principals, teachers, EPs, academics and parents. They would study the medical report or psychological assessment report submitted by each individual applicant in accordance with the guidelines endorsed by the Public Examinations Board and the recommendations from schools and specialists when assessing each application for special examination arrangements

26. The HKEAA has drawn up an application guide on special examination arrangements, which has been uploaded onto the HKEAA website for reference of schools, parents and candidates. Special attention should be paid to Section 5 of the application guide, in which special examination arrangements and exemptions applicable to candidates with different types of special needs are set out.

27. The HKEAA has set up a working group under the Task Group to conduct in-depth discussion and examination of the feasibility of providing a "speech-to-text system" or scribing assistance for candidates with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD), while ensuring that such special examination arrangements are fair to all candidates (including those with and without SpLD). Members of the working group include representatives of the HKEAA, educational/clinical psychologists, academics, secondary school teachers and parents. The first working group meeting was held on 7 March 2013. The EDB will encourage schools to take actions to tie in with the development in this respect.

28. The new academic structure adopts various modes in assessing students' abilities and standards, which include the threshold levels of competence in their learning. School-based Assessment (SBA), one of the assessment modes for the NSS subjects, is used to evaluate skills that cannot be assessed by conventional paper-and-pencil examination. SBA can link up teaching and learning with assessment and can provide a more comprehensive assessment of students' overall performance. It enables students to recognise their strengths and weaknesses from teachers' feedback so as to make improvements continuously. Furthermore, SBA can also enhance students' interests and confidence in learning, thus fostering self-directed learning. Regarding the curriculum design of various subjects, students are given the opportunity to select modules which suit their interests and abilities

from the elective part in addition to the modules in the core part. Public assessments will also align with the design of the curriculum accordingly. Students with SEN who are weak in languages, such as students with SpLD, may apply for appropriate special examination arrangements on account of their learning needs under the existing mechanism.

#### Course Election, Pathways for Further Studies and Employment under NSS

29. To enable students to lay a broad and balanced technology education foundation upon completing junior secondary education, we have reviewed and enriched the learning elements covered by the Technology Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide. Based on the feedback from schools and teachers on the enriched Curriculum Guide, we recommended that, from the 2013/14 or 2014/15 school year onwards, all secondary schools may, depending on their readiness, put in place progressively the enrichment programme set out in the Curriculum Guide starting from Secondary One. Schools may choose and offer a variety of learning modules from the core learning elements. Since the Key Learning Area of the Technology Education Curriculum is developed to provide secondary students with an up-to-date, broad and balanced technology education rather than an in-depth study to any specific technology area, the new technical curriculum will be phased out progressively and abolished by the 2015/16 school year. The transformation from the new technical curriculum to the enriched Technology Education Key Learning Area Curriculum will render the support currently provided by workshop teachers obsolete, whose posts will hence be deleted in phases.

30. Records show that among those students with intellectual disabilities who study in ordinary schools implementing IE, 80 have applied for the 2012-14 adapted Applied Learning courses and 56 (70%) of the applications have been successful. When screening applicants for mainstream Applied Learning courses during interviews, course providers would take into account the applicants' SEN as well as the support available so that applicants would be placed appropriately.

31. In addition to the higher education programmes offered by University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions, the Administration is committed to providing our young people (including students with SEN) with flexible and multiple study pathways which comprise degree and sub-degree programmes covering different professional and academic disciplines, Yi Jin Diploma programme, vocational education and other programmes. The Vocational Training Council (VTC) has established a new Youth College in the 2012/13 academic year to provide dedicated support for ethnic minority students and students with SEN to enable them to have appropriate professional education and training.

32. Post-secondary institutions in Hong Kong enjoy academic freedom and institutional autonomy in course design. Regarding admission, the institutions offer equal opportunities to all eligible applicants. The admission decisions of post-secondary institutions are based on holistic assessment of the merit of the applicants. To assist students with SEN to study in UGC-funded institutions, a sub-system under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System has been created for the admission of these students. Students with SEN do not need to compete with other applicants, but must meet the minimum entry requirements of the corresponding courses. The VTC also has a special admission process for students with SEN. If an applicant with SEN meets the entry requirements of the programme and satisfies the interview assessment that he/she has the ability to complete the programme, an offer will be provided.

### Public Education

33. The EDB is fully aware of the importance of public education in its promotion of IE and has been raising the awareness of IE among the public and parents through various media. Major initiatives implemented in the recent five years are set out at Annex.

34. The EDB also organises talks regularly with NGOs for parents of children with SEN who will be admitted to Primary One. The purpose is to let them understand the support services provided for students with SEN by schools and to encourage them to choose an appropriate school for their children.

35. The EDB has published the Operation Guide on the WSA to IE and the Parent Guide on WSA to IE for schools and parents respectively, in which IE principles are introduced and supported by some successful cases. Recently, the EDB has re-organised its website content on IE and added more information for quicker and easier access and search by the general public.

36. As mentioned above, we have been organising thematic seminars, workshops, talks and experience sharing sessions, etc. for principals and teachers. We will continue to collaborate with the school sector, government departments and NGOs to expound the latest development in IE to different stakeholders through different media and forms of publicity activities, such as talks, workshops, exhibitions, video/television, etc. The EDB is also exploring ways to promote the concept of inclusion in a systematic manner through various forms and means, including Announcements of Public Interest, so as to enhance public awareness and foster a caring and inclusive society.

**ADVICE SOUGHT**

37. Members are invited to note the contents of the paper.

Education Bureau  
May 2013

**Activities on Integrated Education Launched by  
the Education Bureau in the Recent Five Years**

- In the 2008/09 school year, the Education Bureau (EDB), Department of Health (DH) and Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) jointly produced a series of 10 episodes of television programme “Parenting”, which is based on parents’ real-life experiences in taking care of their children with special educational needs (SEN), to enable the public to gain a better understanding of different types of SEN.
- To assist schools in cultivating an inclusive school culture, various kinds of promotional activities have been organised from time to time, including the video production and broadcasting contests jointly organised with the DH and the Subsidized Primary Schools Council for the promotion of integrated education (IE) in 2009. Compact discs containing the contents of the above two promotional activities and proposals for extended activities were produced and distributed to schools with a view to cultivating an inclusive culture in schools through learning activities. The compact discs have been uploaded onto the Hong Kong Education City (HKEdCity) website for access by the general public.
- Since May 2009, an online newsletter (融情) has been published regularly to help parents and the public gain a better understanding of IE. A total of 20 issues have been published up to April 2013. Topics covered include the IE policy, resources and support strategies, and good practices and experiences in implementing IE in schools.
- The EDB participated in the Learning and Teaching Expo 2011 organised by the HKEdCity in late June 2011 and introduced to teachers and the sector the support strategies adopted by ordinary schools in implementing IE and the characteristics of learning and teaching in special schools through booth displays and school visits.
- In late June 2011, the EDB staged the “Special Schools Variety Show” jointly with the RTHK, the Hong Kong Special Schools Council and the Hong Kong Institute of Education at the Hong Kong Coliseum in Hung Hom; and an eight-part series featuring special schools was also produced and broadcast on the radio programme “Crazy and Happy” between June and August 2011 so as to enhance public understanding and appreciation of the capabilities and talents of special school students as well as to honour special schools for their contributions and achievements.

- In mid 2012, the Visual Art Contest on Inclusion was organised, with a view to promoting an inclusive school culture and enhancing public and schools' awareness of and support for IE through the contest and a series of related activities, including roving exhibitions of the winning entries at public venue.
- Between October 2012 and January 2013, two educational television mini-series (“讓我高飛” and “天生我才”) featuring the stories of four primary and secondary students with SEN were broadcast. The mini-series can be viewed on the websites of the EDB and the HKEdCity.
- In 2012, a major public event – “Learning and Teaching Expo 2012” – was held to highlight the development and achievements of IE. Local and overseas academics were invited to give thematic talks and seminars. Relevant government departments and statutory bodies (including the Equal Opportunities Commission), NGOs, tertiary institutions, parent groups and schools, etc. set up booths to showcase their services, teaching materials and ancillary equipment for supporting students with SEN. In tandem, the EDB also arranged school visits to enable the sector, schools, teachers and parents to keep abreast of the latest development of IE. A theme song (天生有才) was composed for the event to boost the promotion of the characteristics and support needs of students with SEN.