



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局  
Education Bureau  
Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
The People's Republic of China

本局檔號 Our Ref. (25) in EDB(ESP)/ADM/10/1/3(4) 電話 Telephone: 3509 8505  
來函檔號 Your Ref.: CB4/PL/ED 傳真 Fax Line: 3104 4667

26 April 2013

Miss Polly Yeung  
Clerk to Education Panel  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central  
Hong Kong

Dear Miss Yeung,

**Legislative Council Panel on Education**  
**School-based After-School Learning and Support Programmes**

With regard to the concerns raised by Members of the Legislative Council about the School-based After-School Learning and Support Programmes (Programme) after the case conference on “Inadequate Financial Support for Children from Low-income Families for Participating in Extra-curricular Activities” on 21 January 2013, our response is as follows:

- (1) The objective of the Programme is to support Primary one to Secondary six students attending public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools who are in receipt of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance or full grant under the Student Financial Assistance Schemes to participate in after-school activities. The after-school activities cover three major areas, viz. learning; cultural, art and sports activities; and activities for enhancing the understanding of the community, with a view to facilitating all-round whole person development of needy students.

Support measures by the Education Bureau are formulated having due regard to the changing circumstances with review of the implementation conducted as appropriate. According to feedback of stakeholders, we have modified the mode of implementation of the Programme at the end of its first year of implementation. Starting from the 2006/07 school year, the Programme has been divided into the “school-based programmes” and the “community-based projects” to better meet students’ needs. As other governmental organisations and charitable trust funds are offering similar support, we have made clear to participating schools and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that the provision under the Programme is complementary in nature. We encourage schools and NGOs to deploy resources flexibly to achieve synergy among different organisations/programmes, hence sustainability of the support provided to students. In the long run, it is expected that service networks can be established at the district level to offer more holistic support for needy students. To address general concerns of stakeholders over the impact of the labeling effect on the development of needy students, flexibility has been built into the Programme to allow both students eligible for subsidies and other students to participate together in the same after-school activities organised.

In the 2010/11 school year, the Government has increased the annual provision to \$175 million, following a review of the after-school activities provided under the Programme. Upon the Government’s subsequent review and relaxation of the income threshold under the means test mechanism of the Student Financial Assistance Agency, the provision for the Programme has been raised further as from the 2011/12 school year to about \$208 million to correspond with the increase in the number of students receiving full grant.

To conclude, we will continue to collect views from stakeholders and review the implementation (including the provision) of the Programme.

- (2) Members have concerns over the issue that some schools may tend to provide after-school activities they excel in. It is worth noting that schools and NGOs, being organisers of school-based and community-based after-school activities respectively, should be able to identify the needs of their target students more objectively. As a matter of fact, most schools and NGOs have gauged students’ needs and interests before deciding on after-school activities to be organised in order to achieve a

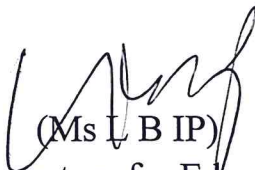
higher the attendance rate for better utilisation of resources. Besides, most NGOs have collaborated with schools under the “community-based projects” to tie in with the implementation of the “school-based programmes” and to attend to the needs of the students in the community. According to information on the after-school activities organised by schools and details of the approved plans of NGOs, we see no trace showing that schools or NGOs only organize after-school activities that they excel in.

- (3) The monitoring of school-based activities under the Programme, like other initiatives being implemented in schools, should be in line with the School Development and Accountability Framework. In brief, schools in receipt of funding have to include the relevant school-based implementation plan for supporting eligible students under the Programme in their school development plans uploaded onto schools’ homepages. Schools are also required to conduct an annual evaluation of the school plans with findings in reports for uploading onto schools’ homepages. Both school-based plans and evaluation reports have to be endorsed by the School Management Committee/Incorporated Management Committee. Regarding the “community-based projects”, NGOs have to submit to the Education Bureau progress reports and, upon completion of the “community-based projects”, evaluation reports as well as audited accounts. In parallel, performance of participating schools and NGOs are verified by supervisory visits and collection of feedback from stakeholders conducted by the Education Bureau for the review purpose.
- (4) Most participating schools and NGOs have adopted various arrangements and means to inform parents properly of the details of the activities. The most common means are circulars/letters to parents and leaflets on the activities. Schools and NGOs will continue to maintain close communication with parents and students to gauge their views before putting the activities in place so that the after-school activities organised can better meet their needs, and to encourage eligible students to participate in these activities. Schools will arrange the eligible applicants to join the activities organised in a fair, open and impartial manner.

- (5) The proposal to provide needy students with Octopus e-cards to facilitate their participation in after-school activities is similar to encashing the relevant support to eligible students or provision of coupons, over which stakeholders have diverse views. We hold the view that provision of funding to schools and NGOs for organizing the activities will better ensure the usage of the funding for supporting students' participation in after-school activities when compared with provision of direct subsidy to individual students. Moreover, after-school activities cover a wide spectrum and expenses to be required for each grade or individual student vary. The mode of providing funding to schools and NGOs would achieve better synergy and be more targeted and effective for sustaining the development of the activities.
- (6) The Education Bureau has all along encouraged schools, especially those located in districts with more needy students, to open up their school premises as far as possible. Generally speaking, after-school activities in most schools run until 6 to 7 pm on Mondays to Fridays. School premises are open on Saturdays until 2 to 3 pm and on Sundays as appropriate depending on the after-school activities organised. In addition, the Community Care Fund will review the After-school Care Pilot Scheme currently rolled out in some of the schools on a trial basis. The Scheme specifically encourages schools and NGOs to extend their service hours to provide after-school services to students in need. We will make reference to the findings of the review.

Should you have any enquiries, please contact Mr CK CHOY, Senior Education Officer (Extended Support Programmes), at 2863 4725.

Yours sincerely,

  
(Ms L B IP)  
for Secretary for Education