

立法會
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Panel on Education

Subcommittee on Integrated Education

**Minutes of the sixteenth meeting
held on Tuesday, 17 June 2014, at 8:30 am
in Conference Room 2A of the Legislative Council Complex**

Members present : Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung (Chairman)
Hon IP Kin-yuen (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che

Member attending : Hon WU Chi-wai, MH

Members absent : Dr Hon CHAN Ka-lok, Kenneth
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP

Public Officers attending : Items II & III

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Mr KWONG Ying-wai
Principal Education Officer (Special Education &
Kindergarten Education)

Mr Raymond HO
Principal Inspector
(Special Education Support 2)

Mrs Anissa WONG
Senior Education Officer
(Special Education Support 3)

Mrs Katherine YUEN
Senior Specialist (Educational Psychology
Service/Hong Kong)

Attendance by Invitation : The Division of Educational Psychology,
The Hong Kong Psychological Society

Mr WONG Yu-kwan
Committee Member

The Liaison Group of Professional Training
Programmes for Educational Psychologists in Hong
Kong

Dr LAM Shui-fong
Spokesperson

The Hong Kong Institute of Education

Dr HO Fuk-chuen
Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education
and Counselling

Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union

Ng Yuk Secondary School

Miss FUNG Yun-yee
Vice-President

Clerk in attendance : Miss Polly YEUNG
Chief Council Secretary (4) 4

Staff in attendance : Mr Ian CHOW
Council Secretary (4) 4

Ms Sandy HAU
Legislative Assistant (4) 4

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes

(LC Paper No. CB(4)761/13-14 -- Minutes of meeting on 18 February 2014

LC Paper No. CB(4)793/13-14 -- Minutes of meeting on 18 March 2014)

The minutes of the meetings held on 14 February 2014 and 18 March 2014 were confirmed.

II. Policy on teacher training and the establishment of the post of "co-ordinator for students with special educational needs"

(LC Paper No. CB(4)806/13-14(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

III. Issues related to the provision and quality of educational psychologist service

(LC Paper No. CB(4)806/13-14(02) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

Meeting with deputations / individuals and the Administration for agenda items II and III

2. The Subcommittee deliberated (index of proceedings attached at **Annex**).

3. The Division of Educational Psychology of the Hong Kong Psychological Society ("The Division of Educational Psychology") was requested to provide the Subcommittee with the findings of a study to be conducted by the working group set up to review the service ratio of educational psychologists.

EDB

4. The Education Bureau ("EDB") agreed to tap some thinking on a member's suggestion to implement a pilot scheme to provide a dedicated post of Co-ordinator for Special Educational Needs in each of a certain number of mainstream schools.

IV. Any other business

5. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:35 am.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
30 September 2014

**Proceedings of the meeting of the
Subcommittee on Integrated Education
on Tuesday, 17 June 2014, at 8:30 am
in Conference Room 2A of the Legislative Council Complex**

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
<i>Agenda Item I - Confirmation of minutes</i>			
000250 - 000401	Chairman	Confirmation of minutes	
<i>Agenda Item II- Policy on teacher training and the establishment of the post of "co-ordinator for students with special educational needs"</i>			
<i>Agenda item III Issues related to the provision and quality of educational psychologist service</i>			
000402 - 000542	Chairman	Opening remarks	
000543 - 001128	The Division of Educational Psychology, The Hong Kong Psychological Society ("The Division of Educational Psychology")	Presentation of views [LC Paper No. CB(4)816/13-14(01)]	
001129 - 001640	Hong Kong Professional Teacher's Union	Presentation of views [LC Paper No. CB(4)834/13-14(01)]	
001641 - 002218	The Liaison Group of Professional Training Programmes for Educational Psychologists in Hong Kong ("The Liaison Group")	Presentation of views [LC Paper No. CB(4)816/13-14(02)]	
002219 - 002634	The Hong Kong Institute of Education ("HKIEd")	Presentation of views [LC Paper No. CB(4)806/13-14(03)]	
002635 - 003159	Ng Yuk Secondary School ("NYSS")	Presentation of views	
003200 - 003308	Chairman	<p>The Chairman recapitulated the deputations' main concerns that –</p> <p>(a) the ratio of educational psychologist ("EP") to school should be improved;</p> <p>(b) the Administration's policy of encouraging schools to deploy existing teaching staff to co-ordinate various support measures to cater for</p>	

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		<p>students' special educational needs ("SEN") appeared ineffective. Instead, consideration should be given to creating the post of co-ordinator for students with special educational needs ("SENCO"); and</p> <p>(c) the target of at least 10% of teachers in an ordinary school having completed basic training in catering for SEN students was too low.</p>	
003309 - 004120	Education Bureau ("EDB") Chairman	<p>On issues related to the provision and quality of EP service, EDB advised that –</p> <p>(a) the School-based Educational Psychology Service ("SBEPS") would be progressively expanded to cover all public sector secondary and primary schools by the 2016-2017 school year; and</p> <p>(b) at present, under SBEPS, one EP served six to 10 public sector schools (with the average being slightly over seven schools served by one EP). SBEPS aimed at providing comprehensive services to schools at the school system, teacher support and student support levels. EPs visited the schools they served on a regular basis. They were expected to provide assessment and intervention for students, consultation and professional development for teachers as well as professional advice to the schools regarding policies and measures for supporting students with diverse educational needs.</p> <p>On issues related to training in special education for teachers, EDB advised that –</p> <p>(a) one of the targets was that by the end of the 2014-2015 school year, at least 10% to 15% of the serving teachers of each public sector ordinary school should have completed the 30-hour Basic Course on catering for SEN students. It was expected that a critical mass of teachers having completed the Basic, Advanced and Thematic Courses ("BAT") in each school would guide and collaborate with their colleagues to adopt the Whole School Approach ("WSA") and appropriate teaching strategies to support their SEN students. The Administration would keep reviewing the training targets to meet the training needs of teachers;</p> <p>(b) apart from the BAT courses, workshops, seminars and sharing sessions would also be organized continuously to keep teachers abreast of the latest development in special education and to enable them to share good practices; and</p>	

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		<p>(c) teacher education institutions had included a module on special education or catering for student diversity in their pre-service teacher training courses.</p> <p>On the suggestion to create the post of SENCO, EDB advised that –</p> <p>(a) in the 2008-2009 school year, EDB created a deputy headship post in public sector primary schools and one of the post holder's duties was to steer and co-ordinate efforts to support SEN students. It was noted that it was a common practice for primary and secondary schools to assign their vice-principals or senior teachers to lead and co-ordinate the engagement of the teaching force in implementing integrated education ("IE");</p> <p>(b) consideration had to be given to what should be the appropriate qualifications and experience for the SENCO post, as well as whether there were qualified teaching personnel available to fill the posts; and</p> <p>(c) there was no single common practice among all jurisdictions. For instance, while a dedicated post similar to SENCO was in place in the United Kingdom and Australia, the United States and Taiwan did not adopt a similar approach as far as co-ordination and steering at the school level was concerned.</p>	
004121 - 004919	Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung EDB Chairman	<p>Mr LEUNG urged EDB to –</p> <p>(a) devise a long-term plan for the implementation of IE and review the implementation of SBEPS ahead of the 2016-2017 school year;</p> <p>(b) consider deputations' suggestion that one EP should serve four public sector schools. To this end, EDB should discuss with universities to provide more EP training places; and</p> <p>(c) strengthen SBEPS so that there would be sufficient EPs to serve the schools so that each EP could allocate adequate time for assessing students and offering professional advice to schools.</p> <p>In response, EDB advised that –</p> <p>(a) under the current SBEPS, the average EP-to-school ratio was about 1:7.5. As observed by EDB, SBEPS had been effective in supporting schools at different levels, i.e. providing</p>	

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		<p>students with timely assessment and intervention, enhancing teachers' professional knowledge and skills in supporting SEN students and advising on school policies and support measures;</p> <p>(b) for the time being, there was no plan to raise the EP-to-school ratio to 1:4 as suggested. The Administration considered it necessary to strike a reasonable balance in the allocation of resources for various types of professional support such as EP service and speech therapy service; and</p> <p>(c) EPs, in their professional capacity, should be in a position to make the best use of their time in providing various aspects of professional services.</p> <p>The Chairman recapitulated the deputations' views that –</p> <p>(a) Hong Kong lagged behind other jurisdictions in the provision of EP service to assist SEN students; and</p> <p>(b) contrary to EDB's observation, under SBEPS, schools could not receive the full range of support at the levels of school system, teacher support and student support.</p> <p>The Chairman considered that EDB should review the effectiveness of SBEPS.</p>	
004920 - 005705	Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che EDB	<p>On SBEPS, Mr CHEUNG expressed the following views –</p> <p>(a) the Chairman's suggestion to review the effectiveness of SBEPS should be supported;</p> <p>(b) the Administration should deploy more resources to provide early support to SEN students so as to avoid the heavy costs for subsequent remedial measures. Early intervention would be conducive to reducing stress-related problems; and</p> <p>(c) there were insufficient professional training places to ensure a steady supply of EPs to meet service needs.</p> <p>Mr CHEUNG was concerned that the provision of resources by way of Learning Support Grant ("LSG") and the inadequate training for teachers would not render schools well-equipped in supporting SEN students.</p>	

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		<p>On the creation of the post of SENCO, Mr CHEUNG –</p> <p>(a) commented that vice-principals or senior teachers assigned the task of co-ordinating efforts to support SEN students were either too busy or lacking the appropriate skills to do so; and</p> <p>(b) urged EDB to create the post of SENCO in schools so that the post holder could focus attention on co-ordinating the school's efforts in catering for SEN students.</p> <p>In response, EDB advised that –</p> <p>(a) currently, EP (professional practice) training places were provided by two local universities whereas in the past, training places were provided by only one university;</p> <p>(b) EDB had encouraged schools to adopt WSA in implementing IE and to assign vice-principals or senior teachers to steer and co-ordinate efforts to support SEN students. Vice-principals were considered to be the appropriate personnel as they were part of senior school management; and</p> <p>(c) it was necessary to further examine whether the proposed creation of the SENCO post could adequately address existing problems in supporting SEN students at the school level and whether resources could be more cost-effectively utilized in other areas.</p>	
005706 - 011038	Deputy Chairman The Liaison Group EDB Chairman	<p>In explaining its suggestion that the EP-to-school ratio should be improved to 1:4, the Liaison Group said that on 25 April 2014, a working group set up by the Division of Educational Psychology had convened a focus group meeting to review the EP-to-school ratio. Ten school-based EPs from 10 sponsoring bodies that provided SBEPs in Hong Kong had attended the meeting. The working group had the following findings –</p> <p>(a) on average, each EP had to serve seven to eight schools and could only visit each school once or twice each month; and</p> <p>(b) each EP had to handle about 100 assessment cases annually and each assessment case took at least five to six hours to complete.</p> <p>Under the existing manpower situation and heavy caseload, EPs had to work under tight time constraint.</p>	

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		<p>They could only make general recommendations in their assessment reports on SEN students, and could only focus on remedial work, while preventive and developmental work could not be provided.</p> <p>The Liaison Group said that it had made reference to overseas practice and considered that improving the current EP-to-school ratio to 1:4 was achievable. As a result of this improved manning scale, an EP could visit each of the four schools once a week. One day in the week could be spent on paper work, preparation and professional development. EPs could have time to carry out the assessments on students in a more thorough manner, as well as to provide advice and support to teachers and parents. According to the Liaison Group's experience, peer coaching, that is, EPs working in collaboration with teachers in planning and designing teaching materials and pedagogy, was most helpful to teachers.</p> <p>The Deputy Chairman sought EDB's views on the existing EP-to-school ratio and on the suggestion of the Liaison Group.</p> <p>EDB responded that while there were merits in an improved manning ratio, the Administration must strike a balance in the appropriate allocation of resources to provide support in different areas.</p> <p>The Chairman considered that SBEPS was vital for the effective implementation of IE. The Administration should formulate an improved target for the EP-to-school ratio and provide the necessary resources to meet the target.</p> <p>EDB said that currently, it was working towards the target of extending SBEPS progressively to cover all public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools by the 2016-2017 school year. It might be more appropriate to consider the question of whether a new EP-to-school ratio should be set after full implementation of SBEPS.</p> <p>The Liaison Group stressed the importance of prior planning. It recalled that in 1990, the Education Commission had recommended in its Report No. 4 that EP services should be introduced in mainstream secondary schools. However, in 1993, fresh graduates of EP training programmes were unable to secure employment as EPs because the Administration had not been able to obtain the necessary resources to take forward the Education Commission's recommendation. Hence, the Liaison Group urged the Administration to consider the formulation of a new target on the EP-to-school ratio now, rather than after the 2016-2017 school year as it</p>	

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		was necessary to take into account the service demand and the availability of trained manpower.	
011039 - 013820	Mr TAM Yiu-chung EDB Chairman NYSS The Division of Educational Psychology HKIEd	<p>Mr TAM remarked that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) as reflected by the deputations, teachers experienced difficulties in catering for SEN students. There was a strong need for EDB to enhance the professional capability of teachers by providing the necessary training; (b) according to some school principals whom he had met, they preferred to be provided with additional teachers, rather than the creation of the post of SENCO, to handle SEN students; and (c) in his view, priority should be given to allocating resources to strengthen SBEPS rather than the creation of the SENCO post as EPs could provide schools with professional advice and teachers with consultation and professional development, thereby enhancing the capacity of schools in supporting SEN students. <p>EDB advised that student support teams also played an important role in providing support to SEN students. Since the circumstances and needs of individual schools were different, it would be more appropriate for schools to flexibly deploy various school-based resources to secure the necessary services/support to meet their specific needs.</p> <p>EDB pointed out that its immediate priority was to implement the progressive expansion of SBEPS to cover all public sector schools. It would review the implementation of SBEPS and its future direction in consultation with stakeholders in due course. The proposed creation of the SENCO post would also require careful consideration.</p> <p>NYSS said that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) serving teachers were often unable to attend training courses in special education due to their heavy day-to-day teaching and non-teaching duties; (b) due to the infrequent visits of EPs, it was very difficult to arrange timely assessment for students, and a waiting period of two to three months was required for new cases referred to EPs for assessment; (c) it was very difficult for schools to deploy LSG to engage additional teachers and/or teaching 	

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		<p>assistants ("TAs") to support SEN students as very few people were willing to take up the job; and</p> <p>(d) teachers were already overloaded with teaching and non-teaching duties. Without additional manpower, they might not be able to give sufficient attention to cater for the needs of SEN students.</p> <p>NYSS urged EDB to –</p> <p>(a) thoroughly review the implementation of IE through WSA in public sector schools;</p> <p>(b) allocate sufficient resources to meet the needs of schools; and</p> <p>(c) strengthen the provision of EP service and create the SENCO post in schools as both were important for supporting SEN students.</p> <p>The Chairman urged the Administration to take into serious consideration the deputations' views and concerns, and come up with the necessary improvements.</p> <p>In response, EDB advised that –</p> <p>(a) under WSA, EDB encouraged all teachers in the school to join efforts in supporting SEN students. EDB would render appropriate assistance to schools where necessary;</p> <p>(b) EDB was open on commencing discussion with stakeholders on the future development of SBEPS ahead of the 2016-2017 school year;</p> <p>(c) EDB was well aware of the challenges faced by teachers in providing educational support to SEN students; and</p> <p>(d) in providing support to schools, the Administration must see to it that resources were put to the most cost-effective use in addressing the needs of the students.</p> <p>EDB assured members that in considering the way forward in implementing IE, the Administration would also make reference to the findings and recommendations of this Subcommittee.</p> <p>At the Chairman's request, the Division of Educational Psychology agreed to provide the Subcommittee with the findings of a study to be conducted by the working group set up by the</p>	<p>The Division of Educational Psychology was requested to provide the information as</p>

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		<p>Division to review the EP-to-school ratio.</p> <p>Sharing the views of NYSS, HKIED said that EPs and SENCOs were equally important for the successful implementation of IE in ordinary schools.</p> <p>HKIED noted that many top overseas universities, such as the University of Oxford, had admitted quite a number of SEN students. This was in sharp contrast to the situation in Hong Kong where very few SEN students could enter universities.</p> <p>On the professional qualification for the proposed SENCO post, HKIED suggested that teachers with formal training in special education should be able to take up the functions of SENCOs.</p>	<p>stated in paragraph 3 of the minutes.</p>
013821 - 015216	<p>Mr WU Chi-wai EDB The Liaison Group Chairman NYSS</p>	<p>Mr WU suggested that each ordinary school should be allowed to confine student intake to not more than two types of SEN. This arrangement would allow schools to accumulate expertise and experience in supporting specific types of SEN and to deploy resources accordingly.</p> <p>Mr WU highlighted the difficulties faced by teachers in catering for diverse SENs under the existing resources provided by EDB. He considered it necessary to identify and assess early those children suspected of having SENs, so that children of similar types of SEN could be placed into the same school.</p> <p>On Mr WU's suggestion, EDB said that while it was open to further discussion, the following issues had to be considered –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) whether such an arrangement would result in a labelling effect on certain ordinary schools, resulting in an alternative type of special schools; (b) the acceptance on the part of parents and the school sector; and (c) whether the choice of schools for SEN students would be reduced as a result. <p>On the professional qualification of SENCO, the Liaison Group opined that a full-time Senior Graduate Master/Mistress ("SGM") rather than a TA should take up the functional post, as SGM should be more familiar with acquiring the necessary services for supporting SEN students and more effective in co-ordinating professionals of different disciplines and in leading other teaching staff to implement IE through WSA.</p>	

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		<p>EDB considered that the responsibility for steering and co-ordinating efforts in supporting SEN students should be taken up by more senior teaching staff such as SGMs or vice-principals.</p> <p>The Liaison Group suggested that EDB should ensure a "revolving door mechanism" so that SEN students who could not adapt to education in ordinary schools could transfer to special schools and vice versa. The Liaison Group considered that schools should not be classified strictly into ordinary schools and special schools. More midway options should be available for students with different abilities.</p> <p>The Chairman commented that the professional qualification for the SENCO post should be pitched at a level commensurate with the functions and responsibilities of the post.</p> <p>NYSS shared its experience that its Guidance Team Coordinator, who had been assigned the responsibility of co-ordinating support for SEN students, had not received relevant training and had experienced great difficulties in performing this function. NYSS also considered that the SENCO post should be a permanent post.</p>	
015217 - 015511	Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che EDB	<p>To better assess the effectiveness of the SENCO post, Mr CHEUNG suggested EDB to carry out a pilot scheme for two to three years to provide a dedicated SENCO post in each of a handful of ordinary primary and secondary schools which had admitted SEN students. The effectiveness of support could then be compared with that of other ordinary schools without such a post.</p> <p>EDB said that it would tap some thinking on Mr CHEUNG's suggestion.</p>	EDB was requested to tap some thinking on a member's suggestion as stated in paragraph 4 of the minutes.
015512 - 020510	Deputy Chairman Chairman EDB	<p>The Deputy Chairman was concerned that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) EDB appeared to have placed the burden of supporting SEN students on schools after providing them with certain lump-sum grants which were far from sufficient; (b) many frontline teachers had felt helpless and disappointed as they were unable to help SEN students, and had chosen to quit the profession or retire early; and (c) the current training courses on catering for SEN students were inadequate in equipping teachers with the capability to support SEN students. 	

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		<p>The Deputy Chairman urged EDB to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) create the permanent post of SENCO in each public sector school; (b) provide full-time in-service professional training , preferably up to postgraduate level, to serving teachers who aspired to be SENCOs; (c) review and formulate an improved EP-to-school ratio; and (d) provide schools and teachers with the necessary assistance and support in catering for SEN students. <p>In response, EDB reiterated that it had provided ordinary schools with various school-based resources for supporting their SEN students. Under the provision of additional resources, schools were required to provide appropriate support to the SEN students.</p> <p>The Chairman commented that the existing resources provided to schools were far from adequate. The various support services had not been effective in achieving their intended purposes. For instance –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) on average, each EP could only visit a school once or twice monthly; and (b) under the existing training target, only about 10% to 15% of teachers in an ordinary school were required to complete the 30-hour Basic Course on catering for SEN students. <p>The Chairman supplemented that according to the Report of the Study on Equal Learning Opportunities for Students with Disabilities under the Integrated Education System released by the Equal Opportunities Commission in 2012, between 30% and 50% of the school principals and teachers appeared not receptive of SEN students and many school principals even indicated that students with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder or Autism Spectrum Disorders should not attend their schools, or that special accommodations to cater for SEN students were unnecessary. These findings reflected that IE had not been effectively implemented in ordinary schools. He reiterated his view that the post of SENCO should be created.</p>	

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<i>Agenda Item IV – Any other business</i>			
020511- 020649	Chairman	To facilitate the Subcommittee in preparing its report, the Chairman reminded the Administration to provide, by the end of July 2014, written responses to issues raised by the Subcommittee at past meetings.	

Council Business Division 4
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30 September 2014