

Panel on Education Subcommittee on Integrated Education

Barrier Free Facilities in Public Sector Schools

Regarding the information requested by Hon Fernando CHEUNG as detailed in his letter of 23 December 2013, the Administration's reply is as follows:

Provision of facilities in public sector schools

- The Education Bureau (EDB) is committed to providing an appropriate learning environment for students with special educational needs (SEN). Schools constructed after 1997 are in compliance with the prevailing requirements on barrier free access promulgated by the Buildings Department to facilitate access to school buildings and facilities by persons with disabilities. 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.
- While schools constructed in different eras should have fulfilled the building requirements governed by the legislation, and regulations as well as established criteria which prevail at the time of construction, 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, taking into account 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 apply for conducting 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 meet the needs of the schools, EDB would continue to install or improve the facilities to facilitate access to buildings and for use by persons with disabilities as far as possible through the above channels.
- Apart from providing additional barrier free facilities to schools, EDB has all along been providing additional resources for schools to help them

support their students with SEN including provision of Top-up Fund. Schools may, based on the actual needs of the students, use Top-up Fund to procure special furniture and equipment, and carry out minor conversion works. For students with visual impairment, schools can apply for Top-up Fund to procure the equipment required, such as CCTV Magnification System, Refreshable Braille Display and Screen Reading Software, to enhance students' learning effectiveness in the classrooms. As for students with hearing impairment, schools can use the Top-up Fund to procure FM system for the students to enhance the listening effects with a view to helping them to learn and to integrate in school activities.

Funding for improving school infrastructure and Top-up Fund

- The funds available for improving school infrastructure and the Top-up Fund in the past 5 years are as follows:

School Infrastructure Improvement Works

- (i) In the 2009-10 to 2013-14 financial years, regarding works that improve the infrastructure of schools, the EDB has been allocated \$5,120 million under Capital Works Reserve Fund Head 708 Subhead 8100QX and Head 156 - Government Secretariat: Education Bureau Subhead 900 to carry out more than 130 numbers of minor works, and for each year about 800 numbers of major repairs works. The scope of works include alterations, additions, repairs and improvements including slope inspections and minor slope improvement works; as well as the major in-house investigations for building projects funded by education subvention under Capital Works Reserve Fund Head 708 Subhead 8100QX (e.g. the consultants' design fees and charges, preparation of tender documents and site investigation costs). In addition, the Finance Committee has approved \$3,800 million under Capital Works Reserve Fund Head 703 and Head 708 to improve the teaching and learning environment of 16 schools through reprovisioning and redevelopment.

Top-up Fund

- (ii) The annual expenditure on Top-up Fund is incurred according to the applications from schools for that particular year. The total amount of Top-up Fund for public sector ordinary schools in the recent 5 years is as follows:-

School Year	\$(Million)
2008/09	0.9
2009/10	1.1
2010/11	1.9
2011/12	0.9
2012/13	0.9

Education Bureau
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