

**Panel on Education
Subcommittee on Integrated Education**

Meeting on 14 January 2014

Capacity of and professional development and training for teachers to support students with special educational needs

Measures/plans to improve facilities of schools to better meet the needs of their students with special educational needs

Introduction

To facilitate the Subcommittee's consideration of the two captioned issues, Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG, Subcommittee Chairman, has instructed that a composite table should be prepared listing the views/concerns of deputations and members, as well as the responses provided by the Administration in respect of the meetings held on 30 April, 27 May, 18 June, 8 July and 3 October 2013.

Advice sought

2. Members are invited to note the attached table setting out the aforesaid information (position as at 9 January 2014).

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
9 January 2014

**Panel on Education
Subcommittee on Integrated Education**

Meeting on Tuesday, 14 January 2014

Capacity of and professional development and training for teachers to support students with special educational needs ("SEN")			
	Existing arrangement	Views of deputations/members	Administration's responses
1	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)824/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>In accordance with the five-year teacher professional development framework put in place in 2007-2008, the Educational Bureau ("EDB") has commissioned structured training courses pitched at the Basic, Advanced and Thematic levels. In addition to the requirement that at least 10% of the teachers in a school should have completed the Basic Course, schools should arrange for at least three teachers to attend the Advanced Course, and at least one Chinese Language and one English Language teacher to attend the Thematic Course on Specific Learning Difficulties. At least one teacher should attend the Thematic Course on Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders where the school has admitted these students.</p>	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)824/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>(a) The deputations shared a general view that the aforesaid targets were unrealistic. Even if they were attained and the number of trained teachers increased steadily, the percentage of teachers well-equipped to handle SEN students remained far from adequate;</p> <p>(b) given the heavy teaching and administrative duties of many teachers, schools had difficulty in releasing their serving teachers to attend the on-the-job training course;</p> <p>(c) there was a view that EDB should work with the tertiary institutions to include training on integrated education ("IE") as part of the pre-service teacher training programmes, instead of relying mainly on in-service training; and</p>	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)952/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraphs 32 and 33</p> <p>Paragraphs 35 and 37</p> <p>Paragraph 38</p>

	Existing arrangement	Views of deputations/members	Administration's responses
		(d) EDB should formulate plans to encourage teachers to undertake IE-related training and to increase the number of teachers equipped with the necessary training in IE.	Paragraphs 32 to 34 and 36 to 37
2	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)945/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>By the end of the 2011-2012 school year, about 40% and 16% of the teachers in public-sector primary and secondary schools respectively have received special education training on catering for SEN students. Starting from the 2012-2013 school year, EDB has offered a new round of professional development courses for teachers. According to EDB, enhancing teachers' professional capacity in catering for SEN students is its policy target.</p> <p><i>Teacher training with respect to students with hearing impairment ("HI")</i></p> <p>The core and elective modules of the Advanced Courses cover all SEN types (including elective modules focusing on the learning and teaching of HI students). Schools having admitted HI students are required to arrange teachers to attend the Thematic</p>	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)945/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>(a) Some deputations referred to Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which also provided that all teachers for the deaf should be proficient in sign language. It was suggested that a sign language qualification requirement</p>	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)1007/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraphs 41 to 46</p>

	Existing arrangement	Views of deputations/members	Administration's responses
	<p>Courses on "Educating students with HI" or "Educating students with HI and Speech and Language Impairment" launched in the 2010-2011 school year. The Thematic Courses on Sensory Communication and Physical Needs cover the content of educating students with HI. Since the 2011-2012 school year, EDB has also arranged 11 seminars and workshops on support for HI students.</p> <p><i>Teacher training with respect to students with visual impairment ("VI") and physical disabilities ("PD")</i></p> <p>For schools which have admitted VI and/or PD students, at least one teacher should attend the Thematic Courses on VI and/or PD. In addition, EDB and the Hong Kong Society for the Blind have been co-organizing thematic seminars on supporting VI students annually since the 2008-2009 school year.</p>	<p>should be set for teachers or professionals involved in educating deaf students. A system of educational interpreters conversant in sign language should be developed for in-class support; and</p> <p>(b) according to some deputations, all teachers in Taiwan were required to undergo basic sign language training. It was submitted that deaf adults should be provided with equal opportunities for training to become teachers for deaf students.</p> <p>(c) There was a general view that the existing training framework could hardly provide in-depth training on supporting VI students. Greater emphasis should be placed on pre-service training for teachers;</p> <p>(d) as VI students had difficulties in coming to grasp with subjects like Mathematics and science subjects, it was suggested that teachers of Mathematics and science subjects should also be required to attend thematic courses on</p>	<p>Paragraphs 41 to 43</p>

	Existing arrangement	Views of deputations/members	Administration's responses
		<p>the learning needs of VI students, similar to the requirement on English Language and Chinese Language teachers; and</p> <p>(e) there was a general suggestion that the proportion of teachers in each mainstream school having received training on supporting SEN students should be raised to 50%.</p>	
3	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)111/13-14(01)</u></p> <p>To support students with mental derangement ("MD"), EDB has commissioned annually a tertiary institution to run a 120-hour thematic course on Psychological Approach to Effective Strategies in Handling Students' Challenging Behaviour. In the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years, EDB and the Hospital Authority ("HA") jointly organized a number of regional thematic seminars on early psychosis for sharing of how to support students with MD.</p>	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)111/13-14(01)</u></p> <p>(a) According to some deputations, frontline teachers were overburdened with an enormous amount of teaching and non-teaching duties. They did not have any spare capacity to undergo training, nor to give extra attention to support SEN students, including those with intellectual disability and MD; and</p> <p>(b) some members indicated that it was unrealistic to require each teacher to be familiar with each type of SEN. Instead, a more pragmatic approach might be the provision of intensive training to teachers on the types of SEN that they had to handle.</p>	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)146/13-14(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraphs 23 and 24</p> <p>Paragraph 26</p>

Measures/plans to improve facilities of schools to better meet the needs of their students with special educational needs			
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4	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)945/12-13(01)</u></p> <p><i>Allocation of resources</i></p> <p>EDB has been providing schools with additional resources on top of the recurrent subvention for mainstream schools, including the Top-up Fund for purchasing special furniture and equipment and carrying out minor conversion works for students with disabilities.</p> <p><i>Barrier-free access and facilities for VI and PD students</i></p> <p>All new schools built in May 1997 or thereafter are required to comply with the Design Manual on Barrier Free Access promulgated by the Buildings Department for the provision of barrier-free access facilities for persons with PD, including lifts, ramps, bridges, toilets for persons with disabilities, handrails and signage</p>	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)945/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>(a) Some members and deputations requested the Administration to consider whether a special fund should be set up for application by SEN students, instead of by schools, to acquire the necessary support services/items.</p> <p>(b) One of the main concerns raised by many deputations for VI and PD students was that not all mainstream schools had provided the necessary barrier-free access and facilities to cater for the needs of these students. The Administration was asked to take stock of the existing facilities at schools and to ensure</p>	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)1007/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraphs 25, 29 and 63</p> <p>Paragraphs 23 to 26</p>

	Existing arrangement	Views of deputations/members	Administration's responses
	<p>etc. For schools built before May 1997, where circumstances allow, additional facilities will be installed through conversion or improvement works to provide a barrier-free learning environment for PD students.</p>	<p>that the necessary rectification works were carried out where feasible; and</p> <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)1006/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>(c) the Administration was requested to provide information on –</p> <p>(i) the number of primary schools, secondary schools and postsecondary institutions that had duly provided barrier-free access and facilities at their premises;</p> <p>(ii) the number of primary schools, secondary schools and postsecondary institutions where barrier-free access and facilities, or alterations for the provision of such facilities, had not been provided at their premises; and</p> <p>(iii) the timetable, if any, for the schools in (ii) above to carry out the necessary works for the provision of barrier-free access and facilities at their premises.</p>	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)1006/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Written response set out in the said paper</p>

	Existing arrangement	Views of deputations/members	Administration's responses
	<p><i>Equal learning opportunities in school</i></p> <p>It is noted that the Code of Practice on Education issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission provides schools and educators with practical guidelines and assists educational establishments in developing policies that prevent and eliminate disability discrimination. It also stipulates that educational establishments should not discriminate against students with disabilities.</p> <p><i>Provision of braille textbooks</i></p> <p>Since 1986, EDB has been providing subvention to the Hong Kong Society for the Blind for the operation of the Centralized Braille Production Centre ("CBPC") which produces braille reading materials for VI students. At present, braille textbooks and reference books used by VI students attending public-sector ordinary primary and secondary schools are produced by CBPC under the coordination of the VI school. As informed by EDB, as a result of concerted efforts by all</p>	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)945/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>(d) According to some deputations, quite a number of VI or PD students had been advised or asked by their schools not to take certain subjects such as Science, Visual Arts, Physical Education, Domestic Science out of safety or other considerations. Some of these students were even refused participation in visits and outdoor activities such as walkathons. EDB was asked to formulate proper guidelines and take measures to eliminate such practices which might amount to discrimination.</p> <p>(e) As reflected by many deputations, there was grave concern that VI students often received braille textbooks at a belated stage, such as shortly before examination. This was an impediment to learning, placing these students in a disadvantaged position;</p> <p>(f) to improve access by VI students to printed works (notably textbooks and related publications) published locally and overseas, the Administration was urged to introduce</p>	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)945/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraph 27</p> <p>Paragraphs 37 to 40</p>

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	<p>parties concerned to expedite the production process, CBPC can basically provide braille books for VI students according to their schools' teaching progress in the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years.</p>	<p>amendments to the existing copyright legislation in order to give effect to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons who are Blind, Visually Impaired, or otherwise Print Disabled adopted by the World Intellectual Property Organization on 28 June 2013. Pursuant to the Treaty, contracting parties are required to adopt national law provisions that permit the reproduction, distribution and making available of published works in accessible formats through limitations and exceptions to the rights of copyright owners. EDB was asked to look into the matter in conjunction with the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau; and</p> <p>(g) to enhance the learning opportunities of VI students, the Administration was urged to allocate more resources, and/or to collaborate with non-governmental organizations, in the production of textbooks and learning materials in the electronic format.</p>	

	Existing arrangement	Views of deputations/members	Administration's responses
	<p><i>Higher education</i></p> <p>According to the deputations, there has been a steady increase in the number of HI, VI and PD students receiving post-secondary and vocational education. An inclusive campus environment with the necessary support for SEN students was therefore crucial for effective teaching and learning.</p> <p>As advised by EDB, resources requirements for providing support to SEN students have been taken into account in the allocation of triennial funding to University Grants Committee ("UGC")-funded institutions. Recent initiatives to support SEN students include the setting up of scholarships to give recognition to meritorious SEN students pursuing full-time post-secondary education. It has also been proposed in the 2013-14 Budget to allocate \$12 million to the Vocational Training Council ("VTC") each year to purchase equipment and learning aids for SEN students, providing them with counseling services, and enhancing the support for teaching and learning.</p>	<p><u>Difficulties faced by HI students</u></p> <p>(h) It was submitted that once HI students progressed to post-secondary studies, all forms of support from EDB would cease, including the provision of free hearing aids, counseling and adaptations of examination arrangements. EDB was asked to continue its assistance for HI students pursuing higher education;</p> <p>(i) according to some individual persons with HI, they had encountered considerable difficulties when seeking admission/pursuing studies in post-secondary institutions and institutes of vocational education under VTC, mainly because these institutions could not provide sign language interpreters or note-takers. HI students might not be able to afford the costs of acquiring such services; and</p> <p>(j) a deputation referred to her university education in the United States and informed the Subcommittee that services of note-takers and sign language interpreters were available for HI students, the costs of which</p>	<p>Paragraphs 53 to 55</p>

	Existing arrangement	Views of deputations/members	Administration's responses
		<p>were borne by the Government.</p> <p><u>Difficulties faced by VI and PD students</u></p> <p>(k) According to some deputations, there was inadequate provision of assistive tools at some institutions to cater for the learning needs of VI students;</p> <p>(l) as reflected by some deputations, there was a lack of barrier-free access and facilities at some institutions for VI and PD students. One of the examples cited was the lack of barrier-free access for electrical wheelchair users at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. This had deterred a student with PD from enrolling with the Academy after a three-week trial; and</p> <p>(m) there was a suggestion that where necessary, post-secondary institutions should allow PD students to bring along an accompanying person when attending classes so as to cater for their special needs.</p>	