

**Panel on Education
Subcommittee on Integrated Education**

Meeting on 18 March 2014

University/higher education for students with special educational needs

Introduction

To facilitate the Subcommittee's consideration of the captioned issue, 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 2013 and 3 October 2013.

Advice sought

2. Members are invited to note the attached table setting out the aforesaid information (position as at 17 March 2014).

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
17 March 2014

**Panel on Education
Subcommittee on Integrated Education**

Meeting on Tuesday, 18 March 2014

University/higher education for students with special educational needs ("SEN")			
Special examination arrangements			
	Existing arrangement	Views of deputations/members	Administration's responses
1	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)824/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Special examination arrangements for SEN students were required to ensure that they could enjoy equal opportunities in assessments and could show the subject knowledge they had acquired and the skills commanded. To provide schools with practical guidance, the Education Bureau ("EDB") published the "Guidelines on Special Examination Arrangements for Students with Special Educational Needs in Internal Assessment" in 2009. As regards public examinations, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority ("HKEAA") had set up the Committee on Special Needs Candidates and the Task Group on Special Examination Arrangements for Candidates with Specific Learning Disabilities. Special arrangements adopted by HKEAA included extended</p>	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)824/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>(a) There was concern that when some students previously diagnosed with specific learning difficulties in reading and writing were assessed under the "Hong Kong Test of Specific Learning Difficulties in Reading and Writing for Junior Secondary School Students", they were assessed as not fulfilling the diagnostic criteria of dyslexia. As a result, they became no longer eligible to apply to HKEAA for special examination arrangements;</p> <p>(b) some deputations urged EDB/HKEAA to consider their suggestion to provide additional special examination arrangements, such as scribe and dictate answers and the feasibility of using speech-</p>	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)952/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraph 48</p> <p>Paragraphs 46 and 47</p>

	Existing arrangement	Views of deputations/members	Administration's responses
	<p>examination time, and providing candidates with dyslexia with question papers in enlarged print and allowing these candidates to write on alternate lines or pages of an answer book. Candidates applying for special examination arrangements were required to provide supporting documents with recommendations by psychologists.</p>	<p>to-text conversion software. Many parents opined that the mere extension of examination time might not be a sufficient adaptation measure; and</p> <p>(c) some deputations considered that while HKEAA provided special examination arrangements to enable candidates with SEN to be equitably assessed under suitable conditions without having an unfair advantage over other candidates in public examinations, it was unfair that the performance of these candidates were assessed according to the same marking scheme/assessment criteria applicable to other candidates.</p>	<p>Paragraph 49</p>
2	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)945/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>HKEAA made special examination arrangements for candidates with SEN after considering the recommendations of qualified professionals such as ophthalmologists, occupational therapists etc. These included arranging special examination centres for the candidates, exempting listening assessment, oral assessment of language subjects and school-based assessment of English Language</p>	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)945/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>(a) Concern was raised about the Liberal Studies ("LS") subject which required considerable listening and presentation skills. Some deputations called on HKEAA to enhance its adaptation arrangements for HI students in the HKDSE Examination; and</p>	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)1007/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraph 51</p>

	Existing arrangement	Views of deputations/members	Administration's responses
	<p>for students with hearing impairment ("HI"), provision of extra time, using braille/enlarged/special font size and word- and line-spacing question papers for candidates with visual impairment ("VI") and allowing them to use ancillary aids such as braille/magnifier/CCTV/screen reader, arranging candidates with physical disabilities ("PD") to sit for examinations at special examination centres with barrier-free access and facilities. HKEAA had set up a Committee on Special Needs Candidates, which comprised representatives from EDB, the Department of Health, special schools, secondary schools and tertiary institutions, Committee on Home-School Co-operation, the Division of Educational Psychology under the Hong Kong Psychological Society and the Hong Kong Occupational Therapy Association. EDB had been maintaining close communication with HKEAA to keep the special arrangements, such as the formats, target groups and criteria, under constant review and enhancement.</p>	<p>(b) some deputations for VI students considered that HKEAA should improve the quality of the question papers, in particular the use of braille diagrams.</p>	<p>Paragraph 52</p>

University/higher education for SEN students			
Opportunities for higher education or training			
	Existing arrangement	Views of deputations/members	Administration's responses
3	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)824/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Under the New Academic Structure, all secondary students took only one public examination, i.e. the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education ("HKDSE") Examination upon completion of Secondary 6. The general entrance requirement for local undergraduate programmes was attainment of Levels "3-3-2-2" in the four core subjects. The minimum general entrance requirements for sub-degree programmes were five subjects at Level 2 or above (including Chinese Language and English Language) in the HKDSE Examination. It was noted that the number of publicly-funded undergraduate places fell short of the number of students fulfilling the minimum entrance requirements.</p>	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)824/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>(a) The deputations noted with grave concern the keen competition for local undergraduate places and the limited opportunities for SEN students. Very few SEN students could manage to gain admission to universities. There was a suggestion that post-secondary institutions should suitably adjust their admission criteria, reserve a certain quota of its places for SEN students and provide the necessary support measures. There was a view that the implementation of integrated education ("IE") should be extended to higher education sector;</p> <p>(b) to ensure equal opportunity in higher education for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders ("ASD"), there was a suggestion that in deserving cases as recommended by educational psychologists or clinical psychologists, these students should be exempted from taking the LS examination. Some deputations also suggested that when considering</p>	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)952/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraph 50</p> <p>Paragraphs 51 and 52</p>

	Existing arrangement	Views of deputations/members	Administration's responses
		<p>applications for admission, higher education institutions should not take into account the grade attained by ASD students in LS in the HKDSE Examination;</p> <p>(c) according to some parents, a number of SEN students had been offered places by Taiwan universities where the learning environment was more favourable. However, some of them could not take up the offer due to a lack of financial means, as the grants/loans currently administered by the Government did not cover overseas studies;</p> <p>(d) the Administration was asked to consider providing financial assistance for higher studies in Taiwan so that SEN students would be able to benefit from university education; and</p> <p>(e) according to some deputations, although the Vocational Training Council ("VTC") had put in place a special admission mechanism for students with SEN, the support available to SEN students to facilitate their learning and satisfactory completion of studies was inadequate.</p>	<p>Paragraph 54</p> <p>Paragraph 54</p> <p>Paragraphs 53 and 55</p>

	Existing arrangement	Views of deputations/members	Administration's responses
4	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)945/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>According to EDB, resources requirements for providing support to SEN students had been taken into account in the allocation of triennial funding to University Grants Committee ("UGC")-funded institutions. Recent initiatives to support SEN students included 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 2013-2014 Budget to allocate \$12 million to 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>LC Paper No. CB(4)945/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>(a) Deputations shared serious concern that there was no prevailing policy on the implementation of IE and fostering of an inclusive environment in the post-secondary education sector, even for the publicly-funded UGC institutions and VTC. As many support measures for SEN students would cease upon their completion of secondary education, SEN students progressing to higher studies were often confronted with formidable challenges;</p> <p>(b) it was noted that EDB was currently collecting information from UGC-funded institutions regarding their support measures for SEN students. The Administration was urged to formulate a comprehensive policy on the implementation of IE in the post-secondary sector, and to consider requiring each institution to establish a dedicated office staffed by qualified personnel to oversee the provision of support to SEN students and the development of an inclusive campus environment. Where necessary, the Administration should consider providing additional resources to the institutions concerned;</p>	<p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)1007/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraphs 53 to 55</p>

	Existing arrangement	Views of deputations/members	Administration's responses
		<p><i>Difficulties faced by students with HI</i></p> <p>(c) it was submitted that once HI students progressed to postsecondary 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>(d) 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;</p> <p>(e) 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 were borne by the Government;</p>	Paragraphs 53 to 55

	Existing arrangement	Views of deputations/members	Administration's responses
		<p><i>Difficulties faced by students with VI and PD</i></p> <p>(f) 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>(g) as reflected by some deputations, there was a lack of barrier-free access and facilities at some institutions for students with VI and PD. 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>(h) there was a suggestion that where necessary, post-secondary institutions should allow students with PD to bring along an accompanying person when attending classes so as to cater for their special needs.</p>	Paragraphs 53 to 55