

**Panel on Education
Subcommittee on Integrated Education**

Meeting on Friday, 13 December 2013

| Current mechanism for placing students with special educational needs ("SEN") into mainstream primary and secondary schools, including parental choice and home-school cooperation | | | |
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| | Existing arrangement | Views of deputations/members | Administration's responses |
| | LC Paper No. CB(4)410/12-13(03) – Annex I | | |
| 1 | <p>The Government adopts a dual-track mode in delivering integrated education ("IE") and special education. The Education Bureau ("EDB") will, subject to the assessment and recommendations of specialists and the consent of the parents, refer students with severe or multiple disabilities to special schools for intensive support services. Other SEN students may attend ordinary schools.</p> <p>On admission arrangements, parents apply for a place for their children in ordinary primary and secondary schools through the established mechanisms, i.e. the Primary One Admission System and Secondary School Places Allocation System.</p> <p>Most of the SEN students in ordinary schools are able to cope with the mainstream</p> | <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)824/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>(a) According to some parents, they had encountered difficulties when applying for admission because some schools were reluctant to admit SEN students;</p> <p>(b) to pool resources for more effective use, there was a suggestion that EDB should examine the feasibility of designating certain schools in each district to cater for specific types of SEN;</p> <p>(c) according to some parents, notwithstanding the "Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education" and numerous other guidelines issued by EDB, the schools attended by their children had been unwilling to implement the necessary</p> | <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)952/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraphs 18 and 19</p> |

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| | <p>curriculum and attend classes together with other students. To facilitate their studies, EDB encourages schools to adopt a 3-Tier Intervention Model to provide additional support for SEN students in accordance with their individual needs. The level of intervention will be adjusted according to the progress and needs of students as shown in their formative and summative assessments.</p> <p>For students in ordinary schools who are in need of Tier-3 individualized support, EDB requests schools to draw up individual education plans ("IEPs") for them and follow up regularly. For other SEN students, schools are required to record the support and adaptations offered as well as their performance and progress for regular review and adjustment of the level of support required. The Government considers that schools have been providing appropriate support and follow-up for all SEN students under the prevailing mechanism.</p> | <p>adaptation measures in teaching and examination arrangements to cater for their special needs;</p> <p>(d) the deputations urged EDB to step up its work in monitoring the effective and equitable implementation of IE at the school level with a view to ensuring that relevant guidelines on IE were properly followed and the requirements, complied with;</p> <p>(e) it was proposed that each SEN student should be provided with an IEP and that small class teaching should be practised in classes with SEN students;</p> <p>(f) owing to the difficulties in implementing IE in the past decade or so, there was a view that the Administration should consider an alternative arrangement of placing SEN students who were unable to integrate into ordinary schools into designated special schools; and</p> | |

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| | | <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)945/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>(g) some deputations had submitted the view that due to the few number of hearing impairment ("HI") students in individual mainstream schools, they could easily be neglected and become victims of bullying and discrimination in schools. It was suggested that EDB might consider placing HI students in a few mainstream schools only. This would enable the pooling of resources to provide support to HI students in a targeted and effective manner at the school level.</p> | <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)1007/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraphs 18 and 19</p> |
| 2 | <p>Parents are encouraged to proactively provide information on SEN of their children to EDB and schools. Subject to the consent of the parents, EDB will collect and send the information to the students' schools for reference and follow-up actions. Should students be assessed suitable for placement in special schools, the specialist conducting the assessment will send the assessment report to EDB for arranging such students to attend special schools accordingly. EDB conducts briefing sessions every year to inform parents</p> | <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)111/13-14(01)</u></p> <p>(a) As highlighted by members and some deputations, students with limited intelligence attending ordinary schools often faced enormous difficulties. However, under the existing policy, these students might only be referred to a special school upon parental consent on an exceptional basis if they were also diagnosed with other types of SEN; and</p> | <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)146/13-14(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraphs 18 to 22</p> |

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| | <p>of SEN pre-schoolers of the referral procedures and support measures offered by schools, etc.</p> <p>After admission to schools, if parents find their children in need of special support in terms of learning or adjustment, they should discuss the matter with the schools so that the schools can provide necessary support services for their children accordingly. Student guidance teachers and social workers in ordinary schools may, according to the guidelines of EDB, refer SEN students to special schools for intensive support services as appropriate. During regular school visits, professional staff of EDB may provide advice and suggestions on individual cases when needed. In fact, the respective section of EBD receives referral cases from ordinary schools every school year and necessary arrangements are made accordingly.</p> <p>EDB invites special schools to serve as Special School cum Resource Centres ("SSRCs") and ordinary schools with rich and proven experience in IE to serve as Resource Schools on the Whole School Approach ("WSA"). They will conduct professional exchanges with ordinary schools and provide school-based</p> | <p>(b) members and deputations expressed concern about parental choice of the schools most suitable for their children. They urged the Administration to appreciate the predicament faced by these students and respect the choice of their parents to place these students into special schools.</p> | |

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| | <p>support for them. SSRCs also provide short-term attachment programmes to assist ordinary schools in supporting intellectually disabled students with severe adjustment difficulties. Students concerned will be arranged to join the short-term attachment programmes which last for three to six months at a suitable SSRC. Apart from offering short-term attachment programmes, teachers of SSRCs will provide teachers of ordinary schools with training and consultation to enhance their professional capability so that they can support these students when they return to their own schools upon completion of the short-term attachment programmes.</p> | | |
| 3 | <p>EDB has been promoting WSA to IE. Schools should provide appropriate support to and make necessary adaptations to cater for the needs of individual SEN students. SEN students should be free from discrimination in admission and class placement, which should be conducted professionally based on, among others, students' abilities, psychological development and social needs. Schools will make the most appropriate class placement arrangements in the light of their individual</p> | <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)945/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>According to some deputations, quite a number of students with visual impairment ("VI") or physical disabilities ("PD") had been advised or asked by their schools not to take certain subjects such as Science, Visual Arts, Physical Education, and 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</p> | <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)1007/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraph 27</p> |

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| | <p>circumstances and an array of factors, including teaching and learning arrangements, division of responsibilities among the teaching force and the effectiveness of class management. It is worth noting that class placement is a professional decision which should rest with schools. It is not appropriate for EDB to issue guidelines requiring all schools to adopt a standardized class placement model.</p> | <p>asked to formulate proper guidelines and take measures to eliminate such practices which might amount to discrimination.</p> | |
| 4 | <p>With EDB's promotion over the years, schools have set up student support teams or functional teams led by principals, vice-principals or senior teachers to plan, implement and review support services for SEN students, including making changes in facilities and pedagogy to remove barriers to learning. The teams should communicate and collaborate closely with parents and stakeholders in order to reach a consensus on culture building, policy formulation and implementation so that SEN students can be provided with appropriate education.</p> | <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)824/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>(a) In the absence of any dedicated post, the school teacher entrusted with the responsibility to head the student support team could only spend a limited amount of his time amidst his other duties to oversee and co-ordinate the work of supporting SEN students in the school; and</p> <p>(b) many deputations considered it necessary to create a dedicated teaching post in schools to oversee and co-ordinate the provision of support measures and implementation of IE (commonly referred to as a SEN Co-ordinator post).</p> | <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)952/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraphs 23 and 24</p> |

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| 5 | <p>EDB recognizes the importance of home-school cooperation. It has been urging schools to establish a regular communication mechanism with parents, the details of which have been set out in the "Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education", including engaging parents in devising support plans, monitoring their children's learning progress and the effectiveness of support measures, etc. to tie in with the work of the schools. EDB has also required schools to elucidate their policies, additional resources and support measures, etc. on IE in their Annual School Reports, and upload such information onto their school websites for parents' reference. To enhance parents' understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the context of the implementation of IE, EDB issued the "Parent Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education" as early as 2008. The Parent Guide has been uploaded onto the EDB's website and is updated from time to time.</p> | <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)824/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>(a) The deputations had cited examples on the lack of communication between the school and parents of SEN students over the adaptation and support measures and in reviewing the effectiveness of these measures;</p> <p>(b) EDB should require schools to formalize and strengthen the existing communication mechanism between schools and parents; and</p> <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)945/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>(c) there was a view that currently, there was very limited information on the admission of HI and VI students by individual mainstream schools. It was suggested that EDB should provide more information on those mainstream schools which had admitted these students/specialized in providing IE for these students, such as the proportion of HI and VI students in the student body, the support measures available etc. for parents' reference.</p> | <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)952/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraph 55</p> <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)1007/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraph 56</p> |

| New Funding Model for integrated education in primary and secondary schools and the adequacy or otherwise of the funding | | | |
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| 6 | <p>To support SEN students, EDB has been providing schools with additional resources, including additional teachers to cater for students with low academic achievement, Learning Support Grant ("LSG"), Enhanced Speech Therapy Grant and Top-up Fund, etc. Schools may deploy such resources flexibly to employ additional teaching staff and procure professional services, having regard to the needs of their students and the situation of the school.</p> <p>Schools use government funding for procuring service from non-governmental organizations ("NGOs"), organizing activities or talks, as well as providing consultation service or collaboration projects. Schools can also tap external professional knowledge through procurement of services and research projects jointly conducted with tertiary institutions. In addition, schools can work with NGOs to promote inclusive culture and support SEN</p> | <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)824/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>(a) As reflected by the school sector, the subsidies/resources provided by the Government were far from sufficient. The existing level of LSG, for example, would only enable a secondary school to engage three new teachers at point 17 of the Master Pay Scale;</p> <p>(b) it was said that a school had to admit as many as 75 SEN students to be eligible for the maximum LSG of \$1.5 million per annum. On the funding mechanism, the Administration was asked to provide a higher level of subsidy on a per capita basis;</p> <p>(c) some parents questioned whether individual schools had spent the additional resources (e.g. LSG) for the direct benefit of SEN students;</p> | <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)952/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraphs 21 and 22</p> |

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| | <p>students. EDB also organizes seminars, network conferences and professional exchange sessions to enable teachers to share successful experiences and achievements. Schools can also establish networks with SSRCs and Resource Schools on WSA to facilitate continuous professional development.</p> <p>Professional staff of EDB pay regular visits to schools to provide advice on schools' support policy, measures, teaching strategies, resources deployment (including additional resources provided for schools, screening tools and teaching resources developed for various types of SEN students) and home-school co-operation, etc. EDB also meets with voluntary organizations, parent groups and school councils from time to time to directly gauge their views on the implementation of IE and explore with them opportunities for collaboration.</p> <p>EDB will continue to disseminate information to schools about special education resources available, including strengthening the database</p> | <p>(d) it was suggested that EDB should review in conjunction with the school sector whether and how the existing provision of resources should be improved, as well as the cost-effective use of resources;</p> <p>(e) there was a view that the Administration should collaborate with the NGO and private sectors in the provision of various professional services. Consideration might also be given to the issuance of vouchers to needy parents/SEN students for acquiring the necessary services;</p> <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)945/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>(f) according to some deputations for VI students, some three months were required for applicant-schools to procure the necessary assistive tools for VI students under the Top-up Fund. There was a suggestion that applications to the Top-up Fund should be allowed during the summer vacation instead of after commencement of the school term in September to enable the</p> | <p>Paragraphs 30 and 31</p> <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)1007/12-13(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraph 29</p> |

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| | <p>and network of its Special Education Resource Centre to facilitate convergence of various resources and information for use and sharing among teachers. Books and publications on special education are also procured and subscribed by the Centre for the sector's reference. The relevant information has been uploaded onto EDB's website.</p> | <p>timely procurement of the items for VI students;</p> <p>(g) it was considered that small class teaching would enhance teaching and learning effectiveness for SEN students;</p> <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)111/13-14(01)</u></p> <p>(h) it was pointed out that while the number of SEN students enrolled in mainstream schools was on the rise, there had not been a corresponding increase in the resources provided;</p> <p>(i) in the view of some members and deputations, the well-being of the children was of paramount concern. The Administration was urged not to place excessive emphasis on resources consideration;</p> <p>(j) members were gravely concerned that schools admitting students with mental derangement ("MD") would not be eligible</p> | <p>Paragraph 31</p> <p><u>LC Paper No. CB(4)146/13-14(01)</u></p> <p>Paragraphs 16 and 17</p> <p>Paragraph 27</p> |

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| | | <p>for additional resources to cater for these students who required learning support not less than their counterparts assessed to have SENs; and</p> <p>(k) some members shared the view that MD should be specified as a type of SEN, and that schools admitting students with MD should also be equipped with additional support and resources.</p> | |