

**For discussion on
11 May 2015**

Legislative Council Panel on Education

**Issues Related to Cross-boundary Students and
Establishing Schools in Shenzhen for Children Born in Hong Kong**

Purpose

This paper appraises Members of the issues related to cross-boundary students (CBS) and establishing publicly-funded primary schools in Shenzhen for children born in Hong Kong.

Background

2. According to Education Bureau's (EDB) survey¹, the number of CBS has risen from 9 899 in the 2010/11 school year (sy) to 24 990 in the 2014/15 sy. The number of CBS attending kindergartens (including kindergarten-cum-child care centres and hereafter as KG), primary schools and secondary schools in Hong Kong and using various land Boundary Control Points² (BCPs) in the 2014/15 sy is provided at the **Annex**.

3. With the implementation of "zero delivery quota" policy since 2013, we estimate that the overall number of students including CBS will rise and peak in the 2015/16 and 2018/19 sy for Nursery (K1) and Primary 1 (P1) levels respectively, followed by a progressive decline thereafter to a stable level. Concomitantly, the demand on the handling capacities of BCPs is expected to stabilise.

¹ EDB's annual surveys on the number of CBS are conducted via schools in September of the respective school years in North, Tai Po, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long, Sha Tin, Tsuen Wan, Kwai Tsing, Tung Chung (starting from the 2012/13 sy) and Wong Tai Sin (starting from the 2014/15 sy) districts.

² The six land BCPs are Lo Wu, Lok Ma Chau Spur Line, Man Kam To, Sha Tau Kok, Lok Ma Chau (Huanggang) and Shenzhen Bay Port.

Issues related to CBS

Provision of school places

4. In the light of the propensity of CBS to choose schools in the North District under Primary One Admission (POA) and hence the excessive demand for primary school places in that district, POA³ has been revised starting from the 2014/15 sy whereby a separate list of schools comprising schools from districts close to the BCPs or other districts with CBS in KG and/or primary schools and ready to support them is provided for CBS to choose from in the Central Allocation stage.

5. To cope with the transient increasing demand for local school places (including that arising from CBS), EDB would in tandem continue to adopt the established flexible measures, which include borrowing of school places from neighbouring school nets; expansion of the capacity of existing schools through the use of remaining classrooms, changing the use of other rooms⁴ into additional classrooms, building additional classrooms through extension projects, temporarily allocating more students to each P1 class if necessary; and recycling of vacant school premises⁵.

6. To ensure that learning effectiveness would not be compromised upon temporary allocation of more students per class, starting from the 2015/16 sy, EDB will provide eligible schools implementing small class teaching with Additional Learning Support Grant when they are temporarily allocated more students per P1 class up to a total of 30 students per class for the cohort of students concerned for a period of six years. This is on top of the prevailing arrangement of providing time-limited additional Assistant Primary School Master/Mistress post(s) to eligible schools for the cohort of students concerned for a period of six years when schools having basically 25 students allocated per P1 class are required to temporarily

³ The POA System comprises two stages, i.e. the Discretionary Places Admission stage and the Central Allocation stage. Parents can choose any public sector primary schools during the Discretionary Places Admission stage and Part A “Unrestricted Schools Choices” of the Central Allocation stage (i.e. without any restriction by virtue of school net), while they can choose schools of their children’s own school net (i.e. their place of residence) under Part B “Restricted Schools Choices” of the Central Allocation stage. The revised arrangement for CBS is applicable to Part B of the Central Allocation.

⁴ Other rooms do not include the special rooms in schools.

⁵ Three schools will be operated in the vacant school premises deployed (including one in school net 72 (i.e. Tin Shui Wai) of Yuen Long and two in school net 46 of Kwun Tong) on a time-limited basis from the 2015/16 sy to the 2023/24 sy.

increase the number of students to 30 per P1 class. In the case when the actual number of students allocated to each P1 class of a school exceeds 30, EDB will provide the schools concerned with an additional funding for each additional student above 30 in each P1 class for the cohort of students concerned for a period of six years.

7. Regarding public sector secondary school places, according to the latest information available and having taken into account the actual number of existing students (including CBS) at primary levels, even if the Secondary 1 student population rebounds a few years later, it is estimated to be adequate to meet the demand.

8. As for KG education, it is not compulsory and has all along been provided by the private sector. KGs have been handling student admission matters at their own discretion subject to relevant rules and guidelines issued by EDB. At the same time, parents can freely choose KG places suitable for their children. EDB has implemented a number of measures to improve the admission procedure for K1 class for the 2015/16 sy. Among others, to prevent the hoarding of more than one place by a student, thereby releasing vacant places for students on the waiting list, we required parents to use ‘2015/16 voucher’ as a registration document and register with only one KG within a period specified by EDB (“centralized registration dates”). To assist parents in securing a K1 place for their children, EDB released KG vacancy information after the “centralised registration dates” and updated it at regular intervals for parents’ information. The sector considered that the arrangements facilitated smooth operation of the admission process and could facilitate early confirmation of enrolment for manpower planning. As for the parents, the long queue situation had been considerably improved or disappeared and they could confirm a K1 place for their children earlier than before.

Transportation facilitating measures

9. To facilitate CBS in commuting to and from schools every day, the Government has put in place various facilitating measures to enhance transportation and clearance services for CBS using various land BCPs. These measures include allowing local school buses to gain access to the Lo Wu (LW) and Lok Ma Chau Spur Line (LMCSL) BCPs to take CBS to and from their schools; granting special quotas for cross-boundary school coaches for carriage of CBS through the Lok Ma Chau (Huanggang) (LMC(HG)), Man Kam To (MKT), Sha Tau Kok (STK) and Shenzhen Bay Port (SBP) BCPs; implementing simplified

clearance procedures at LMCSL, LW and SBP BCPs and provision of on-board clearance service at MKT, STK and LMC(HG) BCPs.

10. The number of students travelling daily across the boundary and choice of BCPs through which they would access Hong Kong are subject to significant year-on-year changes depending on family factors, distribution of their places of residence and adjustment of related policies, etc. It has also to be recognised that there are limits to the handling capacities of the six land BCPs and their connecting road networks on both Hong Kong and Shenzhen sides in the face of transient upsurge in the number of CBS. The Government will continue to monitor closely the transportation and clearance needs of CBS, and will provide necessary supporting measures to cater for their needs and ensure the safe and efficient daily commuting of CBS to and from Hong Kong through various land BCPs.

Views on establishing publicly-funded primary schools in Shenzhen for children born in Hong Kong.

11. EDB understands that there has been suggestion on establishing publicly-funded primary schools in Shenzhen for children born in Hong Kong. In this connection, it is worth noting that firstly the surge in CBS demand for primary school places is transient due to the implementation of the “zero delivery quota” policy since early 2013 for expectant Mainland mothers whose husbands are not Hong Kong residents. Secondly, according to the latest available information, the projected overall demand for P1 school places would progressively decrease from the 2019/20 sy onwards to a stable level. This would have consequential implications for the stability and sustainability of the proposed publicly-funded primary schools for CBS in Shenzhen. Thirdly, operating Hong Kong publicly-funded schools in Shenzhen involves regulatory, operational and financial complications, such as the teacher qualifications, remuneration, level of funding, etc.

12. In the light of the above, EDB is of the view that setting up publicly-funded primary schools in Shenzhen is neither a viable nor desirable option to address the transient problem of a surge in CBS in Shenzhen. To cater for the needs of CBS, apart from continuing with the established flexible measures to increase the provision of school places in Hong Kong for taking in CBS, we would continue to explore with Mainland authorities on providing special quotas for

cross-boundary school coaches and continuing other facilitating transportation arrangements for CBS.

13. We would also encourage more Hong Kong children currently residing in Shenzhen to pursue primary schooling in schools/classes operating under the Scheme of Classes for Hong Kong Students (Scheme). At present, there are nine minban (民辦) schools in Shenzhen participating in the Scheme⁶, and two more minban schools will be joining in the 2015/16 sy. The provision of classes and places of these schools can be adjusted yearly subject to the actual demand. Professional support will continue to be strengthened to enhance the capacity of the teachers of minban primary schools to teach the Hong Kong curriculum effectively. Talks and seminars on the interface between primary and secondary education will also be conducted for teachers and parents of these minban schools in Shenzhen.

Advice sought

14. Views and comments are welcome.

Education Bureau

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⁶ The minban primary schools operating under the Scheme are self-financing. Among the nine schools, two schools offer admission to Hong Kong students only and seven operate Hong Kong curriculum classes alongside the Mainland curriculum classes.

(I). Number of Cross-boundary Students by District and by School Level in the 2014/15 School Year

District	Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary
North	5 379	5 590	1 995
Tai Po	391	1 496	406
Sha Tin	51	322	49
Yuen Long	2 500	2 609	293
Tuen Mun	1 893	1 712	106
Tsuen Wan	0	1	1
Kwai Tsing	80	2	0
Tung Chung	69	6	1
Wong Tai Sin	1	36	1
Total	10 364	11 774	2 852

(II). Number of Cross-boundary Students by Boundary Control Points in the 2014/15 School Year

Boundary Control Point	No. of Cross-boundary Students
Shenzhen Bay Port	6 737
Lok Ma Chau (Huanggang)	1 062
Man Kam To	1 397
Sha Tau Kok	1 288
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	9 021
Lo Wu	5 485

Note: Figures are based on the annual survey conducted via schools in September 2014 on the number of students travelling daily across the boundary in North, Tai Po, Yuen Long, Tuen Mun, Sha Tin, Tsuen Wan, Kwai Tsing, Tung Chung and Wong Tai Sin districts.