



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局
Education Bureau
Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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Ms Angel WONG
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Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Fax Line : 3152 7052)

Dear Ms WONG,

Panel on Education

Follow-up to meeting on 12 December 2016 and the policy briefing on 24 January 2017

Thank you for your letters dated 13 December 2016 and 26 January 2017 respectively. With regard to the two motions passed under the agenda item of "Latest development on the review of the Territory-wide System Assessment" at the meeting on 12 December 2016 and the motion passed under the agenda item "Briefing by the Secretary for Education on the Chief Executive's 2017 Policy Address" at the policy briefing on 24 January 2017, we submit our reply as attached. Grateful for your follow-up, please.

Yours sincerely,

(Ms Jenny CHAN)
for Secretary for Education

Encl.

**Response from Education Bureau to the
motions passed under the agenda items
“Latest development on the review of the Territory-wide System Assessment”
at the meeting of the Education Panel of the Legislative Council on 12 December
2016 and
“Briefing by the Secretary for Education on the Chief Executive’s 2017 Policy Address”
at the policy briefing on 24 January 2017**

Background

The Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy (the Committee) submitted its report on the overall review of Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) to the Education Bureau (EDB) in February 2016, which reaffirmed the intent and value of the establishment of TSA and recognised the functional use of TSA data to provide feedback to learning and teaching and help formulate measures to support learning. For TSA at Primary 3, the Committee considered that the assessment papers and question design should be adjusted, and that the reports distributed to schools could adopt different formats. Such initiatives should be implemented as a tryout arrangement in 2016 with a view to collecting and reviewing feedback.

2. The Committee reviewed the implementation of the four new initiatives for enhancement under the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) (2016 Tryout Study) (including improving assessment papers and question design; enhancing school reports; strengthening diversified professional support measures; and including a questionnaire survey on students’ learning attitude and motivation). Based on the feedback and views collected through various channels and the experience of participating schools, students acquired Basic Competencies through daily learning without additional or over-drilling for TSA, and parents observed that their children participated in TSA felt no pressure. The parents also pointed out the importance of home-school communication and mutual trust in facilitating their understanding of school-based homework and assessment policies and strengthening their partnership with schools. The Committee considered that the four new initiatives for enhancement could effectively eliminate the incentives for over-drilling caused by TSA and alleviate stakeholders’ concerns about the stakes involved. Therefore, the Committee recommended in the report submitted in early December extending the four new initiatives for enhancement to primary schools in the territory in 2017 in order to allow more schools to understand the new initiatives through participation. Accordingly, the Committee and the EDB could receive more comprehensive feedback to continue to review and enhance the arrangements for TSA.

Basic Competency Assessment Research Study

3. Based on the positive feedback from the 2016 Tryout Study, the EDB, with reference to the Committee's recommendations, introduced the Basic Competency Assessment Research Study (Research Study) which would be extended to all primary schools on 23 January 2017. The purpose of the Research Study is to enable more schools to participate and understand the new elements of the 2016 Tryout Study and to collect more comprehensive feedback from schools and various stakeholders. The Committee would continue to listen to the views of various parties and advise on the implementation and evaluation of the Research Study to provide feedback to and review the arrangements for TSA.

4. The Research Study is a research with expanded scope. It is not a resumption of Primary 3 TSA. Besides, the data obtained will not be used to evaluate the performance of schools. According to the experience of the 2016 Tryout Study, there is indeed no incentive for schools to over-drill or over-drive their students in the light of the Research Study. The Research Study includes a basket of targeted complementary measures and resources to enable schools to make good use of assessment data for feedback which can enhance the overall effectiveness of learning, teaching and assessment to benefit students. Therefore, we should trust and support schools to facilitate their smooth participation in the Research Study.

5. The experience of schools participating in the 2016 Tryout Study showed that through enhanced communication, different stakeholders could grasp the function and value of TSA and have a better understanding of the concept of "assessment for learning". Should schools participating in the Research Study encounter special circumstances or difficulties, Regional Education Offices of the EDB would look into the matters and provide assistance.

Removing Stakes

6. The EDB has already removed TSA from the performance indicators of primary schools. We would also strengthen internal guidelines on the use of assessment data and enhance professional training to schools (including school managers) with a view to alleviating schools' concerns about the stakes involved in the use of assessment data.

The Problem of Over-drilling

7. While the new initiatives for enhancement are able to effectively eliminate the incentives for drilling induced by TSA, the EDB and the Committee are still concerned about the problem of drilling culture. An "Initiative" on "Opposing over-drilling and reaffirming the good use of assessment to provide feedback to learning and teaching" was launched by

the Chairman of the Committee on Home-School Co-operation and District Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations on 23 January this year. It was well-received and supported by various stakeholders including sponsoring bodies, school councils and school heads associations, reflecting a clear consensus among them to reaffirm the value of making good use of assessment data to provide feedback to learning and teaching, to oppose meaningless, repetitive and mechanical drills, and to make concerted efforts to promote the healthy development of students with their learning needs as the prime consideration. In support of the “Initiative” and in line with the implementation of the Research Study, the EDB has pledged its full support to the promotion of the “Initiative”, by which government primary schools in the territory will no longer purchase supplementary teaching materials advertising or named after TSA, and will enhance learning and teaching through the use of the online assessment system (STAR) and the Web-based Learning and Teaching Support website which align with the Basic Competencies, to promote “assessment for learning” and make good use of assessment materials to enhance students’ learning.

8. In fact, based on the observation of the questionnaire survey on students’ learning attitude and motivation, even students studying at the same level in the same school with similar homework and assessment arrangements, students and their parents may have very diversified views regarding the homework load. For example, some students may have completed the homework in less than 30 minutes, but others have to spend more than an hour. This shows that the perception of the load of exercises and homework involves multiple factors. The EDB would, through various channels and approaches, continue to urge schools to formulate appropriate homework and assessment policies and to devise diversified homework according to students’ interests and learning needs to help students consolidate their knowledge, apply what they have learned and develop self-learning abilities, with a view to helping students master the necessary Basic Competencies.