

Information Paper

Arrangements for Buying Places from Private Schools

Purpose

This paper sets out the present arrangement and future development in respect of buying places from private schools.

Background

2. To fulfil the commitment of providing universal free junior education and highly subsidised senior education, the Government has been buying school places from private schools since the 1970s to make up the shortfall in government and aided schools.

3. The Education Commission in its Report No. 3 made recommendations on the future of private schools. The major recommendations include -

- (a) the Bought Place Scheme(BPS) is unsatisfactory and should be gradually phased out starting from the 1999/2000 school year until its complete abolition by September 2001;
- (b) BPS schools should be helped to achieve a standard comparable to aided schools before the BPS is phased out;

- (c) a new Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) ¹ should be introduced to admit private schools which attain a sufficiently high educational standard and aided schools.

The Government accepted the above recommendations and implemented them in the past years.

Assisting BPS schools to raise education standard

4. The Education Commission Report No. 3 recommended that the standard of BPS schools should be improved through a contract system and the establishment of a review committee. Between 1990 and 1991, 18 schools signed contracts with the Government. In the ensuing years, these schools took steps to achieve a standard comparable to that of aided secondary schools. These improvement measures include conversion from bisessional to unisessional operation, reorganisation of class structure, employing more trained and graduate teachers, and enhancing equipment of the schools. Some schools have also been granted capital assistance loans to carry out works to improve their facilities. Two BPS schools chose not to sign any contracts with the Government.

5. One and two BPS schools joined the DSS in the 1997/98 and 1998/99 school years respectively ². As present, there are 18 BPS schools (listed at the Annex).

¹ The concept of DSS is that Government will provide private schools with a recurrent subsidy but allow these schools the freedom to decide on curriculum, fees and entrance requirements. The DSS subsidy is based on the average unit cost of an aided secondary school place.

Future development

6. The Government will gradually phase out the BPS as planned. The last places of Secondary 1 in 17 BPS schools are bought in the 1998/99 school year; the last places in Secondary 2, 4 and 6 will be bought in the 1999/2000 school year and the last places in Secondary 3, 5 and 7 in the 2000/2001 school year. The remaining school with places in Secondary 3, 5 and 7 bought in the 1998/99 school year will withdraw from the BPS at the end of the school year.

7. Having regard to their individual circumstances, the existing BPS schools can consider either applying to join the DSS or operating as private independent schools.

8. The Government is now reviewing the criteria for admission into the DSS and will in due course invite private and aided schools to apply to join the DSS from the 1999/2000 school year. Also, the Government is considering the implementation details of allocating, on a pilot basis, government-built school premises to sponsoring bodies for the operation of new DSS schools. This is one of the improvement measures to assist private schools announced by the Chief Executive in his second Policy Address. The Government will formulate a set of fair and just criteria for allocation. It is expected that the new DSS schools will start operation in the 2000/2001

² China Holiness College and Fanling Lutheran Secondary School joined the DSS in the 1998/99 school year. New Method College was split into two schools, with one joining the DSS in the 1997/98 school year and the other is scheduled to withdraw from the BPS from 1999.

school year. Interested BPS schools can respond to the invitation when the details are announced.

Education Department
October 1998

Bought Place Schools

(1998-99 School Year)

1. Delia Memorial School (Glee Path)
2. Delia Memorial School (Broadway)
3. Delia Memorial School (Hip Wo)
4. Delia Memorial School (Yuet Wah)
5. Matteo Ricci College, Kowloon
6. Pak Kau Girls' School
7. Tak Yan School
- ✧ 8. New Method College, Kowloon
9. Pak Kau College
10. Pak U Middle School
11. St. Margaret's Girls' College (Hong Kong)
12. St. Margaret's Girls' College (Kowloon)
13. St. Margaret's Girls' College (Kwai Chung)
14. Wellington College (Kowloon)
15. Saint Too Girls' College
16. Wai Kiu College
- # 17. Amoy College
- # 18. Chan Shu Kui Memorial School

Notes

- ✧ Will withdraw from the BPS from 1999
- # Did not sign contract with the Government