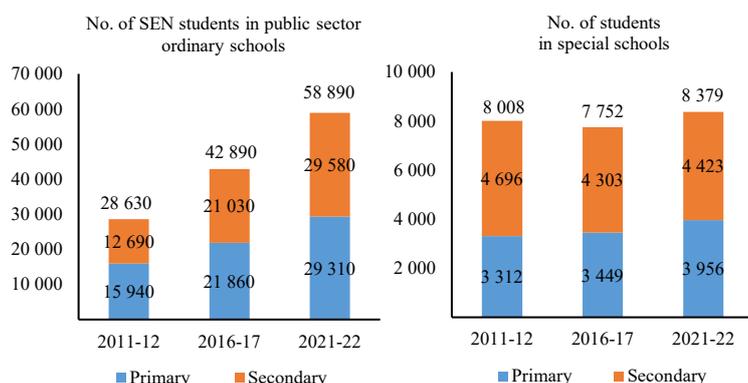


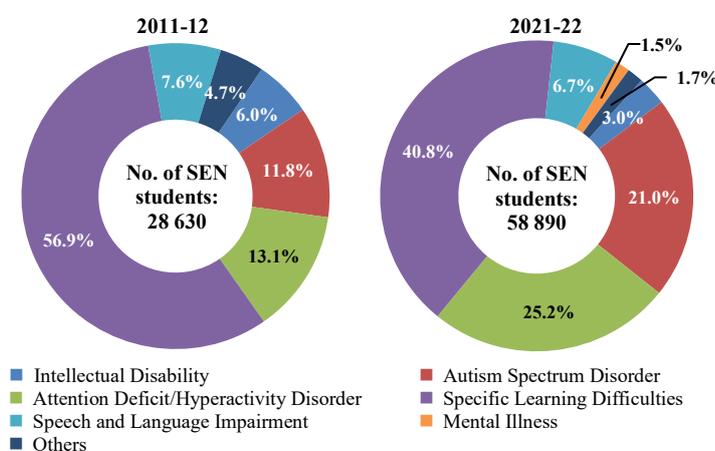
Special educational needs

Figure 1 – Number of SEN students in public sector ordinary schools and students in special schools



Note: (1) Special schools include local/aided special schools and Jockey Club Sarah Roe School operated by the English Schools Foundation.

Figure 2 – Types of SEN students in public sector primary and secondary ordinary schools



Notes: (1) Others comprise Physical Disability, Visual Impairment and Hearing Impairment.
(2) While comorbidity is common among SEN students, each SEN student in this figure is only identified according to their major type of SEN.
(3) Statistics for 2011-2012 do not include students with Mental Illness as the major type of SEN due to data unavailability.

Figure 3 – Student enrolment in primary and secondary local/aided special schools

School type	2011-12		2021-22	
	No.	% share	No.	% share
Mild Intellectual Disability	3 116	39.2%	3 356	40.4%
Moderate Intellectual Disability	1 756	22.1%	2 275	27.4%
Severe Intellectual Disability	746	9.4%	717	8.6%
Physical Disability	932	11.7%	872	10.5%
Visual Impairment	126	1.6%	126	1.5%
Hearing Impairment	145	1.8%	57	0.7%
School for Social Development	775	9.8%	596	7.2%
Hospital School	348	4.4%	312	3.8%
Total	7 944	100%	8 311	100%

Note: (1) Figures of local/aided special schools and hereunder do not include Jockey Club Sarah Roe School operated by the English Schools Foundation.

Highlights

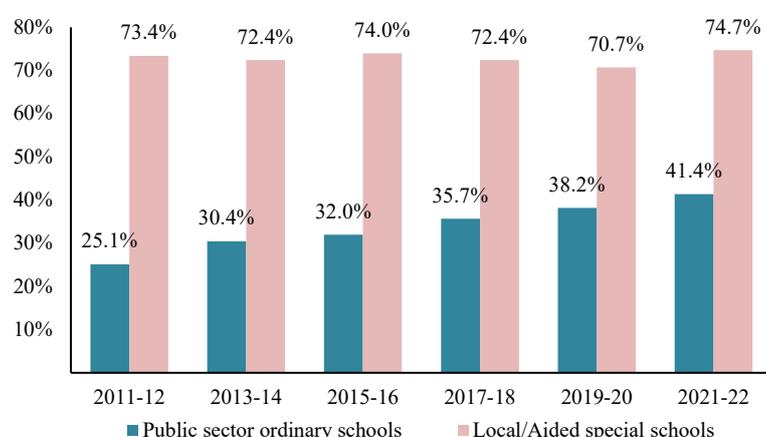
- Special educational needs (“SEN”) refer to the learning needs of students arising from various types of physical and mental illnesses or conditions. In Hong Kong, the Government adopts a dual-track mode in providing special education to SEN students, with children having more severe or multiple disabilities being referred to aided special schools for intensive support services. Other SEN children will attend ordinary schools.
- The number of students identified with SEN has been on the rise over the last decade, consequential to the increased awareness of SEN amongst schools and parents and the continuous improvement in the identification mechanism. The number of SEN students in public sector primary and secondary ordinary schools more than doubled between 2011-2012 and 2021-2022 (Figure 1), and accounted for an increased share of total student population in public sector ordinary schools from 4.4% to 11.0% over the period.
- It is common for SEN students to be diagnosed with more than one SEN condition (or “comorbidity”). More specifically, students identified with “Specific Learning Difficulties” as their major SEN consistently accounted for the largest (though declining) share of the SEN students studying in public sector ordinary schools (Figure 2). This was followed by Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and Autism Spectrum Disorder, both of which demonstrated a more visible increasing trend.
- For those students studying in local/aided special schools, the majority of them attended schools dedicated to children with intellectual disability (“ID”). Some 76% of them studied in schools for children with severe, moderate or mild ID in 2021-2022, up somewhat from 71% in 2011-2012 (Figure 3). In contrast, the enrolment in Hearing Impairment (“HI”) schools registered a visible declining trend, conceivably due to the integration of HI students into mainstream schools.

Special educational needs (cont'd)

Figure 4 – Student-teacher ratios of public sector ordinary schools and local/aided special schools

School type	2011-12	2016-17	2021-22
Public sector ordinary schools	15.1:1	13.0:1	11.8:1
Local/Aided special schools	5.1:1	4.6:1	4.1:1
-Mild Intellectual Disability	6.8:1	6.0:1	5.1:1
-Moderate Intellectual Disability	4.1:1	4.1:1	3.6:1
-Severe Intellectual Disability	4.0:1	3.9:1	3.1:1
-Physical Disability	4.8:1	4.4:1	3.7:1
-Visual Impairment	3.4:1	3.3:1	2.3:1
-Hearing Impairment	3.6:1	2.9:1	2.1:1
-School for Social Development	5.0:1	3.5:1	2.8:1
-Hospital School	5.9:1	5.5:1	4.6:1

Figure 5 – Percentage of teachers with special education training in selected types of schools



Note: (1) Figures refer to the percentage share of teachers who have received 30 hours or more structured special education training.

Figure 6 – Number of drop-out teachers and wastage rate of teachers in selected types of schools

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Public sector ordinary schools					
No. of drop-out teachers	1 745	1 969	1 959	1 991	3 389
Wastage rate of teachers	4.1%	4.5%	4.4%	4.4%	7.4%
Local/Aided special schools					
No. of drop-out teachers	115	157	132	105	190
Wastage rate of teachers	6.8%	8.5%	7.1%	5.4%	9.4%

Notes: (1) “Drop-out teachers” refer to teachers who were serving in local schools concerned in the preceding school year but were no longer serving in any of the local schools (irrespective of whether primary or secondary schools) in the school year concerned. Teachers transferred between ordinary schools and special schools would be counted as “drop-out teachers”.
 (2) “Wastage rate” refers to the number of “drop-out teachers” as a percentage of the total number of teachers concerned in the preceding school year.

Highlights

- The student-teacher ratios of both public sector ordinary schools and local/aided special schools improved between 2011-2012 and 2021-2022 (Figure 4). This represented a welcome trend as teachers could spend more time and effort on supporting each student and students could enjoy higher quality learning.
- Nonetheless, fewer than half of the serving teachers in public sector ordinary schools have received structured special education training for 30 hours or more over the last decade (Figure 5). While the corresponding share was much higher at 71%-75% in local/aided special schools, a higher ratio might be warranted as students attending special schools generally have more severe learning difficulties and require more intensive support. Indeed, the Education Bureau (“EDB”) has set a target of each special school having 85% or more of their teachers with special education qualification by the end of 2023-2024.
- Another issue of concern is the surge in the numbers of drop-out teachers in public sector ordinary schools and local/aided special schools and the corresponding wastage rates in 2021-2022 (Figure 6). While EDB considered that the operation of schools remained smooth in general despite the high drop-out and wastage rates, the situation might be a concern for the learning needs of students. In particular, the potential adverse impact on SEN students arising from the departure of relatively more experienced teachers should not be overlooked. This is because newly recruited teachers may lack practical experience regarding the learning habit and behaviour of individual SEN students. Besides, some SEN students may need time to establish trusting relationships with another teachers after personnel changes.

Data source: Latest figures from the Education Bureau.

Research Office
 Research and Information Division
 Legislative Council Secretariat
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 Tel: 3919 3181

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