

For information

Legislative Council House Committee
Subcommittee to Study the Subject of Combating Poverty
School-based After-school Learning and Support Programmes

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the school-based after-school learning and support programmes for students from disadvantaged families which will commence in summer of 2005.

Background

2. The Chief Executive announced in the 2005 Policy Address that proactive measures have to be put in place to reduce inter-generational poverty. Focus would be placed on providing more assistance to the younger generation of needy families, and giving these children and young people opportunities for comprehensive development as they grow up.

3. Additional provision has been earmarked in the coming financial year to enable schools to provide school-based after-school learning and support programmes, in collaboration with NGOs where necessary, to those most in need of them. We expect that the programmes will increase students' learning effectiveness, broaden their learning experiences outside classroom, and raise their understanding of the community and sense of belonging.

The Programmes

Target Group

4. The programmes will cater for P1 to S7 students who are receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) or full grant under the Student Financial Assistance (SFA) Scheme. They are economically deprived

and their families do not have the means to let them take part in fee-charging learning activities. In particular, the programme will also target at students who do not have adequate parental support and guidance, either because their parents are too busy earning a living or are themselves not competent enough to provide support.

Basic Principles

5. To optimise the use of the available resources and align funding from other sources, the following basic principles will be adopted in disbursing grants to schools for the programmes -

- (a) the grant is to complement subsidies/services currently provided by Government and other agencies for helping students from disadvantaged families;
- (b) the focus will be placed on providing needy students with after-school remedial learning support and other activities conducive to their whole-person development;
- (c) the programmes to be supported by the grant should not overlap with or replace any similar existing services (e.g. the grant should not be used for subsidising students' participation in life-wide learning activities for students of P4 to S3 as the area is being covered by the Jockey Club Life-wide Learning Fund); and
- (d) the programmes should be school-based (not necessarily confined to the school premises though) and custom-made to suit the needs of students concerned, and be conducted outside normal school hours.

Core Components

6. In view of the diversity of needs, a spectrum of school-based programmes, including tuition classes, personal development and skills training, will be considered. The programmes should be designed in such a way that activities are not only focused on academic work related to the school's curriculum but also develop the self-directed learning capacity of the students, including goal setting, study skills, and self-reflection. We also expect the programmes to nurture self-esteem and self-reliance in needy

students. To this end, the programmes should include the following core components -

- (a) developing study skills with emphasis on strategies for organising, retaining and applying knowledge;
- (b) fostering self-worth and developing self-management skills;
- (c) developing personal, interpersonal and social skills; and
- (d) developing self-esteem and co-operation with others.

Examples

7. Provided that the core components are included, programmes may take various forms, including but not limited to the following -

- (a) academically-oriented tutorial service, including the development of study skills;
- (b) programmes that focus on personal development and life skills, including the psychological well-being;
- (c) after-school care, including extra-curricular activities, for unsupervised children.

8. Schools will be required to target the programmes at the most disadvantaged students, and to ensure sustainable positive impact, as well as enable replication of success and establishment of a supportive network in the locality.

Implementation

Mode of Delivery

9. Cash grant will be released to schools on application. A call circular setting out the parameters for the after-school learning and support programmes will be issued to schools inviting them to apply for the grant if they see a need in providing, and are ready to provide, additional assistance to needy students in their schools. To tie in with the summer holiday, schools are

encouraged to launch the programmes for the next school year (2005-06) in August 2005.

10. To avoid undue additional workload on teachers, schools are encouraged to work in partnership with non-government organizations (NGOs) who have rich experience in running support programmes and can bring in their backend support to schools.

11. Schools having a large number of disadvantaged students may organise the programmes themselves, work in collaboration with NGOs or buy services from the NGOs. Schools that do not have a sufficient number of target students to form a critical mass are encouraged to form a school cluster for organising the programmes.

12. To ensure quality and consistency of standard, a committee comprising representatives from Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB), Social Welfare Department (SWD), NGOs and the school sector will be set up to examine and approve applications.

13. Some schools have expressed the concern about labeling of students if the programmes are restricted to students from disadvantaged families only. We encourage schools to open up the programmes to all students who have a need. While the target group of students, i.e. CSSA and full-grant SFA recipients, will receive the service free, a full fee will apply to other students. There will be a cap on the maximum subsidy per eligible student to ensure that resources available can benefit as many needy students as possible.

Monitoring and Evaluation

14. Schools will be required to submit annual reports with an evaluation of the student outcome, including the following -

- (a) whether the programme is implemented consistently with the design and has achieved its goals;
- (b) participation rate, completion rate, feedback from students and parents on the quality of the programmes, and other outcome measures included in the programme plan;
- (c) any academic or affective outcome, e.g. engagement in learning, academic attainment, attitudes, etc.

Discretion of Schools

15. Recognising the varying needs of students, we are inclined to allow some flexibility for schools in the selection of students, for example, students who are poor but refuse to receive CSSA and SFA. However, the grant should not be used for providing material assistance to students, e.g. school uniform, musical instruments, etc. Schools have to deploy other funding or sponsorship as appropriate for these purposes.

Financial Implications

16. A recurrent provision of \$75 million per annum has been earmarked in the draft Estimates for 2005-06 of EMB to implement the school-based after-school learning and support programmes.

Public Consultation

17. We have consulted school councils, district school heads associations and NGOs on the arrangements for the school-based after-school learning and support programmes. They welcome the programmes and expressed their eagerness to have the programmes implemented as soon as possible. The modus operandi described above is the outcome of the discussion with relevant parties. **This paper had also been submitted to the meeting of the Commission on Poverty on 11 April 2005 for information.**

Next Step

18. **A circular will be issued to schools in April, inviting them to apply for the grant for launching the programmes from August 2005.**

Education and Manpower Bureau
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