

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

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seen by the Administration)

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**Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to the Provision of  
Boarding Places, Senior Secondary Education and Employment  
Opportunities for Children with Special Educational Needs**

**Minutes of meeting  
held on Thursday, 23 November 2006 at 4:30 pm  
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung (Chairman)  
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan  
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP  
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong  
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP  
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, GBS, JP  
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
- Public Officers attending** : Dr Catherine CHAN  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Curriculum  
Development), Education and Manpower Bureau
- Mrs Fanny LAM  
Principal Assistant Secretary (School Administration  
and Support), Education and Manpower Bureau
- Mrs Florence AU WONG Wai-yin  
Senior Education Officer (School Administration and  
Support), Education and Manpower Bureau
- Mrs Agnes FUNG FUNG Wing-ye  
Chief Curriculum Development Officer (Special  
Educational Needs), Education and Manpower  
Bureau

Mrs Mary MA LO To-wan  
Commissioner for Rehabilitation, Health Welfare and  
Food Bureau

Mr SIT Tung  
Assistant Director (Rehabilitation and Medical Social  
Services), Social Welfare Department

**Attendance by invitation** : Parents' Alliance on Special Education System

Ms Pansy LEUNG  
Convenor

Ms AU YEUNG CHAN Cheuk-man  
Vice-Convenor

Hong Kong Association for Parents of Persons with  
Physical Disabilities

Ms SHEK Lin-tai  
Executive Member

**Clerk in attendance** : Miss Odelia LEUNG  
Chief Council Secretary (2)6

**Staff in attendance** : Mr Stanley MA  
Senior Council Secretary (2)6

Ms Katherine YEUNG  
Legislative Assistant (2)6

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- I. New senior secondary academic structure for special schools**  
[LC Paper No. CB(2)391/06-07(01) and Report entitled "Action for the Future - Career-oriented Studies and the New Senior Secondary Academic Structure for Special Schools"]

The Chairman highlighted the concern of many deputations about some of the proposals for the new academic structure for special schools as detailed in the Report entitled "Action for the Future - Career-oriented Studies and the New Senior Secondary Academic Structure for Special Schools (the Report)", in particular the reduction of the duration of basic education for students with

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intellectual disability (ID students) from 10 to nine years. He said that the Subcommittee would follow up the concerns of the deputations at this meeting.

Oral presentation by deputations

*Parent's Alliance on Special Education System  
[LC Paper No. CB(2)447/06-07(01)]*

2. Ms AU YEUNG CHAN Cheuk-man said that ID students, like students with hearing impairment (HI students) and students with physical disability (PD students), should continue to enjoy 10-year free basic education, i.e. six years of primary education and four years of junior secondary education. The Alliance considered it unfair to reduce the duration of junior secondary education for ID students from four to three years on the excuse that ID students would not follow the ordinary curriculum and participate in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE). The Alliance considered that the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) should collaborate with the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau and the Social Welfare Department (SWD) to establish a working group to work out appropriate transitional arrangements for students with severe ID completing senior secondary schooling to integrate into the community. The Alliance suggested that EMB should subvent the operation of community colleges to provide continuing education for students with mild ID.

3. Ms Pansy LEUNG supplemented that parents were concerned about the provision of sufficient staffing for special schools under the new academic structure. The Alliance requested the Administration to review the class sizes of special schools and fix and revise the senior secondary school fees and the boarding fees with due regard to the financial burden of families having ID children. These families had to incur substantial medical and travel expenses in taking care of and arranging outdoor activities for their ID children.

*Hong Kong Association for Parents of Persons with Physical Disabilities*

4. Ms SHEK Lin-tai said that the Hong Kong Association for Parents of Persons with Physical Disabilities shared the views and concerns of the Parent's Alliance on Special Education System

*Other submissions received  
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)437/06-07(01) and CB(2)467/06-07(01)]*

5. Members noted the submissions from the Church of Christ in China Kei Shun Special School and the Association of Parents of the Severely Mentally Handicap.

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The Administration's response

6. Principal Assistant Secretary (Curriculum Development) (PAS(CD)) said that the staffing resources for special schools for ID students under the new academic structure would be determined when the design and contents of the new senior secondary (intellectual disability) (NSS(ID)) curriculum were finalised. She pointed out that Chinese Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies/Independent Living would form the core of learning to meet the practical needs of work and adult life after senior secondary schooling. In addition, the development of the curriculum framework for students with mild, moderate and severe ID was a new task for special education in Hong Kong, and would be tried out through research and development (R&D) projects.

7. PAS(CD) further said that EMB would also examine the best ways of how different teaching and professional resources were used in the delivery of senior secondary education for ID students through the pilots. The pilots would aim to assess and identify the effective pedagogies and strategies for teaching ID students in small groups and classes at senior secondary levels, which might well be different from those adopted for junior secondary schooling. EMB would implement the pilots for the three core subjects in the 2006-2007 school year. While students with mild ID might learn and follow a curriculum similar to the curriculum in ordinary schools, students with ID would learn at different paces and require professional support by relevant specialist staff such as education psychologists. EMB would consolidate and analyse the findings from the pilots to support the learning of ID students in special schools.

Provision of 10-year basic education for ID students

8. Referring to the submission from the Parents' Alliance on Special Education System, the Chairman said that the emphasis of the Report should be on the review of the NSS academic structure for special schools, and queried the reason for recommending the reduction of basic education for ID students from 10 to nine years.

9. PAS(CD) responded that under the NSS academic structure, ID students, including those attending schools for the visually impaired (VI schools), schools for the hearing impaired (HI schools) and schools for the physical disabled (PD schools), would be provided with three years of junior secondary and three years of senior secondary education. HI students and PD students following the ordinary curriculum in HI schools and PD schools respectively would continue to be provided with 10 years of basic education, taking into account the learning requirements at senior secondary levels leading to HKDSE.

10. PAS(CD) added that individual students with mild ID pursuing the ordinary curriculum would also be provided with an additional year on need basis in order that they would be better prepared for the three-year senior

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secondary education leading to HKDSE. Students with ID would be provided with individualised education programmes (IEPs). Furthermore, ID students who had been absent from school for a long period due to health or other justifiable reasons could apply for repeat of study under the existing practice.

11. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that as ID students in special schools had all along been provided with 10 years of basic education, the Administration should take into account the learning needs of ID students and continue the existing arrangement under the new academic structure. He considered that since ID students learned at a slower pace than students of normal intelligence, there was no reason to reduce their junior secondary schooling from four to three years.

12. Principal Assistant Secretary (School Administration and Support), (PAS(SAS)) explained that PD students were required to attend various therapies, medical attention and hospitalisation, and HI students were normally slower in language acquisition and had serious disability in language reception and expression. As a result, their learning was frequently and regularly disrupted. The Administration considered it appropriate to maintain the current provision of 10-year basic education for PD and HI students following the ordinary curriculum and taking the HKDSE examinations.

13. PAS(SAS) added that ID students were currently provided with 10 years of basic education, comprising six-year primary education and four-year junior secondary education, plus a two-year Extension of Years of Education Programme (the EYE programme). The EYE programme was introduced to enhance the abilities of ID students to lead an independent life after leaving schools. Under the NSS structure, ID students would continue to enjoy 12 years of basic and secondary education. They would learn and be assessed under IEPs, and the duration of junior secondary education for individual ID students could be adjusted in the light of his/her progress and needs.

14. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong pointed out that while the Administration emphasised the training on independent living, parents considered it important for their ID children to take the subject of Liberal Studies. He considered that ID students should be given opportunities to learn the basic and necessary skills to lead an independent living, as well as the general knowledge embraced in Liberal Studies to facilitate integration into the community. Mr CHEUNG opined that the provision of four-year junior secondary education would better prepare ID students for taking Liberal Studies during senior secondary schooling. He urged the Administration to provide all ID students with four years of junior secondary education.

15. PAS(CD) responded that the curriculum framework for the Liberal Studies/Independent Living was adapted from the Liberal Studies under the ordinary curriculum. The Administration shared the view of Mr CHEUNG

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Man-kwong that the subject of Liberal Studies should be a progression of study for ID students to acquire a wider set of general knowledge and develop their values and attitudes for integration into the community. Given their diversity in learning, most ID students would learn and progress at different paces under IEPs. The teachers and professionals in special schools would provide appropriate support for ID students in the light of their learning needs and progress.

16. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that ID students who were capable of following the ordinary curriculum should attend integrated education in ordinary schools. He considered that the Administration should standardise the provision of four-year junior secondary education for ID students in special schools, instead of allowing flexibility to suit the learning needs of individual ID students. He opined that such flexibility would create problems in the provision of sufficient places for ID students in individual special schools and on a territory wide basis.

17. PAS(CD) said that in the second stage of the R&D projects in the 2007-2008 school year, the Administration would collaborate with the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority to develop a curriculum-related learning outcomes framework (LOF) for assessment of the learning progress of ID students. Under the LOF, a continuum of learning needs and outcomes would be developed for ID students at different key stages of primary and secondary education. In order to develop a common set of learning outcomes for ID students to serve as reference for comparison among students with similar learning characteristics, the Administration would explore to take Basic Competency Assessment for high ability ID students to validate the learning outcomes.

18. The Chairman considered it necessary for the Administration to state categorically the years of schooling in junior and senior secondary education for ID students under the new academic structure.

19. PAS(CD) responded that under the NSS(ID) curriculum framework, the learning progress of ID students would be assessed by way of a continuum of learning outcomes. Given their diverse learning needs and abilities, ID students would learn and progress at different paces, and it would be difficult to specify the learning outcomes for ID students to achieve at this stage. More appropriately, ID students should be continuously assessed with reference to a continuum of learning outcome, and be supported with appropriate IEPs in the light of their learning needs and achievements on an on-going basis.

20. PAS(SAS) supplemented that the NSS(ID) curriculum was designed on the basis of six-year primary and six-year secondary education for ID students, and ID students would learn under their IEPs and be assessed in terms of learning outcomes under the LOF. For various reasons such as hospitalisation,

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some ID students might need an additional year in junior or senior secondary schooling. The Administration considered it appropriate to adopt a flexible approach for the provision of junior and senior secondary education to suit the individual learning needs and circumstances of ID students in special schools. The R&D projects would aim to facilitate the planning and provision of appropriate senior secondary education for ID students.

21. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that most parents would expect their ID children to have longer time and more opportunities to learn and interact with peer students in schools. He called on the Administration to design a four-year junior secondary curriculum for ID students. The Chairman asked why the Administration had singled out ID students and had not specified the duration of junior secondary education for them, as in the case of other children with special educational needs (SEN).

22. PAS(CD) responded that primary and secondary education were conventionally divided into junior and senior levels in order to signify the different stages of school education. As far as learning was concerned, students would learn and progress at different paces, and achieve the different levels of learning outcomes at different times. PAS(SAS) supplemented that student diversity existed in both special and ordinary schools. There was also flexibility for some low academic achievers in ordinary schools to repeat on a need basis in order to complete primary or secondary education.

23. The Chairman pointed out that it was incorrect for the Administration to say that all students would be provided with 12 years of school education under the new academic structure. He stressed that ID students had in the past forty years been provided with 10 years of basic education. He considered it groundless to reduce the duration of junior secondary education to three years by way of implementing the NSS structure. He asked the Administration to explain the justification for such reduction.

24. PAS(CD) explained that under the new academic structure, all students would be entitled to 12 years of school education. The Administration had no experience in providing senior secondary education for ID students, and would examine their learning needs and learning outcomes in senior secondary schooling through the R&D projects.

25. Ms Audrey EU said that ID students were expected to learn the necessary knowledge and skills to lead an independent living after school education. They should be more in need of four years of junior secondary education than HI or PD students, irrespective of their learning outcomes in senior secondary schooling.

26. PAS(SAS) explained that it was commonly recognised on the need of HI students and PD students following the ordinary curriculum for four-year junior

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secondary education in order to better prepare them for the senior secondary schooling. Whether a similar arrangement should be provided for ID students under the new academic structure would have to be explored and validated through the R&D projects.

27. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong considered that whether ID students could follow the ordinary curriculum and take the HKDSE examination should not be the sole consideration in deciding the years of junior secondary education. Similarly, the findings of the R&D projects should not be used as the sole indicator for the purpose. He pointed out that most ID students would attend sheltered workshops, skills training centres, or be placed to hostels after completing school education. In a civilised community, the Government should provide appropriate support for ID persons when they were in schools and after they completed education to lead a stable life. Irrespective of whether ID persons were receiving education, the Government had to give support to them in one form or another.

28. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong further said that there was no need to conduct the R&D projects and establish the learning outcomes to justify the provision of six or seven years of secondary education for ID students. As ID students learnt at slower paces than students of normal intelligence, they would benefit from having longer secondary education. There was no point to assess their learning outcomes at the four key stages of learning as recommended in the Report. If the Administration considered it necessary to do so, the Administration should proceed with the R&D studies on the basis of four-year junior secondary and three-year senior secondary education for ID students.

29. PAS(CD) responded that the R&D projects would be implemented in the context of the NSS(ID) curriculum which was developed for a six-year secondary education. In view of members' concerns and suggestions, the Administration would use existing provision of 10-year basic education as the baseline for the development of the NSS(ID) curriculum and LOF under the R&D projects.

30. The Chairman reiterated that like HI students and PD students, students with mild, moderate or severe ID should continue to be provided with 10 years of basic education. He asked whether ID students would be provided with three years of senior secondary education on top of the 10-year basic education and how the curriculum for Independent Living and Liberal Studies would be developed under the new academic structure.

31. PAS(CD) responded that the Administration would examine the learning needs and the learning outcomes of ID students in the context of the provision of 12-year school education as recommended in the Report entitled "Action for the Future: Career-oriented Studies and the New Senior Secondary Academic Structure for Special Schools" published in August 2006 and supported by the



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community at large. The Administration would also examine the need to extend the duration of secondary education for ID students in the light of the findings under the R&D projects. The R&D projects would shed light on the curriculum orientation and contents of Liberal Studies for ID students.

32. The Chairman pointed out that at present, all ID students in special schools would have 10-year basic education and were required to leave school at the age of 16. It was absurd to say that ID students would be allowed to repeat a year of study for health or other reasons. Their entitlement to 10 years of basic education should not be changed without justifiable reasons.

33. PAS(SAS) explained that the Report was the product of a three-month consultation on Career-oriented Studies (COS) and new senior secondary academic structure for special schools launched in January 2006. The Report summarised the concerns and feedback received and charted the way forward for the implementation of COS and the NSS academic structure of special schools. While the Administration noted the concerns of members and the deputations on the provision of 10 years of basic education for ID students, it would proceed with the recommendations in the Report and might review the need to extend the duration of secondary education for ID students in the light of the R&D projects.

34. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung expressed deep regret that the Administration had no intention to listen to the views of members and the deputations, and would proceed in accordance with the plan and schedule in the Report. The Chairman remarked that reducing the duration of basic education from 10 to nine years was an act of bullying against ID students.

Possible discrimination against ID students

35. Ms Pansy LEUNG and Mrs AU YEUNG CHAN Cheuk-man expressed dissatisfaction about the reduced duration of junior secondary education for ID students from four to three years. They were also disappointed with the response of the Administration at the meeting. Ms LEUNG considered it absolutely necessary for ID students to attend a longer period of school education than students in ordinary schools. Mrs AU YEUNG considered the proposal to reduce the duration of junior secondary education a discrimination against ID students

36. PAS(SAS) stressed that the Administration definitely had no intention to discriminate against ID students in the provision of education in any way or manner. The Administration had all along committed to providing six years of secondary education under the new academic structure, which provided the basis for the development of the NSS(ID) curriculum and the LOF. The commitment was in line with the current provision of 10 years of basic education, comprising six years of primary education and four years of junior secondary education, and two years of EYE programme.

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37. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan considered it unfair to treat HI/PD students and ID students in different ways as far as the provision of junior secondary education was concerned. He pointed out that if the reason for providing four-year junior secondary education for HI students and PD students was merely their taking of the HKDSE examination, ID students should also take the examination and be entitled for the same treatment.

38. Responding to Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, PAS(SAS) reiterated that the Administration had committed to providing six years of secondary education for all students. In view of the specific needs of HI students and PD students, the Administration had proposed to maintain the current provision of 10 years of basic education to better prepare them for the senior secondary schooling. She added that HI students and PD students could complete the junior secondary education in three years if they were capable of doing so.

39. PAS(CD) supplemented that the Administration had made reference to overseas experiences on the provision of junior secondary education to students with SEN, including HI, PD and ID students. There was evidence that with the aid of advanced technologies and sophisticated devices, some students with SEN were able to achieve the expected learning outcomes at different key stages of learning at the same pace as students in ordinary schools.

40. The Chairman sought information on the number of HI students and PD students in special schools who had completed junior secondary education in three years. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong considered that if no HI students or PD students in special schools had ever completed junior secondary education in three years, then the continued provision of four years of junior secondary education for HI and PD students but not ID students might constitute discrimination against ID students.

41. The Chairman requested the Administration to advise in writing the justifications for the provision of four years of junior secondary education to HI students and PD students but not ID students, and provide information on HI students or PD students who had completed junior secondary education in three years. The Administration explained that what they meant was that such possibility should not be precluded although they did not have the information. The Administration reiterated that HI and PD students with normal intelligence following the ordinary curriculum would continue to be provided with 10 years of basic education to better prepare them for the NSS leading to the HKDSE.

42. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan considered that if the Administration insisted to reduce the duration of junior secondary education for ID students from four to three years, the Subcommittee should consider whether it was a policy decision in contravention of the Disability Discrimination Ordinance. Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) should be invited to give professional advice in this regard.

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43. The Chairman pointed out that the Subcommittee had sought the advice of the EOC on the matter. According to the advice of the EOC, the provision of 10-year basic education to HI students and PD students and nine-year basic education to ID students on the ground that HI and PD students were capable of following the ordinary curriculum and participating in HKDSE would not constitute discrimination against ID students. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan remarked that the Subcommittee might seek the advice of the EOC on whether ID students had the right to participate in HKDSE and should be provided with 10 years of basic education.

44. Mrs AU YEUNG CHAN Cheuk-man said that the Parents' Alliance on Special Education System strongly opposed the reduction of basic education for ID students from 10 to nine years. The Alliance would consider seeking judicial review on the matter if the Administration insisted on the implementation of the proposal, and would demand compensation from the Government for not providing ID students with equal opportunities to access senior secondary education in the past decades.

45. As some other issues raised by the depositions had not been discussed, members agreed to further discuss at the next meeting the new senior secondary academic structure for special education, in addition to the subject of education for students with specific learning disabilities.

## **II. Any other business**

### Schedule of meetings

46. Members agreed on the schedule of meetings tabled at the meeting. Members noted that the next meeting would be held on Friday, 22 December 2006.

47. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:22 pm.