

立法會
Legislative Council

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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 Friday, 30 November 2007, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A 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 LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, GBS, JP
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
- Member absent** : Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
- Public Officers attending** : Mrs Fanny LAM FAN Kit-fong
Principal Assistant Secretary (School Administration
and Support), Education Bureau
- Miss WU Po-ling
Principal Education Officer (Quality Assurance),
Education Bureau
- Mrs Mary MA LO To-wan
Commissioner for Rehabilitation, Labour and Welfare
Bureau
- Mr SIT Tung
Assistant Director (Rehabilitation and Medical Social
Services), Social Welfare Department

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Mrs Agnes LI CHAN Chui-ngan
Chief Social Work Officer (Rehabilitation and Medical
Social Services)1, Social Welfare Department

Attendance by invitation : The Association of Parents of the Severely Mentally Handicapped

Ms CHENG Yee-man
Chairman

Ms Sandra HO Wai-ngan
Secretary

The Parents' Association of Pre-School Handicapped Children

Ms YU Tung-mui
Executive Committee Member

Ms CHEUNG Kwok-chun
Executive Committee Member

「爭取肢體弱能學校開辦住宿/暫宿服務」關注組

Ms TAM Yuk-fung
Member

Ms HO Bo-ching
Member

Hong Kong Association for Parents of Persons with Physical Disabilities

Ms NAM Shuk-yee
Chairman

Ms LAM Suk-yu
Vice-Chairman

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

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

Miss Carmen HO
Legislative Assistant (2)6

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I. Residential respite service for students with special educational needs

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)433/07-08(01), CB(2)1214/06-07(01), CB(2)2164/06-07(01) and CB(2)2363/06-07]

The Subcommittee deliberated (proceedings of meeting at **Annex**).

Views of deputations

2. The Subcommittee received the views of four deputations on the provision of residential respite service for persons with disabilities (PWDs) below the age of 15. The major views are summarized below.

- (a) It would be a better approach for special schools to provide respite service for students with disabilities as they had the necessary facilities, trained staff and experience to take care of those students.
- (b) It was inappropriate to segregate education from social service or to categorize residential respite service as a social service. All special schools for students with severe intellectual disability had all along provided boarding service.
- (c) Existing residential care homes for PWDs (RCHDs) were designed for adults with disabilities, and would have to undergo modification works in order to cater for the needs of PWDs below the age of 15. Moreover, their staff would need to attend training to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to look after these PWDs, in particular those requiring intensive care.
- (d) The expected provision of 86 respite places in the 35 RCHDs subvented by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) was grossly inadequate to meet with the demand. Parents were concerned that some of these RCHDs would be reluctant to admit PWDs below the age of 11 or those with aggressive behaviour or severe disabilities and required intensive care. According to the information provided by SWD, only six of the 35 RCHDs had the necessary equipment and facilities to accommodate PWDs with

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severe disabilities below the age of 11, and two could accommodate PWDs with physical disability but none could accommodate PWDs in need of intensive care.

- (e) Although the proposed requirement for referral by school social workers would facilitate NGOs in considering the request of PWDs below the age of 15 for respite service in their RCHDs and in understanding the needs of the PWDs concerned, NGOs should dispense with the requirement under certain urgent and special circumstances.
- (f) The Administration should allocate additional resources for SWD and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to enable the extension of respite service in RCHDs for PWDs below the age of 15. To facilitate parental choice, SWD should publish the service categories and locations of the RCHDs concerned as soon as practicable.
- (g) In the long run, the provision of seven-day boarding service in special schools was one of the ways to meet the shortfall of respite places for PWDs under the age of 15.

Members' views and suggestions

3. Members disagreed with the view of the former Chief Secretary for Administration (CS) as stated in his reply dated 12 June 2007 to the Chairman that residential respite service was by nature a social service. Members considered that the Administration should make effective use of the resources and expertise in special schools and review the best approach in filling the present service gap on the provision of respite service for PWDs under the age of 15. Members made the following suggestions -

- (a) without jeopardizing the work currently undertaken by SWD concerning the implementation of a scheme to extend the existing residential respite service provided by NGOs to accommodate PWDs below the age of 15, the Administration should reconsider the merits and feasibility of special schools providing residential respite service;
- (b) even if residential respite service for PWDs below the age of 15 fell within the purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau, this should not be provided within the existing resources allocated to the Bureau, as indicated in the former CS's letter; and
- (c) upon the implementation of the extension scheme, the Education Bureau should be responsible for arranging residential respite

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service for PWDs below the age of 15 who had been certified as genuinely requiring such service but who could not be accommodated under the extension scheme.

Follow-up

4. Members agreed that the Chairman should write to CS, the Secretary for Education and the Secretary for Labour and Welfare on the matter, and the Subcommittee would further discuss the matter upon receipt of their replies.

5. Members also requested the Administration to provide the following information -

- (a) an estimate of the demand of PWDs below the age of 15 for residential respite service, and a comparison of the respective unit costs of a respite place in RCHDs and in special schools providing five-day and seven-day boarding services;
- (b) the capacities of special schools providing five-day and seven-day boarding services, the number of persons on the respective waiting lists and the average waiting time for allocation of a boarding place; and
- (c) a breakdown by service categories and geographical locations of the RCHDs which would provide respite service for PWDs below the age of 15, their current number of vacant respite places and occupancy rates.

II. Any other business

Date of next meeting

6. Members noted that the next meeting would be held on Friday, 21 December 2007, at 10:45 am.

7. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:41 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
15 January 2008

**Proceedings of the meeting of
Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to the Provision of
Boarding Places, Senior Secondary Education and Employment
Opportunities for Children with Special Educational Needs
on Friday, 30 November 2007, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

Time marker	Speaker	Subjects	Action required
000000 - 000431	Chairman	Welcome to deputations and the Administration and recapitulation of the Subcommittee's discussion on the provision of residential respite service for persons with disabilities (PWDs) below the age of 15.	
000432 - 000954	Admin	Briefing by the Administration on the latest developments on the provision of residential respite service for PWDs below the age of 15, highlighting that 51 of the 86 respite places in residential care homes for PWDs (RCHDs) would admit PWDs aged 11 and above and the fee charged would be in the range of \$30 to \$60 per day.	
000955 - 001550	The Association of Parents of the Severely Mentally Handicapped	Presentation of views [LC Paper No. CB(2)469/07-08(01)]	
001551 - 002120	The Parents' Association of Pre-School Handicapped Children	Presentation of views [LC Paper No. CB(2)469/07-08(02)]	
002121 - 002723	「爭取肢體弱能學校開辦住宿/暫宿服務」關注組	Presentation of views [LC Paper No. CB(2)469/07-08(03)]	
002724 - 003150	Hong Kong Association for Parents of Persons with Physical Disabilities	Presentation of views [LC Paper No. CB(2)469/07-08(04)].	
003151 - 004622	Chairman Admin Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong	AD(RMSS)'s response to deputations' views as follows - - seven non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had indicated their willingness to extend the respite service provided by their RCHDs to PWDs below the age of 15 within their existing capacities; - the current utilization rate of respite service in RCHDs was slightly over 50% and the NGOs concerned had the enthusiasm to help the parents and their children with	

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		<p>disabilities in need of respite service;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the extension scheme would be implemented progressively from April 2008 onwards and the Social Welfare Department (SWD) would monitor and review the scheme after one year; - NGOs would consider the recommendations of school social workers in the allocation of respite places for PWDs below the age of 15; - PWDs who had registered their request for respite service would be put on a waiting list. NGOs would have the discretion to decide on the priority for allocation; - of the 35 RCHDs which would extend their respite service to PWDs below the age of 15, six could accommodate students with physical disabilities (PD students), and three could accommodate students with PD and intellectual disabilities (ID); - two new integrated rehabilitation service centres for PWDs to be established in Lei Yue Mun and Sha Tin would provide respite service for persons with PD below the age of 15; and - one NGO would continue to provide respite service in its special school on a self-financing basis. <p>The Chairman's advice that PWDs, in particular those with severe ID or PD, had to wait for a long time for the allocation of a residential place. Although the overall utilization rate of the respite service in RCHDs was about 50%, the respite places for PWDs below the age of 15 who needed intensive care were rarely available. According to a telephone survey conducted by his office, only 11 units were ready to admit PWDs below the age of 14.</p> <p>AD(RMSS)'s response that so far, a total of 35 RCHDs under seven NGOs would extend their respite service to PWDs below the age of 15.</p> <p>PAS(SAS)'s response that the objective of providing boarding service in special schools was to facilitate students with special</p>	

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		<p>educational needs (SEN) to receive education during school days. The core business of schools was to provide education for students. As advised by the former Chief Secretary for Administration (CS), respite service was by nature a social service. Nevertheless, the Education Bureau (EDB) would not object to the provision of respite service by special schools with a boarding section on a voluntary and self-financing basis.</p>	
004623 - 010008	Mr LEE Cheuk-yan Chairman Admin	<p>Mr LEE's suggestion that the Subcommittee should write to CS requesting his reconsideration of the viability of providing respite service for PWDs below the age of 15 in special schools with a boarding section, and his request for a breakdown of the categories and geographical locations of the RCHDs which would provide respite service for PWDs below the age of 15.</p> <p>AD(RMSS)'s response that SWD would continue to coordinate with NGOs for the provision of respite service for PWDs below the age of 15, and would publish a booklet which would show the distribution of the RCHDs concerned. Six RCHDs could accommodate persons with PD and requiring intensive care who were below the age of 15.</p> <p>PAS(SAS)'s response that the policy on the provision of respite service was formulated after extensive deliberation and consultation. The Admin was well aware of the needs of parents, but was of the view that respite service was a social service that should be provided by SWD.</p> <p>Mr LEE's suggestion to write to CS, the Secretary for Education (SED) and the Secretary for Labour and Welfare (SLW) on the matter, and his concern about the need for additional resources to NGOs for providing more respite places in RCHDs.</p> <p>AD(RMSS)'s confirmation that the 35 RCHDs would extend their respite service for PWDs below the age of 15 within their existing capacities; and his remark that new RCHDs would also provide respite service.</p>	

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010009 - 010945	Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung Admin Chairman	<p>Mr LEUNG's query about the Admin's understanding of the needs of parents with children with SEN, and its policy to differentiate the provision of education and social service for students below the age of 15. His reservations about the willingness and capabilities of existing RCHDs to provide respite service for PWDs below the age of 15, and his view that it would be more cost-effective for special schools with a boarding section to provide respite service for their students.</p> <p>PAS(SAS)'s response that the Admin had committed to constructing two 60-place boarding sections in New Territories (NT) East and NT West to cater for the needs of students with physical disability and long-term boarding needs. The Admin was of the view that the primary role of special schools was to provide education for students with SEN.</p> <p>Mr LEUNG's query about the need to differentiate long-term and short-term boarding needs in the provision of education for students with SEN.</p> <p>PAS(SAS)'s explanation that the boarding places in special schools were intended for students with SEN with long-term boarding needs. Should respite service be provided by special schools, some boarding places would have to be reserved for urgent or temporary needs.</p> <p>Mr LEUNG's view that the overall boarding places in special schools should be increased to meet with the demand.</p>	
010946 - 012752	Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong Chairman Admin	<p>Mr CHEUNG's views that SWD should continue to coordinate the provision of respite service in RCHDs for PWDs below the age of 15; provide the service categories and locations of the 35 RCHDs; and review the implementation of the scheme with a view to improving the service on an on-going basis.</p> <p>Mr CHEUNG's suggestion that EDB should at least undertake to provide residential respite service for PWDs below the age of 15 with genuine needs but who could not be accommodated under the extension scheme. His suggestion was supported by the Chairman.</p>	

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		<p>PAS(SAS)'s response that at present, the majority of the existing 19 special schools with a boarding section provided respite service for needy parents on a voluntary and self-financing basis, subject to availability of places. The undertaking requested by Mr CHEUNG would have wide policy implications and she could not promise.</p>	
<p>012753 - 014454</p>	<p>Mr LEE Cheuk-yan Admin Chairman The Association of Parents of the Severely Mentally Handicapped 「爭取肢體弱能學校開辦住宿/暫宿服務」關注組 Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong</p>	<p>Mr LEE's request for an estimate of the demand of persons with different types of disabilities for respite service.</p> <p>Ms Sandra HO's response that in the past year, as far as students with severe ID were concerned, some 200 man-times involving over 1,000 days required residential respite service, and the provision of seven-day boarding service for students with severe ID in special schools was inadequate. Seven to eight ID students who had been confirmed to require 7-day boarding service were on the waiting list and could not be allocated a place in the coming year.</p> <p>PAS(SAS)'s response that the existing 19 special schools with a boarding section had a total capacity of more than 1 000 places, and that the number of students with SEN on the waiting list for a seven-day boarding place was few. Her agreement to provide the information in writing.</p> <p>Ms Ho Bo-ching's query about the differentiation between long-term and short-term boarding needs in the provision of education for children with SEN.</p> <p>Mr CHEUNG's view that should EDB undertake to provide respite service for those who could not be accommodated under the extension scheme, the need for respite service in special schools would reflect the adequacy or otherwise of the respite service provided by RCHDs.</p> <p>PAS(SAS)'s agreement to liaise with special schools with a boarding section to gather data on the respite service they provided on a voluntary and self-financing basis to facilitate a rough estimate of the demand.</p>	

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014455 - 015024	Chairman	The Chairman's request for the Admin to provide the occupancy rates and the vacant respite places in the 35 RCHDs and estimated costs of a respite place in special schools providing five-day or seven-day boarding service, as compared with those of RCHDs	See para 4 and 5 of the minutes
015025 - 015225	Chairman Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong	Members' agreement to write to CS, SED and SLW on the matter.	

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