

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)911/06-07
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/HS/2/04

**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, 22 December 2006 at 10:45 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung (Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, GBS, JP
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
- Members absent** : Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
- Public Officers attending** : Items II and III

Dr Catherine K K CHAN
Principal Assistant Secretary (Curriculum
Development), Education and Manpower Bureau

Mrs Fanny LAM FAN Kit-fong
Principal Assistant Secretary (School Administration
and Support), Education and Manpower Bureau

Miss TSANG Suk-man
Specialist (Educational Psychology/Special Education),
Education and Manpower Bureau

Mrs Agnes FUNG FUNG Wing-yee
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

Item II

Mrs Florence AU WONG Wai-yin
Senior Education Officer (School Administration and
Support), Education and Manpower Bureau

**Attendance by
invitation** : Item II

Hong Kong Association for Parents of Persons with
Physical Disabilities

Ms LING Ching-ha
Executive Member

Ms TAM Yuk-fung
Member

Parents' Alliance on Special Education System

Ms Pansy LEUNG
Convenor

Ms AU YEUNG CHAN Cheuk-man
Vice-Convenor

Item III

Specific Learning Difficulties Secondary School
Concern Group

Mrs Purple KWAN
Parent Representative

Ms Ivy TAM
Parent Representative

Hong Kong Association for Specific Learning Disabilities

Mrs LAU LI Man-ying
Vice-Chairperson

Ms POON Wai-ha
Parent

Heep Hong Society Parents Association Concern Group
for Inclusive Education

Ms NG Lai-ho
Convenor

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

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

Miss Carmen HO
Legislative Assistant (2)6

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I. Confirmation of minutes
[LC Paper No. CB(2)690/06-07]

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2006 were confirmed.

II. 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"]

Provision of 10-year basic education for students with intellectual disability

2. The Chairman recapped members' concern about the reduction of basic education for students with intellectual disability (ID students) from 10 to nine

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years under the new academic structure to be implemented in the 2009-2010 school year. He pointed out that under the new senior secondary (NSS) academic structure, ID students with physical disability or hearing impairment in special schools for the physically disabled (PD schools) or schools for the hearing impaired (HI schools) would be provided with three years of junior secondary education. However, students with physical disability (PD students) or students with hearing impairment (HI students) in the same special schools would be provided with four years of junior secondary education, on the ground that they would follow the ordinary curriculum and participate in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) examination. He considered it ridiculous that students with multiple disabilities, for example ID and HI/PD, would be provided with lesser years of basic education. He invited the Administration to update the Subcommittee on its latest stance on the provision of basic education for ID students under the new academic structure.

3. Principal Assistant Secretary (School Administration & Support) (PAS(SAS)) said that as stated in the Report entitled "Action for the Future - Career-oriented Studies and the New Senior Secondary Academic Structure for Special Schools (the Report)", all students would be provided with 12 years of education, comprising six years of primary education and six years of secondary education. Under the NSS academic structure, PD students and HI students following the ordinary curriculum in PD schools and HI schools respectively would continue to be provided with 10 years of basic education, taking into account their learning needs and the learning requirements at senior secondary levels leading to HKDSE. ID students, including those attending schools for the visually impaired (VI schools), PD schools and HI schools, would learn under tailor-made individualised education programmes (IEPs) and be provided with three years of junior secondary education and three years of senior secondary education. As stated in paragraph 8.17 of the Report, ID students who had been absent from school for a long period due to health or other justifiable reasons could apply for repeating class just as the existing practice.

4. The Chairman said that at the meeting on 23 November 2006, the Administration was requested to provide information on PD students or HI students who had completed junior secondary education in three years. PAS(SAS) replied that as recorded in paragraph 41 of the minutes of the meeting, the Administration did not have the relevant information and what she actually meant was that the possibility of PD students or HI students completing junior secondary education in three years should not be precluded. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong remarked that he would not insist on obtaining the information as it was extremely unlikely that PD or HI students would have chosen to complete junior secondary schooling in three years.

5. The Chairman pointed out that paragraph 9.5 of the Report stated that some ID students could aspire to attain threshold Level 1 in HKDSE for all or some of the subjects. He asked whether these ID students would be provided

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with four years of junior secondary education. PAS(CD) responded that ID students with such aspiration would have a justifiable reason for the provision of an additional year of study as stated in paragraph 8.17 of the Report.

6. Miss CHAN Yuen-han said that under the current system, ID students enjoyed four years of junior secondary education in special schools. It would be a different thing if these students needed to apply for repeating class in order to enjoy four years of junior secondary education under the NSS academic structure. The need to repeat class would affect the self-image of the students concerned and give rise to emotional and psychological stress. Teachers would also be unnecessarily shouldered with the burden to consider the need of the ID students to repeat class.

7. PAS(CD) acknowledged that it might not be appropriate to use the words "repeating class" to reflect the need of ID students for an additional year of basic education when justified. She undertook to refine the literal presentation in future to reflect more accurately the Administration's intention to cater for the aspiration of individual ID students to achieve threshold Level 1 or higher achievement in HKDSE.

8. PAS(SAS) also shared the view that the term "repeating class" might not be a good term to properly reflect the need of individual ID students to extend the duration of IEPs. She undertook to clarify the concept with the special education sector in the course of implementing the NSS academic structure for special schools.

9. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that the Administration might regard the provision of four years of junior secondary education for ID students an additional request from members once the request for three-year junior and three-year senior secondary education under the new academic structure was acceded to. However, parents of ID students might never conceive that the duration of basic education for ID students would be reduced from 10 to nine years under the NSS academic structure. Mr CHEUNG opined that whether the ID students would attend the HKDSE examination should not be taken as the deciding factor. Most students with moderate and severe ID would stay in residential homes after secondary schooling. It was a form of social kindness in a civilised and developed society to take care of ID students and provide them with reasonable years of education. He urged the Administration to consider providing ID students with four years of junior secondary education from this perspective.

10. PAS(SAS) responded that the Administration noted the views of members and the deputations on the matter. She pointed out that the Report was compiled after three-month extensive consultation with the key stakeholders. The Chairman remarked that parents had all along expressed objection to the reduction of basic education for ID students from 10 years to nine years.

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11. Ms TAM Yuk-fung said that under the existing academic structure, ID students were not required to take the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination in order to be provided with four years of junior secondary education. It was unjustified to reduce the duration under the new academic structure on the ground that ID students would not attend the HKDSE examination. She considered that the proposal under the new academic structure was discriminatory against ID students.

12. Ms AU YEUNG CHAN Cheuk-man said that the Administration had ignored the right of ID students to enjoy 10-year basic education. She considered it unreasonable to reduce the duration of junior secondary education for ID students as the focus of the current reform was on the NSS academic structure. She also considered it illogical for ID students to undergo a shorter duration of basic education than PD or HI students with normal intellectual ability.

13. PAS(SAS) responded that the Administration had considered the views of parents and the Hong Kong Special Schools Council during the three-month consultation exercise, and was aware of some parents' request for maintaining the current provision of four-year junior secondary education for ID students. She pointed out that the recommendation to provide six years of secondary education for ID students was largely supported by the key stakeholders in the special education sector. PAS(CD) supplemented that the Administration would review the provision of junior secondary education for ID students through the research and development studies on the NSS(ID) curriculum and the learning outcomes framework.

14. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that the Administration should frankly explain the reasons for reducing the duration of junior secondary education for ID students to three years. He considered it better to resolve the issue by peaceful negotiation than by resorting to judicial review. The Chairman suggested that the Administration should reconsider the matter and revert to the Subcommittee in three months. PAS(CD) responded that she would bring back the views of members.

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15. Ms Audrey EU sought information on the additional resources required for the provision of four years as opposed to three years of junior secondary education for ID students, and the decision-maker in respect of the recommendations in the Report.

16. PAS(SAS) reiterated that the Report was compiled after careful consideration of the views collected during the three-month consultation exercise, and the recommendation to provide six years of secondary education for ID students was supported by the Hong Kong Special Schools Council and some parents groups. In response to the question of who made the final decision,

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she said that the Secretary for Education and Manpower had considered and endorsed the recommendations of the Report. She undertook to advise in writing the additional resources required for the provision of four years as opposed to three years of junior secondary education for ID students.

Tuition and boarding fees

17. The Chairman pointed out that according to its paper, the Administration would continue with the existing policy on tuition fees to recover 18% of the cost of senior secondary education. Students in senior secondary classes of special schools were now paying the same level of school fees as their counterparts in ordinary schools. As regards boarding fee in special schools, the Administration considered that there was room for gradual adjustment of the existing fee, having regard to the boarding fees for hostels under the Social Welfare Department (SWD). The Chairman requested the Administration to elaborate on its views on tuition fees and boarding fees for special schools under the NSS academic structure.

18. PAS(SAS) responded that the current boarding fee of \$440 per boarder per month for both five-day or seven-day boarders in special schools was fixed many years ago. The Administration considered it appropriate to review the boarding fee in the light of changing circumstances. During the consultation, the special education sector had expressed support for the setting of different rates for five-day and seven-day boarding services. PAS(SAS) stressed that the Administration did not have any firm view at the present stage and would consult the stakeholders on any proposal to adjust the boarding fee. The Chairman remarked that the Administration should also consult the Subcommittee on any proposal in this regard. The Administration noted the view.

19. Ms AU YEUNG CHAN Cheuk-man said that the boarding fees in special schools and in hostels under SWD were devised under different mechanisms. Persons at the age of 18 or above in hostels under SWD might apply for the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA). However, ID students were not eligible for CSSA but they needed to incur additional expenses for continuous medical attention and care. It was inappropriate to adjust the boarding fee in special schools with reference to the boarding fees of hostels under SWD.

20. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong requested the Administration to clarify the basis for determining the existing boarding fee in special schools. He considered that if the Administration had no intention to bring it in line with the fees of hostels under SWD, it should not make reference to such fees in its review of the boarding fee in special schools. He agreed that the fees for five-day and seven-day boarding services in special schools should be different. However, the basis for determining the fees for boarding services in the review should not be deviated substantially from that for the present fee.

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Admin 21. PAS(SAS) responded that as the existing boarding fee was fixed many years ago, there was no idea how it was set and whether the decision at the time had made reference to the policy to recover 18% of the total recurrent costs incurred. The Administration was still open to any review principles including the need to follow the 18% cost-recovery policy in its review of the boarding fee. In principle, any fee adjustments would be implemented in phases, taking into account the affordability of parents. She would try to see if she could find out information on the basis for determining the existing boarding fee in special schools.

Admin 22. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan enquired whether a revision of the boarding fee in special schools required the approval of the Legislative Council. He also asked how the boarding fees for hostels under SWD had been determined. Assistant Director (Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services) undertook to provide the information in writing.

III. Education for students with specific learning disabilities

[LC Paper No. CB(2)689/06-07(01)]

Oral presentation by deputations

Heep Hong Society Parents Association Concern Group for Inclusive Education
[LC Paper No. CB(2)719/06-07(03)]

23. Ms NG Lai-ho presented the views of the Heep Hong Society Parents Association Concern Group for Inclusive Education as detailed in its submission. She highlighted that the Concern Group suggested that the Administration should legislate to require school principals to supervise the formulation of IEPs for and assessment of students with special educational needs (SEN), and allocate resources to schools for each enrolment of student with SEN. The Concern Group also suggested that post-secondary institutions should provide programmes in multi-media information technology, music, arts and design and consider admission of students with specific learning disability (SpLD students) on the basis of their talents and performance in the subject area concerned.

Hong Kong Association for Specific Learning Disabilities
[LC Paper No. CB(2)719/06-07(02)]

24. Mrs LAU LI Man-ying presented the views of the Hong Kong Association for Specific Learning Disabilities as detailed in its submission. She highlighted that the Administration should improve special examination arrangements for SpLD students; modulate the academic assessment of SpLD students at primary five (P5) and P6 levels; reinforce professional development of teachers on identification of students with SEN at P1, P3 and P4 levels;

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provide clear guidelines on transfer of student data between schools; monitor the use of resources for integrated education in schools; and abolish the plan to transfer the responsibility of identifying SpLD students to teachers of primary schools in five years.

*Specific Learning Difficulties Secondary School Concern Group
[LC Paper No. CB(2)719/06-07(01)]*

25. Ms Purple KWAN presented the views of the Specific Learning Difficulties Secondary School Concern Group as detailed in its submission. She highlighted that the Administration should supervise the use of resources for students with SEN in schools; involve teachers with experience in special education on school-based assessment of SpLD students; collaborate with schools and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) to provide suitable examination arrangements and modulation of assessment of SpLD students in examinations; reinforce professional development for teachers in support of SpLD students in learning; provide Applied Learning courses at senior secondary one level and alternative assessment mechanism for SpLD students; protect the interests of SpLD students in private independent schools and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme; and continue the operation of Project Yi Jim under the new academic structure. Ms Ivy TAM urged the Administration to ensure the availability of a norm-referenced test for junior secondary school students with SpLD for use by psychologists in mid-2007.

The Administration's response

26. Responding to the issues of concern raised by the deputations, PAS(SAS) provided the following information -

- (a) A special grant for primary schools to procure speech therapy services for students with speech and language impairment was introduced in the 2006-2007 school year. The scheme would be implemented by three phases and a few hundred schools had participated in the scheme in the first phase. For others schools, the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) would continue to provide the speech therapy services to students;
- (b) A two-day course on SEN for school heads would be arranged. The course would cover the 3-tier intervention model and the basic knowledge and skills in supporting students with SpLD;
- (c) A norm-referenced test to facilitate assessment of SpLD of junior secondary school students by psychologists would be published by May 2007. A norm-referenced Assessment Battery on Chinese Reading and Writing for teachers to assess secondary school students' reading and writing ability in Chinese would be available

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for teachers to screen students suspected to have SpLD and assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of students in different domains of Chinese literacy for planning appropriate intervention strategies;

- (d) EMB had commissioned the Hong Kong Polytechnic University to run a series of a 42-hour course on SpLD for Chinese and English Language teachers in primary and secondary schools in the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years. So far, 164 teachers from 106 schools had attended the courses; and
- (e) EMB had drawn up a teacher training framework to tie in with the 3-tier intervention model for students with SEN, including SpLD. For in-service teachers, the framework consisted of a 30-hour basic course, a 90-hour advanced course and thematic courses on particular types of SEN. Both the advanced and thematic courses included SpLD as an elective. EMB envisaged that by the 2012-2013 school year, 10% of teachers in each school would complete the basic course; at least 3 teachers per school would complete the advanced course; and at least one English teacher and one Chinese teacher per school would have attended the thematic course on SpLD.

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27. In response to the Chairman, the Administration agreed to provide further information concerning (a) above.

Discussion

Special examination arrangements in public examinations

28. The Chairman asked how the Administration would collaborate with HKEAA to provide special arrangements for students with SEN, including SpLD students, to take public examinations.

29. PAS(SAS) responded that HKEAA had held two briefing sessions for parents of students with SpLD in January and October 2006 to clarify the rationale and procedures for application of special arrangements and accommodations in public examinations. With effect from the 2005-2006 school year, students with SEN, including SpLD students, at S4 and S6 levels could apply at the commencement of the school year for special arrangements in HKCEE and Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination. HKEAA would consider their applications and provide response in February of the school year. The extra time-allowance for candidates with SpLD in need of special arrangement in written papers had been extended from 20% to 25%. The Task Group on SpLD under the HKEAA would continue to examine and review the effectiveness of the existing special arrangements and the use of computers in public examinations.

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30. The Chairman requested the Administration to coordinate a meeting between HKEAA and the deputations on the special arrangements for students with SEN to take public examinations. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that the technical aspects of public examinations should be adjusted to take account of the needs of students with SEN and prevailing international practices and trend. However, being public examinations with recognized qualifications, the contents and standards could not and should not be compromised. He suggested that the Administration should arrange meetings between HKEAA and the deputations to discuss the special arrangements for students with SEN, including SpLD students, to take public examinations.

31. PAS(SAS) agreed with Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's view that the technical aspects of taking the public examinations, such as extra examination time, might be adjusted but the content and standard of the examinations must remain intact. She pointed out that the Task Group on SpLD under the HKEAA comprised educational psychologists, academics and EMB representatives and would continue to review the effectiveness of existing arrangements for students with SEN to take public examinations. She undertook to help arrange a meeting of the Task Group with the deputations in this respect.

Transfer of student data

32. The Chairman was concerned about the arrangements for transfer of student data between schools. He pointed out that the deputations considered it necessary to transfer to the relevant schools as early as possible the data of students with SEN who had completed P6 and proceeded to secondary education or changed school in the course of a school year. He suggested that EMB should advise schools to arrange for transfer of the student data within one month after the students with SEN had changed schools.

33. PAS(SAS) responded that in a circular issued to all schools, EMB had stipulated the need to and the procedures for transfer of student data between schools. The contact officers of EMB would also advise schools to effect the transfer at an early opportunity. In response to members' suggestion, the Administration agreed to advise schools to ensure the transfer of student data within one month after the students had changed schools.

Modulation of school-based assessment

34. The Chairman asked whether EMB had published guidance notes for schools on modulation of scores for students with SEN, including SpLD students, in assessing their academic performance at P5 and P6 levels. He sought information on how EMB would assist schools in modulating the scores of students with different types of SEN.

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35. PAS(SAS) responded that EMB had issued to schools for reference guidance on assessment accommodations for students with SEN in internal examinations, including SpLD students. Starting from the 2006-2007 school year, EMB had assigned to each primary school a contact officer to advise on the provision of support and assistance to students with SEN. These contact officers would visit their designated schools at least three times a year, and discuss with principals and teachers on practical issues including the assessment accommodation in internal examinations. In practice, the Student Support Team of individual schools would discuss with the educational psychologists, the contact officers and the parents concerned on the appropriate assessment accommodation arrangements for individual students with SEN.

36. In response to Mrs LAU LI Man-ying's enquiry about the service scope of contact officers, PAS(SAS) replied that the contact officers would serve as a resource person to help schools promote inclusive culture and to help schools develop the school-based policy for education of students with SEN. They would visit schools regularly to discuss with teachers their concerns and to see that the whole-school approach was implemented in an effective way.

Identification and intervention

37. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that given the heavy workload of teachers and principals in schools, the Administration should make available an alternative mechanism for parents to request for an assessment of their children suspected to have SpLD. The Chairman added that parents were frustrated with the long waiting time for assessment of SpLD by educational psychologists.

38. PAS(SAS) explained that the identification of SpLD was not an esoteric exercise carried out solely by psychologists. It should be carried out at many levels. In principle, frontline language teachers should constantly be engaged in noticing and identifying students' general learning difficulties and in trying out various teaching strategies to facilitate students' learning. If a student's response to the adjusted teaching was not satisfactory, the teachers might initiate a more detailed examination of the student's difficulties through analysing his/her response to the instruction within the classroom. This was "assessment through teaching". If the difficulties continued despite the extra help from the teachers, the students should be referred to the educational psychologist for a psycho-educational assessment. The whole process should not be seen as "waiting time".

39. PAS(SAS) said that the Administration would encourage parents to approach the teachers in schools for early identification and provision of timely intervention to their SpLD children. She added that EMB, upon receiving referral, would arrange students at other levels who were suspected to have SpLD to have an assessment by educational psychologists in about a month.

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40. Specialist (Educational Psychology/Special Education) (S(EP/SE)) explained that primary school teachers would use the norm-referenced Observation Checklist for Teachers (OCT) to screen P1 pupils with learning difficulties in December each year to facilitate early identification of SpLD students and provision of timely intervention. By way of adjusted teaching and "assessment through teaching", some students with mild SEN could gradually learn and progress at the same pace as their peers in classes. For students whose learning difficulties continued despite the extra help from the teachers, the educational psychologists would step in and participate in the design of the appropriate support for the students. She added that similar approach and practices to help students with SEN in learning were widely adopted in overseas places including the United Kingdom and Taiwan.

41. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong suggested that EMB should publicise the alternative paths available for parents to approach EMB for assessment of their children suspected to have SpLD, in particular when SpLD might only become observable at senior primary levels. PAS(SAS) responded that EMB had provided the relevant offices and telephone numbers on its web-page and parents could approach EMB for help if necessary.

42. The Chairman said that there had been cases in which secondary students suspected to have SpLD were only assessed after being referred to EMB for a year. S(EP/SE) replied that educational psychologists in EMB had readily responded to referrals from secondary schools, and students suspected to have SpLD would be arranged for detailed assessment as soon as practicable.

Funding for integrated education in primary and secondary schools

43. The Chairman and Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong urged the Administration to work out the funding model for implementation of integrated education in secondary schools. Mr CHEUNG said that primary schools had complained about the reduction of resources under the new funding mode, and only 37 secondary schools adopted the whole-school approach to integrated education without the provision of additional resources. Mr CHEUNG pointed out that the Band-3 initiative was introduced to relieve teachers' workload and not supporting SpLD students in secondary schools. He suggested that the Administration should at least specify the policy direction on provision of additional resources for secondary schools with enrolment of SpLD students.

44. PAS(SAS) responded that the Administration would review the funding mode for implementation of integrated education in primary and secondary schools in the 2007-2008 school year. The review would take into account the operational experience from the current funding mode for primary schools and the Band-3 initiative for secondary schools. She added that apart from the Band-3 initiative, secondary schools were provided with on-site professional support from specialists and special education trained officers of EMB.

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45. The Chairman considered that the Administration should set a timetable for the review. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong suggested that if the Administration could not formulate in time a funding policy for secondary schools to implement integrated education for the 2007-2008 school year, the Administration should extend the new funding model for primary schools to secondary schools as an interim measure.

46. Mrs Purple KWAN asked how the Administration would support SpLD students in schools not benefited by the Band-3 initiative. PAS(SAS) responded that apart from the recurrent funding, secondary schools were provided with additional resources such as the Capacity Enhancement Grant to support student learning. In addition, the Administration had earmarked substantial resources for teacher training on special education in the 2007-2008 school year.

47. The Chairman requested the Administration to elaborate on the provision of additional resources for implementing integrated education in secondary schools at the next meeting. The Administration noted the request.

Curriculum and assessment framework

48. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that the deputations were concerned that SpLD students were at a disadvantaged position to compete with other students in academic subjects such as English Language, Chinese Language and Mathematics. They suggested that the curriculum and assessment framework should provide a wide range of elective subjects such as career-oriented studies to meet the diverse needs, interests and abilities of students with SEN. He suggested that EMB should re-activate the work of the Working Group on Integrated Education and consult the deputations on the development of the curriculum and assessment framework for integrated education. PAS(SAS) agreed.

IV. Any other business

49. Members noted that the next meeting would be held on 22 January 2007 to discuss the implementation of integrated education.

50. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:57 pm.