

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

Education and Manpower Bureau's Response to the Major Issues Raised at the Meeting of 21 July 2006

Issues/Views	EMB's Response
1. There should be strategic planning for teacher training in supporting SEN.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● We consider that equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills required as well as inculcating an inclusive attitude in them are crucial for schools to successfully implement integrated education. We agree that there should be strategic planning for teacher training to build up their capacity for support students with SEN. We have proposed a teacher training framework which will tie in with the 3-tier intervention model. The details of the framework were given in LC Paper No. CB(2) 2772/05-06(01) presented to Members at the Sub-committee meeting on 21 July 2006.
2. To enhance cost-effective use of resources, the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO) should be reviewed so as to allow schools to limit the number of SEN types in student intake.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● According to legal advice, confining the intake of students to a certain type(s) of SEN in a school would go against the fundamental spirit of the DDO on equal opportunities for the disabled. It is noteworthy that no place in the world has such legislation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is practically difficult to set such a numerical limit since (a) the intensity of the support required varies with different types of disability and between individuals; (b) there are students with multiple disabilities; (c) the incidence rates of certain types of SEN are quite high; and (d) there are the risks of schools rejecting the more difficult cases, such as autism and Attention Deficit & Hyperactivity Disorder. The consequence is far-reaching. ● In the interest of the students, a better alternative is to enhance schools' and teachers' capacity in catering for students with different types of SEN. Specifically, we would enhance the training on integrated education (IE) for school personnel, produce a guide on IE for schools, and step up professional support for schools, in particular those with hard core cases and/or a large cluster of SEN students.
<p>3. More information should be provided for parents to facilitate their choice of schools especially for S1 admission. In addition, places of skills opportunity schools should be made available for parents' choice on a territory-wide basis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We are now compiling a guide on IE for parents, which would help parents better understand, inter alia, the appropriate ways to cater for their children's SEN and how to choose the most suitable school for their children. The guide is expected to be ready by the end of 2007. ● We agree that parents should be well informed of the education services provided by individual schools for students with SEN so that they could make informed choices. EMB would work with relevant government departments and non-government organizations to brief

parents of those pre-school children identified to have SEN on IE in primary schools and also choice of schools for P1 admission. For parents with SEN children participating in the current Primary One Admission (POA) cycle, we plan to organize briefings on POA to better facilitate them in making school choices at the Central Allocation Stage.

- On S1 admission, we would explore with schools on the best ways to provide P6 parents with more information on individual secondary schools' education services for students with SEN so as to help parents make informed choices of schools. Our school support officers would work with individual primary schools to provide advice and counseling service to parents of SEN students in their choice of secondary schools.
- To better cater for the needs of students with SEN on transfer to another school, we have put in place an arrangement to facilitate schools to transfer their SEN data to the recipient schools (with the prior consent of parents) so that the recipient schools can provide the required support in good time.
- To allow parents more choice, the mainstreamed skills opportunity schools will continue to earmark a maximum of 80% of its S1 places as discretionary places and the remaining for central allocation under the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System. Under the

	<p>existing netting arrangement of the SSPA System, these schools would serve all SSPA nets to better facilitate parents' choice. We also highlight the characteristics of these schools in the SSPA Secondary List.</p>
<p>4. There should be assessment of students' SEN at P6 to facilitate proper placement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Currently, re-assessment of students' SEN is done on a need basis and not solely for S1 admission purposes. Should a student with SEN be assessed to require special arrangement for school admission, we would follow up as appropriate. ● Where necessary, our school support officers, educational psychologists and also the student guidance teachers of individual primary schools would be able to provide advice to parents on the proper schooling for their children with SEN.
<p>5. There should be special accommodations for students with SEN in public examinations as well as for students with visual impairment in the provision of Applied Learning courses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All along, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) has put in place special accommodations (such as extra time allowance, supervised breaks, special format of question papers, special answer books, use of computer in answering, etc.) in public examinations for students with SEN. In fact, the HKEAA has set up a Committee on Special Needs Candidates to deal with matters related to special examination arrangements for students with SEN in public examinations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Visually impaired students, like students of other SEN types, are given equal opportunities to choose the Applied Learning courses as their elective subjects, subject to their schools' curriculum design. Course providers for Applied Learning would make appropriate arrangements to facilitate their learning of the courses. For example, a course on western cuisine for hearing impaired students has been conducted in smaller class size with instructors who can communicate with the students through sign language.
<p>6. For SEN students in ordinary schools who have difficulty in learning or are repeatedly being bullied, an effective mechanism should be put in place to facilitate their transfer to special schools. EMB may consider using the mediation mechanism required under the Code of Practice issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We have established procedures for transferring students from ordinary schools to special schools if required. Students from special schools who are ready for integration in ordinary schools will also be assisted in their choice of schools. ● A 3-tier mediation mechanism is already in place to handle complaints and grievances from parents pursuant to the Code of Practice in Education produced by the Equal Opportunities Commission. Schools and parents are informed of the procedures. ● We adopt a 'Zero Tolerance' policy on student bullying irrespective of the students' background. Transferring the victim student to another school is not the right way to stop student bullying. We believe that an inclusive culture is the key to a harmonious school environment and

	<p>successful implementation of integrated education. A circular is issued annually to remind schools to adopt positive measures to ensure that students are safe at school. We have also provided guidelines to schools on the prevention and handling of bullying cases – a resource package entitled ‘Co-creating a Harmonious School’ was developed in 2004 to enhance teachers’ awareness and knowledge of bullying at school and the skills to prevent it and intervene; and a pamphlet for parents on ‘Help Your Child Develop a Harmonious Relationship in School’ was also published in 2004. We also organize workshops, seminars and training courses for teachers and guidance and discipline personnel.</p>
<p>7. There should be more resource support for secondary schools to implement integrated education (IE), at a level comparable to the provisions for primary schools. More support should be provided for students with Special Learning Difficulties (SpLD) in secondary schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In principle, the provision of resource for SEN should be able to differentiate students’ needs by severity of their learning difficulties within the context where the needs are interpreted and catered for. The current 3-tier intervention model in schools well represents such a resource deployment. ● As far as secondary schools are concerned, the tier-1 support for students with mild and transient learning difficulties will be covered by the basic provision of quality education for all. For Tier-2 support for students identified with persistent learning difficulties, educational psychology service is provided for all secondary schools to support differentiated learning. The Band 3 Initiative introduced as from the 2006/07 school year provides additional teachers for secondary

schools with territory Band 3 and bottom 10% students which usually covers the majority of the students with SEN. For the sporadic cases of SEN students who do not fall into the category of Band 3 students, backend support from EMB will be lined up to work with the school. Under the new senior secondary academic structure, students in need of tier-2 support will be catered for by the diversified curriculum, the Diversity Learning Grant as well as the enhanced class-to-teacher ratio of 1:2. For tier-3 support, the Integrated Education Programme with additional teachers being provided in some secondary schools will continue. Students with visual or hearing impairment in ordinary secondary schools are under specific support programmes provided by special schools. Where necessary, on-site support from a nearby special school cum resource centre could be arranged for ordinary secondary schools with students with SEN. In cases when the student has core autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), support may come in the form of secondment of a resource teacher to the school, short-term intervention programme in a special school, the provision of teacher assistants (TA) during the critical period etc. To this effect, EMB will work closely with schools on the identification and intervention procedures so that timely support is always in place to meet students' needs. We would closely monitor the adequacy of the support for students with SEN in ordinary secondary schools.

- In supporting students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) in

	<p>secondary schools, we will provide teachers with the operation guides on reading and writing and the teacher-administered assessment battery on literacy skills in mid 2007. School-based programmes are being run in this school year to help teachers acquire the intervention skills and disseminate good practices. In addition, the “Read and Write: A Jockey Club Learning Support Network” sponsored by the Hong Kong Jockey Club has been launched and the project covers work on research, teacher development, consultation service and resource development covering secondary students with SpLD. For speech and language impairment, a number of half-day workshops for teachers as well as language enhancement programmes in some secondary schools have been planned for this school year.</p>
<p>8. A Task Group with representatives from parent groups and school councils to collect feedback on the implementation of integrated education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A Task Group on Integrated Education in Mainstream Schools has been set up since 2005 to advise on the implementation of IE. The group comprises representatives from parents, schools councils, tertiary institutes, non-government organisations and relevant government departments. ● In addition, we also hold meetings with different stakeholders from time to time.

Education and Manpower Bureau

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