

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

**Implementation and Effectiveness of
The Whole-School Approach to Integrated Education**

Background

The integration of children with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools has been implemented in Hong Kong since 1970s. Various school-based or centre-based support services are provided, including special classes, intensive remedial teaching programmes and adjustment programmes. Mainstream primary schools admitting 15 or more students with SEN are provided with additional resource teachers under the Intensive Remedial Teaching programme (IRTP). Traditionally, resource teachers are responsible for providing remedial teaching to students with SEN. However, class teaching, remedial teaching and other support services for these students are often arranged through compartmentalized arrangements.

2. To take integrated education a step forward, the government launched the 2-year Integrated Education (IE) pilot project in September 1997 that was featured by the adoption of whole-school approach (WSA) to catering for students with SEN. The objectives are to enhance the effectiveness of support for students with SEN, through improvement on the culture, policy and practices of the whole school. The ultimate aim is to enhance the capacity of all schools in catering for student diversity, so that all teachers are ready to provide early intervention to students with varying degrees of learning difficulties and in a more integrated approach. After the 2-year pilot project, the IE Programme was extended to other mainstream schools as from the 1999/2000 school year.

3. In the 2005/06 school year, there are 385 primary schools participating in the IRTP and 115 primary and secondary schools in the IE Programme.

Salient Features of the WSA

4. Under the WSA, concerted efforts of the school management, staff, students and parents are mobilized to provide support services to students with SEN in an integrated approach and to promote the inclusive school culture and ethos.

(a) Individualized Education Planning Committee (IEPC)

Based on the needs of individual students, Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are drawn up and regularly monitored through the Individualized Education Planning Committee (IEPC) meetings that involve the teachers (including class teachers, resource teachers, guidance teachers and subject teachers as and when required), parents and the students themselves. The IEPs focus on the performance of the students and the support required to reach certain educational goals. Schools are also advised to use assistive technology to facilitate teaching and learning.

(b) Parent Participation

Parents are invited to participate in the IEPC to establish and review the learning goals and progress of the students.

(c) SEN Register and Records

Schools keep a set of the assessment reports and progress review on the students. These documents are shared among the teachers in the school and will be transferred to relevant educational establishment (after obtaining consent from the parents) when students with SEN change schools.

(d) Training and Support for the Teachers

Induction workshops and 10-hour school-based staff training are arranged for the participating schools. Throughout the year, territory-wide seminars, workshops and experience-sharing sessions on practical skills and inclusion strategies etc. are organized for the participating schools and other mainstream schools. In addition, a 30-hour Introductory Course on Integrated Education is organized twice a year for the teachers. Educational psychologists, inspectors, audiologists and school development officers of the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) visit the schools regularly to provide professional support and conduct school-based staff development programmes to meet the needs of the schools.

Promotion of WSA through the New Funding Mode

5. With effect from the 2003/04 school year, a new funding mode (NFM) has been piloted in primary schools, with a view to bridging the service gap in those schools admitting students below the threshold to be eligible for additional resources under the IE Programme or the IRTP. Schools are funded according to the number of students with SEN and required to adopt the whole-school approach to cater for student diversity. There are 240 primary schools participated in the NFM in the 2005/06 school year.

6. With the implementation of the NFM, the number of schools adopting the WSA has increased in the past three years as follows:

School Year	Number of Schools ¹ adopting WSA to Supporting Students with SEN
2003/04	135
2004/05	271
2005/06	334

Evaluation Results of the WSA in Schools under the IE Programme or the NFM

7. The past eight years witnessed encouraging changes in these schools, especially in the following areas.

(a) Improved Student Performance

Schools are required to conduct an annual self-evaluation survey. The findings obtained at the end of July 2005 (response rate 89.3%) indicated that the overall academic performance and social adjustment of the 501 students as reported by the schools were as follows:

- *Overall Academic Performance* – an average of 91.4% showed stable performance or improvement.
- *Learning Motivation* – an average of 92.8% showed stable performance or improvement.
- *Social Adjustment* – an average of 96.8% showed stable performance or improvement.
- *Self-esteem* – an average of 97% showed stable performance or improvement.

¹ These schools include those participated in the IE Programme and / or NFM. Please note that some schools may participate in both. Some IE and IRTP schools have opted to join the NFM because of its funding flexibility.

(b) Inclusive School Culture

- *Mutual Acceptance and Help among Students and Teachers* – through serving as peer-tutors or student ambassadors in the peer support programmes, the self-esteem and achievement motivation of students in the regular classes are also enhanced.
- *Collaboration among Teachers* – through co-teaching in classes, the regular class teachers become more systematic in lesson preparation and more reflective of their teaching strategies and classroom management skills. Through the regular IEPC meetings, teachers develop management strategies to ensure consistency in behaviour management and enhanced effectiveness in teaching.
- *Teacher-Parent Collaboration* – through collaboration in the IEPC, teachers are more ready to share with parents about guidance methods, and parents feel encouraged to reflect their children's problems to teachers.
- *Teachers' Competency & Confidence* – through daily contact with the students, teachers' fear of the unknown and worry of inadequacy in student management skills begin to wane. Teachers were more ready to make accommodation and adaptation on homework assignments and academic assessment.

(c) Parents' Willingness to Disclose Children's SEN

In the past, many parents hesitated to reveal their children's difficulties for fear of rejection or discrimination by the schools. In recent years, there was a significant increase in the number of students reported by parents as having SEN. This can be reflected from the number of students reported by the parents as having SEN in the Primary One Admission in the past eight years. It increased from 158 students in 1997 to 483 students in 2005. This openness also makes it possible for schools to provide early intervention in collaboration with the parents.

(d) Readiness to Use the "Catering for Student Differences ~ Indicators for Inclusion" in School Development Plans

A school self-evaluation and school development tool called "Catering for Student Differences – Indicators for Inclusion" was developed and introduced to schools in May 2004. This tool guides schools to set targets and success criteria when designing school self-evaluation and preparing triennial and annual school development plans. The tool is well received among schools and they are getting more ready to use the Indicators for Inclusion in school development plans.

8. In January 2005, we also conducted a survey to the 170 pilot NFM schools. Positive feedbacks were received from heads (144 returns), teachers (577 returns) and parents (290 returns). More than 90% of the respondents expressed their support on the principles of WSA, the concept of NFM, and the operation of Student Support Team (SST). They agreed that the WSA raised teachers' awareness of the needs of the students with SEN, and were satisfied with the progress of the students with SEN under the management of the SST. In March 2005, 22 district-based focus group meetings were arranged for 200-plus teachers of the NFM schools. Most teachers showed their support for the WSA and NFM. In April 2005, 16 schools shared their good practices through 8 regional-based sessions. Favourable comments were received from the participants. From April to June, we also held consultation meetings with parents' associations, heads of primary schools, and the non-governmental organizations. They also indicated their support for the WSA and the NFM.

Support Measures for the Implementation of WSA

9. We have been taking forward the following support measures :

(a) Teacher Training

More teachers are empowered through continuous professional development. Tertiary institutes are commissioned to conduct SEN courses. Details of the courses for the 2004/05 school year are as follows:

Course Type	Teachers Participated
120-hour Professional Development Course on Catering for Student Diversity	532
30-hour Introductory Course on Integration Education	166
6-10 hour School-based Training on Integrated Education	2,195
Total	2,893

We also organize a spectrum of other modes of training throughout the year. These training programmes include networking activity of teachers and school heads, territory-wide and school-based seminars, workshops and experience-sharing sessions on knowledge and practical skills. A total number of 8095 teachers participated in these training activities. There are also

in-service and induction training programmes on student guidance for teachers such as the Certificate Course on Student Guidance for Teachers of Primary School.

(b) Professional Support

Our educational psychologists, inspectors, audiologists and school development officers visit the schools regularly to provide professional support for the teachers, such as participating in the meetings of the Student Support Team and the IEPC of students. We also conduct school-based staff development sessions to meet the needs of the schools. Details of the various support measures have been set out in the Information Note on Education of Children with Special Education Needs in Schools referenced LC Paper No. CB(2)1130/04-05(01).

(c) Development of Resource Materials

We have provided a wide range of resource materials for schools such as resource kits, training packages, and leaflets to support students with various types of SEN. There are also guidelines on principles and strategies of teaching and learning, homework design and school-based assessment accommodation. A set of 'Catering for Student Differences ~ Indicators for Inclusion' was developed and introduced to schools in the School Self-evaluation workshops as well as other seminars in the 2003/04 and 2004/05 school years. That tool is well received among schools. It assists schools in drawing up achievable targets and success criteria for school development and school self-evaluation plans.

(d) Parent/Public Education

We produced leaflets and CD-ROMs for parents and the public to help students with various types of special educational needs. The broadcast of a radio and TV Announcement of Public Interest (API) on equal opportunities in education is arranged perennially. Individual or group briefings are arranged for parents to make more informed decision on schooling for their children with SEN.

The Way Forward

10. We aim to promote the adoption of the WSA to cater for student diversity in all schools, and to provide flexibility in the funding mode. The following measures will be introduced or strengthened:

(a) Training and Professional Support for Teachers

The 120-hour professional development course on SEN for teachers continues,

providing a total of 540 training places in the 2005/06 school year. Professional support from EMB will be strengthened by more school-based support for teachers in the classroom (especially those with specific learning difficulties, autism or hyperactivity); more focus-group meetings for sharing of good practices among schools; and developing more learning materials for students with SEN. Schools will be supported to make reference to the Indicators for Inclusion to draw up achievable targets and success criteria in catering for student diversity in the school development plans and school self-evaluation. We are formulating comprehensive training strategies with a view to providing more structured professional development to the teachers. Teaching resources will continue to be developed for use by teachers and parents where appropriate.

(b) Integration of Support Services for Students with SEN and Streamlining of Resources

To address the needs of schools admitting large clusters of students with SEN, alignment of support services and streamlining of resources are necessary. Details are as follows:

- The new funding mode that provides better flexibility in catering for the students' needs will continue to be extended to other primary schools.
- Currently, there are provisions of various programmes for secondary schools such as School-based Remedial Support Programme, School-based Curriculum Tailoring Scheme and IE Programme. As proposed in the Action Plan of The New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education (May 2005), a cash grant at a combined rate for SBRSP and SBCTS, and a separate rate for IE Programme will be worked out. Through integrating and streamlining all these support services, schools will have greater flexibility in resource deployment for supporting students with SEN.
- As part of the scope of the Diversity Learning Grant, schools may obtain additional resources under the Grant to strengthen the support for students with SEN at senior secondary levels.

(c) School Partnership Scheme

In addition to the two special schools that have been offering support to other schools under the Scheme of Professional Development Schools, we have launched a 2-year School Partnership Scheme starting from the 2005/06 school year to provide additional funding for some mainstream and special schools with experience in catering for SEN to share their practices with other mainstream schools. The Scheme comprises the following two parts:

- Sixteen special schools with good experience in providing professional support for ordinary schools on handling SEN matters have been enlisted to serve as “Special Schools cum Resource Centres”. This initiative was first launched in the 2003/04 school year, and special schools involved provide direct services for the students, and share with teachers on intervention strategies and resources; and
- Seven mainstream schools with proficient experience in adopting the WSA approach to catering for students with SEN serve as resource schools to share their good practices with mainstream schools admitting students with SEN.

(d) Parent/Public Education

We have plans to enhance publicity of parent-school cooperation and inclusive education practices through various channels such as leaflets and TV/radio API. There will be more talks or workshops for parents on concepts of inclusive education, WSA, and their rights and responsibilities.

Advice Sought

11. Members are invited to note the implementation and effectiveness of the whole-school approach to integrated education and the way forward.

Education and Manpower Bureau
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