

**For discussion on
10 January 2005**

Paper No.:

**Joint Meeting of LegCo Panel on Education and
LegCo Panel on Welfare Services
Information Note**

Preamble

The purpose of this paper is to provide information for members' reference on (1) boarding service for students with physical disability, (2) reform of academic structure of special schools, and (3) further education and employment opportunities of special school students.

Boarding service for students with physical disability

2. This Bureau sets up boarding section in some schools for the physically disabled (PD schools) in order to solve their boarding problem when they receive education. This service is planned on a territory-wide basis without regional constraints.

3. At present, there are seven PD schools in Hong Kong. They are located on the Hong Kong Island, in Kowloon and the New Territories, providing a total of 820 school places. Two of them, which are on the Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon, have boarding sections providing a total of 170 boarding places for students from different regions who have long-term boarding needs. As at 15 November 2004, there were nine vacancies available in these two boarding sections.

4. The boarding sections of these two schools are of a larger scale, and they have been providing school buses and arranging rehabilitation buses for the students' journeys to and from home. All along, parents of individual students who have more severe physical disability or reside in remote areas may liaise with their schools to handle the individual circumstances.

5. For students with physical disability who are residing in the New Territories and unwilling to enroll in the PD schools in Kowloon or

on the Hong Kong Island, this Bureau has liaised with the sponsoring bodies of some special schools with boarding section in the New Territories. They have consented to render assistance so that students of PD schools in the New Territories who have long-term boarding needs can be admitted to the boarding section of their special schools. As the special schools of other categories, in recent years, have also admitted multi-disabled students who are also physically disabled, their staff members are experienced in taking care of these students.

6. Under the community support programmes for people with disabilities and their family funded by the Social Welfare Department (SWD), the physically disabled students would also be provided with respite services. These respite services include the "Holiday Care Service" which provides short-term day care service during holidays; the "Home Respite Service" which provides hourly charged day care service in the disabled person's home; and the "Extended Care Service" provided in the Day Activity Centres. Physically disabled students aged 15 or above could also be admitted to the residential homes for the mentally handicapped/physically disabled subvented by the SWD for temporary care, relieving the burden on their family.

7. Recently, a sponsoring body proposed to pilot a self-financed small-scale boarding section in a PD school in Sha Tin. This Bureau also actively assists the school in implementing the proposal.

8. This Bureau will continue to monitor the supply and demand of the boarding sections of PD schools, and will continue to arrange for admission of students with long-term boarding needs to the boarding sections. This Bureau will also continue to liaise with the school mentioned in Paragraph 7 above and with the departments concerned, and will keep a close watch on the progress and implementation of their pilot project.

Reform of academic structure of special schools

9. At present, there are a total of 62 aided special schools in Hong Kong, among which three operate a primary section only, 55 operate both primary and secondary sections, and four operate a secondary

section only. The category, number and curriculum of the existing special schools are summarized as follows:

School Category	No. of Schools	Existing Curriculum
School for the visually impaired	1	Up to junior secondary level
School for the hearing impaired	4	Up to Secondary 5 level
School for the physically disabled	7	Up to junior secondary level, with two of them offering the HKCEE curriculum
Schools for social development	7	Up to junior secondary level, with two of them piloting the HKCEE curriculum
Schools for the mentally handicapped (MH) (Including those for the mildly MH, moderately MH, mildly and moderately MH, severely MH and visually impaired with mental handicap)	42	10-year alternative curriculum; with effect from the 2002/03 school year, this Bureau has launched an Extension of Years of Education (EYE) Programme for two extra years in the schools for the mentally handicapped.
Hospital School	1	Up to junior secondary level (in the form of remedial learning)
Total	62	

10. Apart from the 42 special schools for the mentally handicapped, the rest of the special schools offer mainstream curriculum for their students. Among them, some PD schools and schools for the hearing impaired operate up to Secondary 5. This Bureau has launched Secondary 4/5 curriculum on a pilot basis in two schools for social development in the 2003/04 and 2004/05 school year respectively. In general, students in schools for the visually impaired may, upon completion of their junior secondary education, continue their studies in mainstream schools.

11. Special education forms an integral part of the education system. In the new academic structure for senior secondary education being proposed, this Bureau considers providing the same opportunity for students with special educational needs to receive 6-year secondary education like their age-appropriate counterparts. In December 2004, this Bureau has separately met with the Hong Kong Special Schools Council and the principals of all categories of special schools to collect their views on how to plan for the educational services for the students with special educational needs under the academic structure and curricular development of special schools, in order to tie in with their learning needs. As students in different categories of special schools have different learning needs, this Bureau finds it necessary to make adequate consideration and arrangements in the light of the learning needs of these students. Implementation details will be announced after completion of the consultation on the reform of academic structure.

Further education and employment opportunities of special school students

12. At present, upon completion of their junior secondary education, the special school students may further their studies in senior secondary forms or receive training in vocational training centers under the Vocational Training Council (VTC) or the integrated vocational training centres, integrated vocational rehabilitation services centres, sheltered workshops, supported employment service, and On the Job Training Programme for People with Disabilities provided by the SWD.

13. Skills centres provide vocational training for people with disabilities for the purpose of equipping them with the necessary skills to secure jobs in open employment. Upon completion of training, vocational counselling and job placement services are also provided to graduates to assist them in job-seeking. In recent years, most graduates can find jobs in the open market. Those who wish to further pursue mainstream education can apply for courses offered by the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education or the Industrial Training Centres of the VTC.

14. Special school graduates receiving training in the above

vocational rehabilitation services units provided by SWD would be assisted to find a job in the open market according to their ability and wish.

15. Like any other young people, young people with disabilities may also participate in other suitable continuing education opportunities and various training initiatives. Some examples include adult education courses, courses under the Skills Upgrading Scheme, courses under the Continuing Education Fund, etc.

16. At present, all MH schools and the vast majority of PD schools have joined the EYE Programme. The Committee on Special Educational Needs under the Curriculum Development Council has also joined forces with the MH schools through working groups to further revise the focus of learning and expected learning outcomes of the EYE Programme.

17. In implementing the EYE Programme, this Bureau also maintains close contact and collaboration with VTC and SWD. Apart from introducing the latest employment and training requirements to the MH schools and PD schools, we also arrange the students for short-term job attachments to the training institutions. This will enable the students to self-determine their future training paths, hence enhancing their motivation to learn and their learning outcomes.

18. Through the foregoing working groups for curriculum development, this Bureau will continue to join forces with the MH schools to further revise the focus of learning and expected learning outcomes of the EYE Programme. This Bureau will also continue to collaborate with VTC and SWD for introducing the latest employment and training information to the MH schools and PD schools, and to arrange the students for short-term job attachments to the vocational rehabilitation services institutions. The VTC will continue to provide vocational assessment services to the visually impaired, hearing impaired, physically disabled and mentally handicapped students of special schools for assessing their vocational strength and potential for open employment. Moreover, this Bureau will explore with VTC and SWD the introduction of Vocational Exposure Programmes for special school students and the interfacing arrangements for these students to receive

training and transit to adult life under the proposed reform of academic structure.

Education and Manpower Bureau
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