



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育統籌局
Education and Manpower Bureau
Government Secretariat, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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Miss Odelia Leung
Clerk to Education Panel
Legislative Council
Jackson Road, Central, Hong Kong

Dear Miss Leung,

Education for Children of Ethnic Minorities

At the Panel meeting on 9 January 2006, Members discussed –

- (a) the need for having an alternative curriculum in Chinese Language for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students in primary and secondary schools;
- (b) the benefits of concentrating support for NCS students in selected schools in each of the five electoral constituencies; and
- (c) the need for providing adequate vocational training and post-secondary education opportunities for NCS students.

This letter reports the follow-up action being taken by this bureau on the issues raised.

On (a) above, instead of designating an alternative curriculum for Chinese Language for application to all NCS students, we believe that NCS students should be provided with different avenues for learning Chinese, depending on their level of proficiency. Empirical evidence shows that exposure to the Chinese Language at an early age would facilitate the learning of the language by NCS students. With adequate support at junior levels, individual NCS students are capable of learning Chinese Language alongside the local students and of achieving comparable standards. In this regard, we are stepping up efforts in

encouraging NCS parents to enrol their children in kindergartens which give sufficient exposure to the Chinese Language, and supporting schools in the development of school-based curriculum and appropriate teaching strategies catering to the needs of the NCS students.

For those NCS students who are less proficient for various reasons (e.g. a late start in the learning of Chinese), we agree that an alternative curriculum designed for non-native speakers and leading to a recognized qualification would be useful. In this connection, the three secondary schools which conventionally admit a larger number of NCS students are already putting in place school-based curricula with a view to preparing students for the alternative qualification of GCSE (Chinese). We will continue to assist schools in developing the supporting curricula.

On (b) above, with the support of Members, we will, on top of the schools conventionally admitting a greater number of NCS students, identify one to two mainstream schools (those with a good foundation in supporting NCS students) in each of the five electoral constituencies. The objective is to offer better support for NCS students through the centralizing of expertise and focused use of resources, while preserving the right of NCS students to select these “resource schools” or other schools under the existing school places allocation systems. We are also liaising with the Home Affairs Bureau and the Equal Opportunities Commission to ensure that this approach of centralizing support in a regional basis is permissible under the future legislation against race discrimination.

On (c) above, as set out in the paper presented to the Panel on 9 January 2006 (LC Paper No. CB(2)779/05-06(01)), we have taken active steps in making available vocational training opportunities in English for those NCS students who are less proficient in Chinese. For Career-oriented Curriculum piloting in secondary schools and the future career-oriented studies under the new senior secondary curriculum, prospective course providers have already indicated that a number of programmes may be offered in English subject to demand. To further widen the choices of courses for NCS students who have little problem communicating in Chinese orally but are only relatively weaker in reading/writing the language, we have invited the relevant institutions to

consider supplementing the courses conducted primarily in Chinese with English reading materials/assessment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Bernadette Linn".

(Ms Bernadette Linn)
for Secretary for Education and Manpower