

**Progress Report on the Motion on
“Concern about Students with Special Educational Needs”
moved at the Legislative Council Meeting on 6 June 2007**

Background

At the Council meeting on 6 June 2007, Hon Bernard CHAN moved the following motion on “Concern about students with special educational needs” which was carried subsequently –

“That, as integrated education in Hong Kong is currently implemented by a whole-school approach, and as some schools do not have sufficient complementary facilities and adequate training for frontline teachers, and they have to take care of too many types of students with special needs, the result achieved is not proportionate to the efforts made; for example, although some autistic students have excellent learning abilities, not only do they fail to exploit their strengths in class, their social adjustment and communication difficulties also make it difficult for teachers to deal with their behaviour, emotions and discipline in class, this Council urges the Government to deploy more resources to mainstream schools which admit students with special educational needs, so as to consolidate the foundation of such students for learning and help them integrate into mainstream education as soon as possible.”

2. This report sets out the actions taken by the Administration for Members’ information.

Resource Provision

3. The Education Bureau (EDB) is committed to supporting students with special educational needs (SEN) in ordinary schools through the whole school approach (WSA). While the basic education provisions enable schools to provide tier-1 support for students with SEN, we also aim at making our tier-2 and tier-3 support timely and effective. On tier-2 support in primary schools, we provide them with additional resources through the New Funding Mode (NFM) which also allows flexible deployment of resources under the WSA in catering for students’ SEN. To encourage more primary schools to join the NFM, we conducted sharing sessions and forums in May and June for hundreds

of school heads and teachers to disseminate good practices. Feedback from the sector was encouraging. We anticipate more schools will implement the NFM in the 2007/08 school year. We also plan to review the NFM.

4. At secondary level, the “New Initiative to Cater for Academic Low Achievers” has provided 330 additional teachers for 180 schools in the 2006/07 school year. It is anticipated that about 580 additional teachers will be provided for some 200 schools in the coming school year. Many of the students with SEN will benefit from this provision. To further enhance the support for students with SEN in secondary schools, we are exploring the feasibility of providing additional resources for schools so that they can adopt the WSA to support students with SEN.

5. On tier-3 support, we will provide teaching assistants for schools in the coming school year to cater for the hardcore/clustered SEN cases. In addition, 26 resource schools have been selected for the purpose of expanding the school network support. In the coming school year, around 75 ordinary schools will receive intensive support from 18 special schools cum resource centres. Four special schools cum resource centres will provide short-term attachment programmes for some students from ordinary schools who may have severe adjustment problems.

Professional Support

Teacher Training

6. Building up the capacity of teachers is a crucial factor for the successful implementation of integrated education (IE). In the 2006/07 school year, we have provided 360 places on basic training, 240 places on advanced training and 5,620 places for other thematic courses on special education. In accordance with our 5-year teachers’ professional development framework on special education, a total of 1,400 places on basic training, 450 places on advanced training and 6,200 places for other thematic courses on special education are planned for the 2007/08 school year.

7. We have trial run separate training courses on SEN for secondary and primary school heads as well as teaching assistants in the past months. We will continue to provide more such courses in the 2007/08 school year. In addition, a 120-hour course on child psychology for teachers as well as

school-based training on special education for primary and secondary schools will be organized.

Specialist Support

8. On educational psychology service, we will review the current provision for future development. To address the shortage of educational psychologists, we are exploring increasing the training capacity of tertiary institutes for such personnel.

9. To provide timely support for primary students with speech and language impairments, the Enhanced Speech Therapy Grant (ESTG) has come to place in the 2006/07 school year. In the 2007/08 school year, 350 primary schools will receive the ESTG, and the EDB will continue to provide speech therapy service to those public sector schools not receiving the grant.

10. In supporting students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD), the Read and Write: A Jockey Club Learning Support Network has been in operation for a year. There will be much research, teaching training and publicity work to strengthen the support for this cohort in the years to come. Responding to the Ombudsman's recommendations, more assessment tools will be developed. These include a revised edition of the Hong Kong Test of Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) in Reading and Writing (with extended norms for Primary Five and Six pupils), the Hong Kong Test of SpLD in Reading and Writing for Junior Secondary School Students for use by educational psychologists, as well as the Chinese Language Assessment Battery for Secondary Students for teachers' use.

On-site Support for Schools

11. Commencing from the 2006/07 school year, all primary schools have been assigned a Special Education Support Officer who will help the school implement the WSA to IE. Up to present, over 2,500 school visits were carried out to support the schools, teachers, parents and the SEN cases. The service is well received. Based on individual school's particular needs, this support measure will continue and focus on specific areas of support. We will gradually extend such support to secondary schools subject to deployment of manpower.

Parent Education

12. To facilitate parents of SEN children in making school choices, we have conducted regional briefing sessions for about 850 parents of pre-P1 children, as well as 570 student guidance officers on advice to parents of P6 students in the past 6 months. We will continue to organise similar events to promote information flow. We have also revised the layout and explanatory notes of the School Profiles to encourage schools to indicate their experience and measures in SEN support for parents' reference. In addition, we are now compiling two separate guides on IE for parents and schools. They will focus on the principles and good practices for IE with a view to promoting home-school cooperation in addressing students' SEN. The guides will be ready for dissemination in the 2007/08 school year. At the same time, we have recently issued a circular memorandum to remind schools to get parental consent for transferring students' SEN data between schools when the students change schools so as to facilitate schools to provide timely and appropriate support to the students.

Education Bureau
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