

For discussion on  
12 July 2010

**Legislative Council Panel on Education**

**Progress on the Implementation of the  
New Academic Structure**

**PURPOSE**

This paper reports on the progress on the implementation of the New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education (NAS) focusing on the following areas: curriculum, learning and assessment, the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE), issues related to the last Secondary 5 (S5) and S7 cohorts, interface with post-secondary and university education, support for schools, implementation of and feedback on the NAS, communication with various stakeholders, and evaluation and monitoring.

**BACKGROUND**

2. The New Academic Structure (NAS) involves 12 years of schooling followed by multiple study pathways. Undergraduate programmes have also been changed from three years to four years with revamped curriculum. The NAS has been implemented in all secondary schools at S4 since September 2009 and the new public examination leading to the HKDSE qualification will take place for the first time in 2012. Students with the HKDSE qualification have multiple pathways which include applying for various 4-year undergraduate programmes or other post-secondary programmes, going overseas for further studies, or joining the workforce.

3. Since 2004, the Education Bureau (EDB) has undertaken a multi-stage approach in developing reform proposals, consulting different stakeholders (including parents, principals, teachers, post-secondary institutions, universities, employers, overseas education organizations/universities), and collecting views from schools to address their needs. We have committed to report to the Panel

on Education every year on the progress of the NAS and related issues. In the previous updates (July 2006, May 2007, June 2008 and March 2009), we have reported on the latest development of the NAS and the progress of preparation made by different parties. The paper for the Panel meeting on 30 April 2010 meeting reported specifically on the recognition of HKDSE, while the paper for the meeting on 14 June 2010 discussed the study pathways for the last cohort of S5 graduates in 2010.

## **PROGRESS**

### **Curriculum, Learning and Assessment**

4. The NAS has been implemented in secondary schools at S4 since September 2009. Some progress has been observed through school visits, focus group interviews and surveys on areas relating to curriculum, learning and assessment. For instance, there is smooth interface between the junior secondary and senior secondary levels and schools have provided a broader and more balanced curriculum. On the other hand, schools and other stakeholders (including parents and students) still have concerns over Liberal Studies, Applied Learning, New Senior Secondary curriculum for Intellectual Disabled students, as well as the problem of learner differences. Development in these areas during the 2009/10 school year and some updates are reported in the following paragraphs.

#### ***Liberal Studies***

5. Liberal Studies is the subject of most concern among schools and parents. EDB has been providing comprehensive support to teachers in the teaching of Liberal Studies in the 2009/10 school year. These include the provision of about 12,000 training places of professional development programmes (PDPs) of different themes to teachers and curriculum leaders. EDB, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA), has set up a Liberal Studies School Network Scheme to provide support to both schools and teachers on curriculum and assessment of the New Senior Secondary (NSS) Liberal Studies curriculum. The provision of courses on updating subject knowledge would continue, with more emphasis put on practical learning and teaching in the classroom, the planning of

Independent Enquiry Study (IES), and the conduct of School-based Assessment (SBA) in Liberal Studies. The feedback received from various evaluation studies on the 1<sup>st</sup> year of implementation of NAS has shown that there is greater pressure on teachers and school heads regarding the learning and teaching of Liberal Studies as a core subject for the first time and the need to cater for learner diversity. The effectiveness of the current support services for schools has been reviewed. The services would be strengthened so that they would address more effectively the practical concerns of schools by measures such as providing more exemplary practices in learning, teaching and assessment; more on-site support services; and more sharing among schools, alongside with the joint EDB and HKEAA support service.

6. The Web-based Resource Platform for Liberal Studies has been revamped to facilitate in-class discussion on current issues. The contents will be updated on a regular basis. A Teachers' Manual on various resource items as hosted in the Web-based Resource Platform for Liberal Studies has already been distributed to schools in mid-October 2009. EDB will continue to provide updated materials to enrich the contents of the Teachers' Manual from time to time.

7. The Liberal Studies Parents' Handbook has been made available in November 2009 to familiarise parents with the aims and objectives of the curriculum and the assessment design, as well as to provide useful tips for helping their children to study the subject. EDB will continue to hold parents' talks on different themes related to the NAS, including Liberal Studies, to help them understand Liberal Studies better and advise them on how to support their children in studying the subject.

### ***Applied Learning***

8. Under the old academic structure, one Applied Learning (ApL) subject pass was treated as a subject pass in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) (excluding Chinese Language and English Language) for admission to Pre-Associate Degree/3-year Higher Diploma programmes or equivalent by the Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions (FCE). The same treatment applies for civil service appointments, subject to the counting of a maximum of two courses.

9. Under the NAS, students' results in ApL courses will be reported in the HKDSE certificate as "Attained" or "Attained with Distinction". Briefings, seminars and meetings with end-user groups such as universities, sub-degree providers and employers' associations have been held to exchange views on the articulation pathways of ApL courses. The latest progress is as follows:

- The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) will consider taking into account the two levels of attainment in the ApL courses when considering the acceptance of the results in the ApL courses for civil service appointment.
- For further studies in sub-degree programmes, FCE have recommended that the minimum admission requirements for sub-degree programmes should be set at HKDSE Level 2 in five subjects (including Chinese Language and English Language) or equivalent, including ApL courses. A maximum of 2 ApL courses would be counted for admission.
- For further studies in bachelor degree programmes, UGC-funded institutions value the learning experiences that students acquire in ApL. When considering admission, they will consider accepting "attained with distinction" as an elective subject, consider it for awarding extra bonus, or as additional information to the application, depending on individual institution and programme. Further details will be released at a later stage.

10. In the first cohort of ApL under the NAS, 30 courses under 6 areas of studies will be offered by 11 course providers. As at end of June 2010, a total of 298 schools have submitted about 11,000 student applications.

### ***Development of NSS Curriculum for Students with Intellectually Disabilities***

11. To support the implementation of the NSS curriculum for students with intellectually disabilities (NSS(ID) curriculum), special schools have been provided with supplementary guides (with related PDPs) for the three core subjects (i.e. Chinese Language, Mathematics, Liberal Studies/Independent Living) and two elective subjects (Physical Education and Visual Arts) since commencement of the NAS in September 2009. In parallel, core NSS subjects are provided with Learning Progression Frameworks (LPFs) (formerly named

Learning Outcomes Frameworks) to facilitate teachers to understand the performance of students, and to make improvement in learning and teaching. The curriculum frameworks of 4 other NSS elective subjects, namely Technology & Living, Information & Communication Technology, Music and Design & Applied Technology (DAT) have been successfully adapted and trial run through Collaborative Research and Development (Seed) Projects. The development of the supplementary guides for these subjects would be undertaken in the 2010/11 school year.

12. For the first cohort of students with ID under the NAS, 13 Adapted Applied Learning courses (with more than 250 places) will be offered by 5 course providers in the 2010/11 school year to meet the different needs of the ID students. The Seed Projects for the 2009/10 school year were completed with findings and good practices disseminated to all special schools through briefing sessions in June and July. In the 2010/11 school year, there will be new Seed Projects covering the development of the curricula for General Studies (basic education level) and Ethics and Religious Studies (senior secondary level), revision of the LPFs for the 3 core subjects and finalization of the supplementary guides for Music and DAT of the NSS (ID) curriculum.

13. Apart from the supplementary guides mentioned above, EDB has also provided the following support to ensure smooth implementation of the NSS(ID) curriculum in special schools:

- Curriculum Development (CD) visits to special schools admitting students with different categories of ID are conducted for getting a full picture of schools' practices in curriculum management. Advice is given to schools where necessary and good practices are gathered for sharing with other schools.
- A web-based resource platform will be set up in September 2010 for sharing learning and teaching resource materials with teachers.
- NSS(ID) Coordinators Networks have been set up for the sharing of good practices and learning and teaching resource materials (e.g. innovative teaching strategies for Liberal Studies/Independent Living, how to establish the link between basic education with NSS in the teaching of Liberal Studies/Independent Living, Other Learning Experiences (OLE) implementation practices for ID students, administrative arrangements to maximize the choices of

students etc.).

- In collaboration with the seed schools, a number of sharing sessions were conducted from May to July 2010 to disseminate effective teaching strategies, lesson exemplars and assessment frameworks for all special schools offering the ID curriculum.

14. Data collected through the Seed Project on the NSS(ID) curriculum and the LPFs in the 2008/09 school year revealed that students who participated in the tryout of the NSS(ID) curriculum had made significant progress. Our overseas advisor considers that the NSS(ID) curriculum is age-appropriate for teenagers with ID with age 16 to 18. The new "3+3" academic structure will facilitate a better articulation of curriculum and provide a wider range of educational experience through core and elective subjects and other learning experiences.

15. With the introduction of 12 years of schooling to all students in ID schools under the NAS, some individual students may need to extend their years of study due to various valid reasons. All along EDB has a mechanism in place to allow individual students in need to extend their stay at school. To tie in with the implementation of the NAS and to make the mechanism on extension of years of study more responsive to the actual needs of students and the operation of schools, EDB has deployed additional resources to implement improvement measures from the 2010/11 school year progressively after thorough and in-depth consultation with relevant stakeholders. These improvement measures include providing additional school places for the ID schools so that they can have sufficient capacity to cater for students who need to extend their years of study, and empowering schools to exercise school-based professional judgment to allow students with such a need and valid reasons to extend their years of study according to the objective criteria jointly set by EDB and the sector.

### **The Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education**

16. EDB and HKEAA have been working closely to promote the NAS and the HKDSE qualification since 2005. A recapitulation with an update is set out below.

### *Local recognition & articulation pathways*

17. University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions reconfirmed their General Entrance Requirements (GER) in July 2009. EDB informed schools of these announcements in a Circular Memorandum on 3 July 2009.

18. The announcement was consistent with the following principles that were discussed in the NAS sharing forum:

- The GER will remain 4 + 1X or 4 + 2Xs (X being an elective subject);
- No institution requires the 3rd X in GER;
- Some institutions will consider accepting ApL courses as specified Xs for individual programmes; and
- Other languages will be accepted as an unspecified X in GER.

19. The Secretary for Education announced on 21 January 2010 the minimum requirement for admissions application under the NAS as reconfirmed by the UGC-funded institutions. For the core subjects, the Heads of Universities Committee (HUCOM) confirmed that the UGC-funded institutions would consider the application of students who have attained Level 3 for Chinese Language and English Language and Level 2 for Mathematics and Liberal Studies in the HKDSE for admission to 4-year undergraduate programmes under the NAS. The level requirement of the elective subjects is being considered by the institutions. It is expected that the announcement would be made by the end of 2010. To reaffirm universities' support of OLE as an essential component of whole-person development for students, HUCOM has also confirmed that the Student Learning Profile of students would be a document with good reference value for consideration of university admission.

20. Providers of sub-degree programmes are revising their curriculum to ensure a smooth articulation with the NSS education. The sub-degree programmes under the NAS will be two years in duration and graduates with satisfactory results may apply for articulation to Year 3 of 4-year degree programmes. FCE have recommended that under the NAS, the minimum entrance requirements for sub-degree programmes should be Level 2 in five subjects (including Chinese Language and English Language) in the HKDSE or

equivalent qualifications. The minimum entrance requirements will form part of the new Common Descriptors for sub-degree programmes under the NAS. Regular liaison meetings have been held with FCE and other stakeholders on matters related to smooth transition under the NAS.

21. The Government will take the lead to recognise the new HKDSE qualification for civil service appointments. Under the NAS, the Government will continue to welcome holders of different qualifications to apply for government positions to serve the community. EDB, HKEAA and HKCAAVQ are meeting regularly with CSB, aiming to make an announcement in 2010 on the comparability of the HKDSE results with those of HKCEE and HKALE for civil service appointments. This would serve as a good reference for employers in the private sectors.

### *International recognition*

22. HKEAA has worked closely with the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) in the United Kingdom (UK) to include the HKDSE qualification into the latter's tariff system. This allows overseas universities to understand the relative standards of the HKDSE qualification and other international qualifications in the UCAS tariff system for the purpose of admission to undergraduate programmes. The benchmarking results were promulgated in a media briefing in January 2010. HKEAA has also commissioned the National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) to conduct benchmarking studies on the recognition of the HKDSE qualification. The NARIC study reveals that the HKDSE compares favourably with alternative systems in Australia (Senior Secondary Certificate of Education), the UK (General Certificate of Education A Level) and the United States (US) (Advanced Placement Program).

23. At the end of 2009, the Australian Government recognized HKDSE as comparable to the Australian Senior Secondary School Certificate. Australian universities are being invited to provide information on entry requirements for holders of HKDSE.

24. Starting from March 2010, EDB and HKEAA have been jointly promoting the NAS, including the HKDSE qualification, overseas for wider recognition. Details are listed in paras 56 and 57 on Communication with



Overseas Institutions and Parties.

### ***School-based Assessment***

25. To ensure smooth implementation of School-based Assessment (SBA) in the HKDSE Examination, a SBA Advisory Group on the overall co-ordination and working groups for specific subjects was set up in 2008. The SBA Advisory Group, comprising school principals and teachers, advises HKEAA on various issues related to the implementation of SBA.

26. HKEAA has conducted 62 briefing sessions to update subject teachers on the latest arrangements for the public assessment (including the SBA component) of the 24 subjects. Teachers' feedback was taken into account in developing the SBA Teachers' Handbooks for each of the 24 subjects, which contain assessment requirements, assessment criteria, guidelines and procedures for the conduct of SBA. A handbook for school leaders on SBA, containing general guidelines and administrative procedures, was published to facilitate planning and monitoring by school administrators. These SBA handbooks have been available on HKEAA website since June 2009. Hard copies were delivered to schools in October 2009. Professional development courses for subject teachers will continue to be provided to help them familiarise with the conduct of SBA.

### **Last Cohorts of S5 and S7 under the Old Academic Structure**

#### ***Last Cohort of S5 in 2010***

27. Some parents and schools have expressed concerns about the pathways for the last cohort of HKCEE students. As in the past, apart from further study in S6/7, there are other pathways available, including sub-degree programmes, vocational education/training (such as programmes organised by Vocational Training Council (VTC), Clothing Industry & Training Authority and Construction Industry Council Training Authority, etc), Project Yi Jin and pre-employment programmes (such as the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme organised by the Labour Department). As HKEAA will offer the last HKCEE in 2011, students wishing to attain better results in HKCEE can sit for the last HKCEE as private candidates in 2011. Besides, students may

consider switching to the NSS curriculum at S5 and sit for the first HKDSE in 2012. Given that there is sufficient curriculum continuity between HKCEE and NSS subjects, students should have no great difficulty in picking up the study at S5 under the NAS.

28. For this last S5 cohort, we have appealed to schools to consider admitting their own students and students from other schools to study S5 under the NSS in the 2010/11 school year, if places are available. To cater for the needs of students and parents, schools are also strongly advised to upload relevant information, such as admission requirements, NSS subjects offered and the number of places available on their websites for students' information.

29. EDB has strengthened its communication strategies to ensure that all parties have a good understanding of the multiple pathways, and that every HKCEE student would have access to the information based on their needs. To disseminate information on the multiple pathways, seminars have been organised for parents and students, guidance teachers and non-government organizations (NGOs) providing guidance services for students. Publications like "Multiple pathways --- Stretching potentials" for the last cohort of S5 graduates (2009/10 school year), Careers Guidance Handbook for S5 Graduates and articles on the media have been issued. A designated webpage (<http://www.edb.gov.hk/lastcohort>) on the multiple pathways for the last cohort of S5 graduates (2009/10 school year) was also launched in May 2010. Information on the study pathways for the last cohort of S5 graduates will be provided to local newspapers before the release of the HKCEE results so that the general public, including students and parents, will be fully informed of the latest development. A message on multiple pathways was sent through Short Message Service (SMS) to private candidates in June and will be sent again before the release of HKCEE results.

### ***Last cohort of S7 in 2012***

30. Apart from applying for degree programmes, S7 graduates may consider other pathways such as to further their studies at sub-degree level, re-sit the HKALE (the last one to be held in 2013) as private candidates or join the workforce. The current sub-degree programmes for the HKAL graduates are generally two years in duration and graduates of these programmes with satisfactory results may apply for articulation to Year 2 of 3-year degree

programmes. Students are encouraged to choose among different pathways in accordance with their ability, interests and aspirations. Based on our latest projection, there would be adequate post-secondary places to accommodate the last cohort of S7 graduates who meet the minimum entrance requirements of sub-degree programmes.

### **Professional Development Programmes and School-based Support for Teachers and School Leaders**

31. Since the implementation of NSS curriculum in September 2009, about 39,000 training places for NSS teachers have been offered. We had also strengthened the programmes for the NSS curriculum at subject level, as well as the programmes for Key Learning Areas (KLAs)/panel heads/coordinators in Curriculum Management, Planning and Leadership. The total number of NSS programmes provided in the first nine months of the 2009/10 school year was 270. A survey was conducted in April 2010 to collect data for better planning of NSS PDPs. Based on data collected from schools, EDB will continue to provide courses to meet the needs of teachers, especially for new teachers and serving teachers who will be deployed to teach NSS subjects as well as to provide new PDPs to address new learning and teaching emphases.

32. To support teachers, useful examples of curriculum planning and timetabling have been generated and uploaded to the New Academic Structure Web Bulletin continuously for their reference.

33. CD visits have been conducted to observe the authentic general picture of curriculum implementation and development in schools, provide advice to schools, and collect feedback continuously and systematically by KLA/subject from teachers and students so that curriculum developers can understand the impact of curriculum reform and make better informed decisions to support teachers and benefit student learning. CD visits also aim at identifying good practices adopted in schools for sharing with schools/teachers. The visits have covered a range of school contexts so that a comprehensive picture of the implementation of the NSS curriculum could be gained. About 300 CD visits were conducted from September 2009 to June 2010.

34. Apart from CD visits, focused group discussions with school heads,

KLA/subject panel coordinators and teachers have also been carried out to gather their views and concerns on various NAS-related issues.

35. Since the 2005/06 school year, a total of 36 seed projects related to NSS curriculum have been completed and the experiences generated from these projects have been disseminated through PDPs e.g. workshops, seminars and sharing sessions held for different KLAs. Furthermore, various types of resource materials such as CD-ROMs, learning and teaching packages, websites and publications etc. have been produced by different seed projects.

36. Teachers are also supported by on-site school-based support service delivered by university-school partnership projects and EDB officers. We would provide school and curriculum development support, such as whole-school curriculum planning, catering for learner diversity, learning and teaching in various KLAs, project learning and assessment for learning, in accordance with the needs of schools. In the 2009/10 school year, the School-based Support Services Office (SBSSO) provided on-site support to about 320 secondary schools, with emphasis on assisting schools to master the learning and teaching of Liberal Studies.

### **Textbooks & Learning Resources**

37. A total of 152 sets of NSS textbooks are available on the Recommended Textbook Lists for teachers' selection and reference. Apart from textbooks, about 176 learning and teaching materials for NSS subjects had been developed by CDI, and around 464 resources/web links are also available. These resources will be further updated (when necessary) on an ongoing basis. "NSS Subject Resource list" for each NSS subject which lists out the availability and sources of relevant learning and teaching materials (e.g. textbooks, the learning packages and websites) was uploaded in December 2008 for teachers' reference. We will continue to develop resources to support teachers in teaching NSS subjects.

### **Supporting measures for Other Learning Experiences and Student Learning Profile**

38. A wide range of support measures was provided to facilitate schools to develop OLE and Student Learning Profile (SLP) according to their own needs. These include OLE Learning Symposium, PDPs for enhancing student learning in OLE and SLP under the overarching concept of “Turning Experiences into Learning”, OLE Learning Network for sharing experiences, career learning tools and resources, “Other Learning Experiences” Activity Databank, “Learning Experience Resource Corner” webpage for providing schools with references and parents seminars for introducing OLE/SLP to parents.

39. In addition to the supporting measures, EDB, following consultation with school councils and a secondary school head association, has been liaising with the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS) Office in devising practical arrangements for submitting student information of OLE and SLP for university admissions purpose. The JUPAS Office organised the first briefing session for schools in March 2010 and another briefing session will be organised to announce further details in August 2010.

### **Funding Support**

40. The Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant (SSCSG) and the Diversity Learning Grant (DLG) have been provided to schools since 2008/09 school year and 2009/10 school year respectively. The former aims to facilitate the implementation of the NSS curriculum while the latter is to encourage schools to offer diversified curriculum (including ApL, other languages, gifted education and network programmes to be shared among schools) to cater for the different needs, interest and aptitudes of their students. In addition, schools with genuine financial difficulties may apply for a top-up provision of the NSS Curriculum Migration Grant, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In the 2010/11 school year, the SSCSG and the DLG will continue to be provided to schools to support the implementation of the NSS curriculum at both S4 and S5 levels.

### **Implementation of and Feedback on the NAS**

41. Following the implementation of the NAS at S4 in September 2009, a “Survey on NSS Subject Information” was conducted from October to

November 2009 to collect data on NSS subjects offered and students enrolled from all secondary schools offering the NSS curriculum. The results indicate that all secondary schools offer 11 to 12 elective subjects at S4 on average. The majority of S4 students (about 96%) take 2 to 3 elective subjects. For students taking 2 elective subjects, there are about 199 subject combinations. As for students taking 3 elective subjects, there are about 836 subject combinations. The elective subjects of about 70% of the students fall under 2 or 3 KLAs. The above data reflects that schools no longer adopt the traditional practice of streaming students into arts, science and commercial classes. S4 students can select their elective subjects in accordance with their interests and ability as well as the school situation. This survey can be regarded as the first survey that reflects students' subject preferences, and it clearly demonstrates that schools are offering diversified elective subjects for students to choose.

42. EDB has also commissioned the Chinese University of Hong Kong to conduct the "NSS Curriculum Implementation Study 2009/10" from March to May 2010 (i.e. second semester of first S4 cohort). About 100 secondary schools responded to the survey. While the data are being analysed, the preliminary findings show that they are generally consistent with our observations and feedback received from different sources of contacts with schools.

43. The preliminary findings on the NSS curriculum implementation as reported by respondents (including school heads/deputy heads, middle managers, teachers and students) so far are summarised as follows:

- a. Implementation at the school level: The majority of secondary school heads/deputy heads (over 90%) indicated that they had ensured a smooth interface between the junior and senior secondary curriculum, catered for the diverse needs of students and provided elective subjects in accordance with student preferences, interests and needs. They also reflected that their students had started developing their SLPs. Around 80% of the middle managers agreed that different panels/functional groups had actively explored opportunities for collaboration. It was evident that schools had made good progress in planning suitable curriculum to suit their students' needs and had been promoting cross-curricular collaboration to enhance student learning. As regards building teachers' capacity for implementing the NSS curriculum, over

90% of the school heads indicated that their schools had formulated a long-term policy and strategies for staff professional development and provided teachers with adequate support in SBA implementation.

- b. Implementation at teacher level: The majority of S4 teachers (over 90%) reported that they had designed their teaching plan based on students' abilities and interests in some/most lessons. Also, a majority of the middle managers (over 70%) indicated that they had adopted diversified approaches to teaching and learning, which included direct instruction, group learning and enquiry-based learning. As for assessment, S4 teachers reflected that they were confident in implementing SBA when they taught S5 in the coming school year. For instance, over 80% of them were confident that they could clearly explain to their students the assessment requirements and methods of SBA in their subjects, as well as the complementary nature of SBA in the public examination. They also had confidence in designing effective SBA tasks to improve student learning in S5. While there was pleasing progress in adopting effective learning, teaching and assessment strategies, only about 60% of the S4 teachers indicated that they had received adequate support in the implementation of SBA. More support for enhancing teachers' assessment literacy is needed in the coming year.
- c. Student learning (perception of S4 students): In terms of students' selection of subjects, the majority of S4 students (about 80%) indicated that they had the freedom to choose elective subjects that they were interested in but only half of them had the freedom to decide how many elective subjects they could study. About 80% of them agreed that Liberal Studies could help increase their awareness of current affairs, broaden their knowledge base and help them learn to analyse issues from different perspectives. Students were also positive in developing their values and attitudes, with the majority of them (over 80%) reporting that they were confident in possessing personal aspirations, accepting themselves, being adaptable in adverse conditions, learning from mistakes, and being resilient under adverse situations. Most S4 students (over 80%) also indicated that they had developed a good relationship with teachers and their peers. As it was the first year of implementing the NSS, only about 50% of the S4 teachers agreed that

their students performed well in the following areas: becoming biliterate and trilingual with adequate proficiency, having a broad knowledge base, becoming informed citizens, and having clear goals for their own career or academic aspirations. There is still a lot of room for improvement in the coming years.

### **Preparation of Higher Education Institutions**

44. The normative four-year undergraduate academic structure will be implemented starting from the 2012/13 academic year. Besides working on admission-related issues, institutions are now actively addressing a number of issues associated with the new structure including double cohort, capital works, strengthening teaching and students' learning experience, curriculum enhancement, etc. The UGC has set up a dedicated "3+3+4 Group" to support and oversee the institutions' work in these areas. Since December 2008, UGC has sponsored a series of idea-sharing symposia to bring together relevant stakeholders and sector representatives in discussing various NAS issues such as interface issues, admissions, core curriculum activities, etc. Separately, the implementation of the new structure will require additional campus space and facilities to accommodate the additional cohort of students. Funding for all 12 NAS-related projects has been approved by LegCo with an estimated cost of \$5.84 billion. Construction works of all the projects have commenced and are expected to be completed before September 2012.

45. For the sub-degree sector, around 20 local post-secondary institutions are offering a wide array of sub-degree programmes of different disciplines currently. According to information provided by the institutions, there should be adequate sub-degree places in 2012 to meet the demands of the S7 graduates under the old academic structure and the first cohort of graduates under the NSS curriculum. To align with the introduction of the NAS, post-secondary education institutions are in the process of reviewing their curriculum design and a new set of Common Descriptors of Associate Degree and Higher Diploma programmes for the 2012/13 academic year onwards will be implemented.

### **Communication with Different Stakeholders**



## ***Integrated Communication Plan of EDB & HKEAA***

46. A Task Group on “334” Communication Strategies has been set up to plan and co-ordinate communication strategies on the NAS. Membership of the Group includes representatives from EDB, HKEAA, UGC, and different stakeholder groups. EDB and HKEAA have compiled an Integrated Communication Plan for promoting the NAS and the plan was regularly discussed in the core group meetings between EDB and HKEAA, as well as in the meeting of the Task Group. For the purpose of promoting the NAS and HKDSE to overseas governments as well as academic and education sectors, the Integrated Communication Plan has included necessary actions to step up communication and secure recognition from overseas universities.

### ***Communication with Local Stakeholders***

47. In order to provide updated information to enhance citizens’ understanding on the progress of the NAS, we have disseminated information through handbooks, pamphlets, road shows, Announcements of Public Interest (APIs), etc. We have also revamped the New Academic Structure Web Bulletin with designated corners for different stakeholders including parents, students, tertiary institutions, employers, etc. APIs have been produced and widely broadcasted through television, radio and on public transport including MTR and CityBus Roadshow. According to the latest opinion polls, the awareness of the NAS has increased significantly with the mass media providing the main sources of information. The latest API was broadcasted from late January 2010 promoting the HKDSE Examination (recognition and the timing of the first examination in 2012). The next one will focus on the employer sector’s recognition of HKDSE and on the Government’s taking the lead to recognise the qualification for civil service appointments.

48. EDB has maintained close contact with the education sector. The regular Principals’ Liaison Meetings on “334” and the Liaison Group on “334” Interface Issues represented by UGC-funded institutions have continued discussions on various issues related to the implementation of the NAS in schools, entrance requirements for admission to UGC-funded institutions (including the level requirements of elective subjects), and the use of SLP and use of results in ApL. There were also dialogues and meetings with non-UGC funded institutions to discuss NAS related matters like interfaces, admission

requirements, etc. Besides, EDB has organised seminars for school leaders to update them on the latest development of the NAS, and thematic seminars for sharing on specific matters related to the NAS, such as managing the NSS curriculum, OLE/SLP, Liberal Studies, etc. Recent seminars include three regional and two thematic seminars held from April to June.

49. As the first HKDSE Examination will be held in 2012 and some of the graduates will then join the workforce, we have stepped up efforts to brief the employer sector since 2009. An employers' working group was set up in October 2008 to steer and provide advice on this area of work. There is also joint effort with HKEAA in meeting and briefing the employer sector on the HKDSE qualification.

50. The purpose of these meetings and briefings is to raise the awareness of the employers on the HKDSE qualification, especially in explaining the meaning of descriptors in the standard-referenced reporting system of the HKDSE Examination. Our strategy is to approach the sector by categories, namely major business chambers/associations, human resources organisations, industries/trades, and also by size (e.g. the small and medium enterprises). We have also held employer focus group interviews to gather feedback from various industries/trades and this will continue.

51. A total of 28 meetings and briefings for the employer sector have been held since 2009. The audience includes business chambers, professional bodies, and industries/trades of high employment share. We have leveraged on the platform of the Labour Department's Human Resources Managers Clubs and briefed 15 industry sectors (i.e. retail, catering, hotel & tourism, banking, trading, logistics, information technology, electronics, garment, manufacturing, construction, building services, community and social services, education, and services) and small and medium enterprises of three districts. HKEAA has organised seminars for the employer sector in collaboration with the Hong Kong Institute of Human Resources Management.

52. As the Government is the largest single employer in Hong Kong, EDB has been working closely with CSB on the transition of the HKCEE/HKALE to the HKDSE; and the implications on civil service appointments.

53. The Bureau will launch an API in the third quarter of 2010 to raise the

public awareness of the NAS; and has partnered with the Radio Television of Hong Kong on producing a series of five 5-minute programmes which has been broadcasted since 27 June 2010. The programmes explain the meaning of descriptors to popular industries/trades under the standard-referenced reporting system.

54. A student handbook has been compiled and was distributed to all NSS students in September 2009 to deepen their understanding of the framework of the NSS curricula and to promote effective engagement in NSS learning.

55. There is increasing attention on how parents could support their children's studies, and the articulation of HKDSE with post-secondary pathways and employment. In this connection, a total of 20 parent seminars have been organized from September 2009 to June 2010. Over 11,000 parents and students have participated in these seminars. Communication with parents in the near future would focus more on how the NAS smoothly articulates to multiple pathways to meet the diverse interests and abilities of students, the programmes available in post-secondary institutions, as well as the preparation for the changing requirements in employment.

### ***Communication with Overseas Institutions and Parties***

56. Starting from March 2010, EDB and HKEAA have been jointly visiting overseas governments, universities, related associations and agencies to introduce the NAS and the HKDSE qualification. We have visited Canada, US, UK, Australia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan and Korea. Besides, a briefing for all Consulate-Generals in Hong Kong was conducted in mid April 2010. Responses to the NAS have been positive. The emphasis on broad-based learning, development of student abilities for life-long learning, and development of their global outlook were generally supported. Overseas counterparts also appreciated the smoother articulation of the NAS with worldwide education systems. There were useful discussions that serve as good reference for charting the necessary follow up actions. The higher education institutions visited are all positive in accepting the HKDSE qualification as a credential for application for admission. More overseas visits have been planned from now to the first quarter of 2011 to further promote the NAS and the HKDSE qualification.

57. Different channels such as website and publications, and DVD/CD-ROM are developed to communicate with and reach out to overseas authorities, universities and relevant counterparts. EDB has launched the Overseas Visitors' Corner hosted in the New Academic Structure Web Bulletin, which provides the latest and tailor-made information to overseas governments, education institutions and students. The information is regularly updated. HKEAA has been collecting information on overseas universities' entrance requirements and posting them on its website. A biannual e-Newsletter will continue to help maintain close communication with overseas universities and keep them posted of the development of HKDSE. Publications such as the NAS Booklet (overseas edition) and booklet on HKDSE Examination and factsheet on the UCAS study have also been dispatched to relevant overseas parties. Taking into account concerns and needs of overseas counterparts, more factsheets on topics such as SLP, students' learning, etc. will be produced as necessary.

#### ***Communication with Mainland authorities/institutions***

58. EDB has visited the Ministry of Education (MoE) to brief them on the development of the NAS and the HKDSE qualification. Under the NAS, Hong Kong students who wish to apply for undergraduate programmes in Mainland China will continue to take part in the Joint Entrance Examination for Universities in PRC as at present. Currently, a few universities, such as Beijing University, Tsing Hua University and Sun Yat-sen University come to Hong Kong for direct recruitment. We will liaise with these universities to brief them on the NAS and the HKDSE qualification to facilitate their recruitment efforts in the future.

#### **Evaluation and monitoring**

59. The progress of the implementation of the NAS has been and will be monitored over the next few years to ensure that it is implemented smoothly. Its impact on students will also be evaluated through a study on the first cohort of NAS students who will complete secondary schooling in 2012. Given the complexity of the tasks, a consultancy study on the master evaluation plan of the NAS was commissioned to Cambridge University in mid-2009 and the final proposal was received in September 2009. A coordinating committee

comprising external local and overseas experts was set up towards the end of the year to advise on the implementation of the evaluation plan. The first study on curriculum implementation in schools under the master evaluation plan as reported in paras 42 and 43 has been conducted in March to May 2010, with a number of focus group interviews and CD visits on different KLAs conducted throughout the year to collect feedback from schools.

## **WAY FORWARD**

60. Given the complexity of the education system reform, new concerns are expected to emerge during the change processes. We would continue to provide support to schools and teachers on one hand and use appropriate and effective communication channels to solicit feedback, identify issues and concerns, and work in partnership with different stakeholders to fine-tune/improve support measures on the other. Studies to evaluate the progress and outcomes of the NAS over the next few years will be carried out to complement or supplement the information that we have collected.

61. In view of the lead time for Hong Kong students' applications for overseas studies, as well as overseas students coming to Hong Kong, one of the major tasks ahead is to promote a wider understanding of the NAS, recognition of the HKDSE qualification, and the favourable outcomes of the benchmarking studies. It is anticipated that the promotion efforts will facilitate overseas universities to make early decisions on admission requirements for Hong Kong students. We will continue to go overseas to promote the NAS and the HKDSE qualification so as to ensure that overseas curriculum agencies, universities, institutions as well as secondary schools will have a better understanding of the NAS and the HKDSE qualification.

## **ADVICE SOUGHT**

62. Members are requested to note the progress of implementation of the NAS as reported in this paper.

Education Bureau  
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