



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局
Education Bureau

Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

本局檔號 Our Ref. : EDB(SPA)PPR2/13/7(2)

電話 Telephone : 3509 8505

來函檔號 Your Ref. : CB4/PL/ED

傳真 Fax Line : 3104 4667

7 January 2013

Clerk to Panel
Legislative Council Panel on Education
Room 203E, 2/F
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn: Ms Polly YEUNG)

Dear Ms YEUNG,

Legislative Council Panel on Education
Follow-up to Special Meetings on 2 and 3 November 2012

Thank you for your letter dated 19 December 2012. Our reply to the issues raised in the letter is as follows:

(a) Outcome of discussion with the education sector regarding the temporary adjustment of the number of students allocated per Secondary One (S1) class from the 2013/14 to 2015/16 school years and (b) response of stakeholders including school sponsoring bodies and parents to the aforesaid outcome

We appreciate public sector secondary schools' concern over the possible impact of the temporary decline of S1 student population from the 2013/14 to 2015/16 school years. In general, they are mainly concerned about the stability of the teaching force and sustainability of schools amidst the population drop. We have therefore put in place a basket of targeted measures with a view to maintaining the stability and strength of the schools as well as the teaching force.

The measures include, among others, relaxing the “not less than three classes” requirement, allowing schools to operate two S1 classes with an intake of only 26 S1 students, allowing schools operating a single S1 class to continue their operation under various development options, offering schools operating two S1 classes or less to participate in the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) with a cap of three planned S1 classes and extending the retention period for surplus teachers, if any, from one year to three years. Stakeholders (including school sponsoring bodies) generally agree that the targeted measures will help stabilise the overall situation in public sector secondary schools during the transient period concerned.

In the deliberation, we note public sector secondary schools’ general wish to reduce the number of students to be allocated per S1 class amidst the temporary decline of S1 student population with a view to minimising the possible number of S1 classes to be packed and the subsequent impact. Some public sector secondary schools have also suggested taking the opportunity to adjust the S1 class size to the extent that the class size of 30 at S6/S7 prior to the New Academic Structure would be reinstated when this cohort of S1 students progress to senior secondary levels. Having consulted other stakeholders, we appreciate some parents’ concern over the dampening of their children’s chance of admission to schools of their choice upon reduction of school places. To balance the needs and interests of different stakeholders, we have, after due consideration, adopted a flexible approach of district-/school-based adjustment to the number of students to be allocated per S1 class under the SSPA System underpinned by the principle of reverting to the prevailing S1 class size (i.e. 36 students per class inclusive of two repeater places) upon rebound of the S1 student population after the transient period concerned. The approach aims to cater for the differences among districts and schools including supply and demand of school places as well as the different needs and aspirations of school sponsoring bodies, principals, teachers, parents and students.


With the new arrangement under SSPA 2013, the S1 discretionary places of the majority of schools can no longer be calculated based on the standardised S1 class size and the number of S1 classes of individual schools as in the past. To enhance transparency, we have published the “Addendum to the Handbook for Application for Secondary 1 Discretionary Places” (Addendum) to capture the total number of discretionary places of individual schools. The Addendum has also been uploaded onto the website of the Education Bureau (EDB) for parents’ reference in making school choice for their children at the Discretionary Places Stage from 3 to 23 January 2013.

Parents generally welcome the above-mentioned arrangement as reflected by their feedback at a series of talks on school choices held in mid-December 2012.

(c) Implementation details for district-/school-based flexible adjustment of the number of students to be allocated per S1 class with breakdown by the number and category of schools

The Secretary for Education informed public sector secondary schools in writing on 27 November 2012 of the implementation details of the flexible approach adopted in adjusting the number of students to be allocated per S1 class. Details are at Annex 1. With the concerted effort of schools, the aforesaid flexible adjustment has been put in place to kick start the SSPA 2013. An overview of the flexible adjustment with breakdown by the number and category of schools is at Annex 2.

Yours sincerely,


(Ms L B IP)
for Secretary for Education

The basic principles of the district-/school-based approach to adjust the number of students to be allocated per S1 class of public sector secondary schools are as follows:

- (a) In principle, all public sector secondary schools except Through-train/Feeder/Nominated schools exempted in (b) below shall adopt the “1-1-1” option, i.e. to reduce the number of students to be allocated per S1 class under the SSPA System from the prevailing 34 to 33 in SSPA 2013 and further to 32 and 31 in SSPA 2014 and SSPA 2015 respectively. That said, individual districts and schools may still have other options in accordance with the principles set out in (b) to (e) below.
- (b) Through-train/Feeder/Nominated public sector secondary schools should consider the prospective S1 students from their Through-train/Feeder/Nominated primary schools. Referring to the utilisation rate of S1 places in the previous school year, should a Through-train school adopting an option for reducing the number of students to be allocated per S1 class fail to reserve not less than 7% of its total number of S1 places for admitting students of other primary schools or should a Feeder/Nominated school use up 100% of its feeder/nominated places in the previous school year, the school concerned will be exempted from adjusting the number of students to be allocated per S1 class. (Note: the schools exempted may also opt for the “1-1-1”/“2-1-1” option on application with the proviso that they have consulted their linked primary schools and sought endorsement from their Incorporated Management Committees / School Management Committees¹.)
- (c) The remaining schools (i.e. other than those mentioned in (b) above) with special circumstances may apply for exemption from adjusting the number of students to be allocated per S1 class².
- (d) To cater for differences among districts, a school in a district with the consensus of not less than two-thirds of the public sector secondary schools in the district concerned can opt for the “2-1-1” option, i.e. to reduce the

¹ The EDB informed the schools concerned on 21 November 2012 to submit application to the District School Development Sections within seven days, i.e. by 28 November at the latest.

² Mainstreamed former Skills Opportunity Schools and Practical Schools under “no-choice-no-allocation” may apply for exemption from adjusting the number of students to be allocated per S1 class apart from other options.

number of students to be allocated per S1 class under the SSPA System from the prevailing 34 to 32 in SSPA 2013 and further to 31 and 30 in SSPA 2014 and SSPA 2015 respectively. The remaining public sector secondary schools (i.e. not more than one-third of the public sector secondary schools) in the district concerned may adopt the “1-1-1” option or other school-based options in accordance with (b) and (c) above.

- (e) If public sector secondary schools in a district fail to reach a consensus as mentioned in (d) above, individual schools in the district may, with the endorsement of their Incorporated Management Committees / School Management Committees, apply for the “2-1-1” option mentioned in (d) above.

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Annex 2

An overview of the district-/school-based adjustment to the number of students to be allocated per S1 class under SSPA 2013 with breakdown by the number and category of schools is as follows:

Number of students to be allocated per S1 class	Number of public sector schools		
	Government schools	Aided and Caput schools	Total
34	15	15	30
33	3	44	47
32	12	299	311

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