

For information

**Legislative Council Panel on Education
Subcommittee on Integrated Education**

**Supplementary Information in Response to Concerns Raised at
Meeting on 23 April 2014**

Purpose

At the request of the Subcommittee, this paper provides supplementary information in response to the concerns of the Members and the related deputations at the meeting on 23 April 2014.

**Promoting Parental Involvement and Increasing Transparency in
Information Transmission**

2. At present, the “Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education” produced by the Education Bureau (EDB) reminds schools to establish a systematic and regular mechanism to strengthen the communication and co-operation with parents and involve them in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the intervention programmes for their children. For instance, schools are requested to introduce the support measures to parents and students by the Student Support Team in the annual Orientation Day, to invite parents to attend case conferences and regularly inform them of the progress of learning of the students. Parents can also access to relevant information on the procedures for identifying and assessing different types of special educational needs (SEN) and various support strategies from the “Parent Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education”. In fact, parents can request for meetings with the school authorities directly at any time to discuss matters related to the learning problems of the students.

3. Under the School Development and Accountability Framework, schools are required to assess the effectiveness of their school policies and measures, including the support for students with SEN, through self-evaluation each year, which is validated through External School Review conducted by the EDB. The EDB also requires schools to submit an annual self-evaluation

report on the implementation of the Whole School Approach (WSA) to Integrated Education at the end of each school year. To further enhance transparency, schools are required to set out in their annual school reports how resources are deployed to provide support services for students with SEN. Professional staff of the EDB also conducts regular school visits to provide consultation and organise training and sharing sessions for schools to help schools deploy resources properly for supporting students with SEN.

Individual Education Plan (IEP) for Students with SEN

4. There are views that the EDB should devise individual education plan (IEP) for every student with SEN. The EDB, however, making reference to evidence-based research findings and reviewing the practices in different countries/places, does not recommend schools to formulate IEPs for all students with SEN as a rule regardless of the circumstances of the students.

5. Evidence-based research findings do not show that IEP is effective for the learning of all students with SEN¹. The principles of behavioural psychology underpin the design of IEP, skewing towards the learning of observable and measurable behaviours, e.g., language expression, while the learning goals and follow-up plans in the learning of more abstract areas such as logical reasoning are comparatively hard to be included and followed up through an IEP. In fact, studies in general show that the facilitating factors which make some IEPs effective, including systematic discussion among teachers to identify the student support strategies and collaborative involvement of the parents and other stakeholders to implement the IEP, are not unique in IEP, and these facilitating factors do not always emerge during the implementation of the IEP.

6. Across the globe, only very few countries/places require implementation of IEP for every student with SEN. The legislations in the United States of America (USA), including the ‘Individuals with Disabilities Education Act’ and ‘Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973’ laid down the circumstances under which IEP should be formulated for students with SEN and the situations under which schools should state the support and

¹ David Mitchell, Missy Morton & Garry Hornby (2010), Review of the Literature on Individual Education Plans : Report to the New Zealand Ministry of Education.

accommodation provided for the students with SEN, instead of an IEP. Similarly, the United Kingdom (UK) has never required IEP to be formulated for every student with SEN. In UK, IEPs are only implemented for those with severe SEN or multiple disabilities.

7. Making reference to the experience of some countries/ places that have legislations stipulating the formulation of IEPs for all/ some students with SEN, we notice that many problems arose during the implementation. There are comments² that such requirement can merely ensure that students are provided with a written document but cannot guarantee that students are given the support services most appropriate to their actual needs. The requirement has strained teachers to handle numerous documents at the expense of teaching quality. The computer-programmed IEPs adopted by some teachers have failed to meet the individual needs of their students, and some teachers have even gone to the length of devising and applying one IEP for all students with SEN in a class. These cases have aroused discontent among parents and prolonged legal actions in some regions which are a waste of social resources.

8. At present, students with SEN studying in ordinary schools generally have the basic abilities to cope with the demands of the mainstream curriculum. The former Education and Manpower Bureau invited British scholar Dr Rea Reason to conduct a study on the support model and practices suitable for students with SEN in 2005. Dr Reason suggested that Hong Kong should learn from the experiences of the UK and the USA, adjusting the tier of support according to the students' response to intervention. In general, students with mild or transient learning difficulties will benefit from Tier-1 support in the regular classroom with quality teaching. Students with persistent learning difficulties are arranged with provision of Tier-2 "add-on" support, such as pull-out or after-school remedial programmes, and hire of supplemental professional intervention services, etc. Those who show persistent and severe learning difficulties after add-on remediation are arranged with Tier-3 support, including IEP. Through regular review of the students' progress, timely and structured tiered intervention is arranged for them, ensuring that students with

² 胡永崇(2003)個別化教育計劃的困境與檢討:接受問卷調查的啟智班教師之書面陳述意見分析, 屏東師院學報, 18, 81-120; Huefner, D. S. Requirements Under IDEA '97, *Journal of Special Education*, 2000, 33, 195-204; Gallagner, T. & Desimone, L. Lessons Learned from the Implementation of the IEP: Application to the IFSP, *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 15, 3, 1995; Lingard, T. Does the Code of Practice help secondary schools SENCos to improve learning? *British Journal of Special Education*, v 28, n4, 187-190, 2001.

different support needs receive the most appropriate resources and services.

9. According to the observation of EDB's specialist staff, schools in Hong Kong have generally developed a good grasp of the operation of the 3-Tier Intervention Model and kept the progress of their students and needs for support under regular review. They are also prepared to develop and implement IEPs for their students when necessary. Hence, the EDB is of the view that the need to develop IEPs should be subject to students' needs for support based on professional judgment and decision of the schools. There is no need for the schools to develop an IEP for every student with SEN. As a matter of fact, an IEP is only one of the many strategies for supporting students with SEN in ordinary schools. Other evidence-based and effective teaching strategies, such as differentiated instruction, collaborative learning and assistive technologies, are also used by teachers to support students with SEN.

Number of students requiring support under the 3-Tier Intervention Model

10. At the meeting on 13 December 2013, the Subcommittee on Integrated Education requested the EDB to provide the number of students requiring support in each of the tiers under the 3-Tier Intervention Model (the details of which have been recorded at item 4 (a) of the meeting minutes). The EDB provided Members with supplementary information for the same request through an Administration's response in July 2014. For details, please refer to LC Paper No. CB(4)954/13-14(01).

Views sought

11. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Education Bureau
August 2014