



立法會

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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By Hand and by Fax (2882 0099)

22 November 2013

Mrs Carrie LAM, GBS, JP
Chief Secretary for Administration
Chief Secretary for Administration's Private office
25/F, Central Government Offices
2, Tim Mei Avenue
Hong Kong

Dear Carrie,

**Panel on Education
Subcommittee on Integrated Education**

On behalf of the Subcommittee, I write to convey to you members' concerns about the existing mechanism for the *early identification of students with special educational needs* ("SEN") and *early intervention*.

The Subcommittee notes that under existing arrangements, the Hospital Authority ("HA") and the Department of Health ("DH") are responsible for providing assessment and treatment for children with developmental disorders (including SEN) upon referral from pre-primary institutions or through their own surveillance programmes. They also make referrals and arrangements for appropriate pre-school services which are provided by the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") for children assessed with SEN. Meanwhile, the Education Bureau ("EDB") provides early identification and appropriate learning support services for school-aged students with SEN.

In the course of deliberation, the Subcommittee is gravely concerned about the long waiting time, which could be up to 12 months, for children to receive assessment by HA/DH. Due to the limited number of places available at various pre-school services provided by SWD and the high demand for such services, the waiting time could be as long as 15 months for many children assessed with SEN. As a consequence, children would miss the prime time for effective and timely assistance, thereby defeating the objective of early identification and early intervention. Besides, the shortage of educational

psychologists, medical and paramedical staff has affected the quantity and quality of services. Since a number of departments/bureaux are involved the provision of various services, members are concerned about the lack of high-level steer and co-ordination.

At the meeting held on 20 November 2013, members stressed the need for the Administration to take a holistic and forward-looking approach by ascertaining the future demand for services and devising plans to meet the demand. Members also agreed that I should write to request you to provide a comprehensive paper with input from all relevant bureaux/departments on *the Administration's plans in the next five years to give effect to the principles of early identification and early intervention in the implementation of integrated education*, bearing in mind that they are among the five principles in accordance with which EDB promotes integrated education. The paper should include the following information in respect of pre-school children as well as school-aged children :

- (a) the forecast demand for services in the light of population trends;
- (b) an evaluation of existing services, including shortfalls in performance and areas for improvement;
- (c) the timetable and resources required (e.g. funding, manpower and land resources) for bridging existing service gaps and improving services.

To facilitate consideration, the Subcommittee would appreciate it if you would provide the paper in both Chinese and English in four weeks' time.

Looking forward to your early reply and with best regards,

Yours sincerely,



(Dr Fernando CHEUNG)
Chairman of Subcommittee

c.c. Mr Kevin YEUNG, Under Secretary for Education (Fax no. 2110 1076)