

For information

**Panel on Education
Subcommittee on Integrated Education**

**Provision of Supplementary information
after the meeting on 13 December 2013**

Purpose

At the request of the Subcommittee, this paper aims to provide supplementary information in respect of the issues raised by members at the meeting on 13 December 2013 (as detailed at items 4(a) to 4(g) in the minutes of meeting).

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

2. The number of students with special educational needs (SEN) studying in public sector ordinary secondary and primary schools in the 2013/14 school year is about 33 830. The Education Bureau (EDB) encourages schools to adopt a Whole School Approach in supporting students with SEN through a 3-Tier Intervention Model, taking into account their needs and the tier of support required. In fact, even for students with the same type of disability, their needs and the level of support required may vary. Under the 3-Tier Intervention Model, students with more severe learning difficulties are provided with tier-3 support under which schools are required to draw up an individual educational plan (IEP) for individual students. Schools will, on an on-going basis, observe the progress of students, collect data, communicate with parents and consult related professionals (such as the educational psychologists) in order to adjust the support needed. As for the other students requiring tier-1 and tier-2 support, schools should keep the Student Support Registers to record the support and adaptations offered to the students as well as their performance and progress for regular review and adjustment of the level of support required as appropriate. As such, the level of support of students with SEN may require upward or downward adjustment. As the distribution of students under the 3-Tier Intervention Model may change from time to time according to the changing needs of the students, providing the number of students requiring different levels of support is inappropriate and misleading.

Including sign language in the school curriculum

3. The EDB has not considered including sign language as part of the school curriculum for ordinary schools. To tie in with the work of the Working Group on Promoting Sign Language under the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, the EDB will continue the promotion of sign language in schools.

Claw back of Learning Support Grant (LSG) from schools

4. The EDB encourages schools to fully utilize the LSG provided every school year to cater for the needs of the students with SEN of the respective school year. Therefore, schools in general should not have large surplus in the LSG. For schools having accumulated a surplus in excess of 30% of the 12 months' provision of the LSG at the end of the respective school year (for aided and caput schools) or financial year (for government schools), the excess surplus will be clawed back. This arrangement was first implemented in government schools in 2011-12 financial year. It came into effect in aided primary schools and aided/caput secondary schools starting from the 2011/12 and 2012/13 school years respectively. The number of schools with LSG surplus in excess of 30% of the provision for the school year/ financial year at the end of the 2011/12 school year or 2011-12 financial year is 45, and the amount involved is about \$3.4 million. As the amount to be clawed back from aided and caput schools for the 2012/13 school year will be confirmed only after the schools' submission of audited accounts by the end of February 2014 and verification by the EDB, we are unable to provide the claw back information for the 2012/13 school year and beyond.

Integrated Education Pilot Programme and New Funding Mode

5. Comparison between the Integrated Education Programme and the New Funding Mode

	Integrated Education (IE) Programme	New Funding Mode
Target Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Including five types of students with SEN, namely Intellectual Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Physical Disability, Hearing Impairment, and Visual Impairment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Including eight types of students with SEN, namely Intellectual Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Physical Disability, Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, Specific Learning Difficulties, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, and Speech & Language Impairment.

Additional Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An additional teacher is provided to the school with five or more target students and an additional learning support assistant (LSA) is also granted once the number of target students reaches eight or above. The ceiling is one additional teacher and one LSA. • A recurrent grant based on the number of target students under the IE Programme per annum is provided. The grant is adjusted annually according to the Composite Consumer Price Index. The rate of grant in the 2013/14 school year is \$1,195 per target student per annum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Support Grant (LSG) is provided according to the number of students with SEN and the tier of support the students require; it includes a basic provision of \$120,000 per school per annum for the first one to six students requiring tier-3 support. A grant of \$20,000 for the 7th and each of the other students requiring tier-3 support and a grant of \$10,000 for each student requiring tier-2 support. The ceiling for each school per annum is \$1,500,000. • The grant rates of the LSG will be increased by 30% (i.e a grant of \$13,000 and \$26,000 for each student requiring tier-2 and tier-3 support respectively) in the 2014/15 school year. The grant rates and its ceiling will be adjusted annually according to the change in the Composite Consumer Price Index thereafter.
Operation Mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools should deploy the additional teacher and/or learning support assistant under the IE programme together with other teachers in school to support students with SEN. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools will adopt a Whole School Approach to cater for students' learning diversity and SEN. Schools may flexibly deploy the LSG and pool together other resources to employ additional teachers, teaching assistants and/or hire professional services to render appropriate support for the students with SEN.

Transfer of schools of ordinary students and students with special educational needs

6. At the request of the Subcommittee, the figures on the transfer of students in public sector ordinary schools in the past three years are provided for members' reference as follows :

School year	(i) Number of students in public sector ordinary schools who transferred schools	(ii) Total number of students in public sector ordinary schools	(iii) Percentage of transfer [(i)/(ii)]
2010/11	1553	652 071	0.23 %
2011/12	1438	658 011	0.21 %
2012/13	1261	606 378	0.20 %

7. Under the existing arrangement, schools are required to report to EDB on cases of student withdrawal (regardless of the students' age, class attended and whether they have SENs). The EDB does not collect information on the reasons for transfer of school of students. It is worthy of noting that students may change schools due to different reasons (such as removal, family reasons and adaptation problem, etc.). We consider that providing a breakdown of the information on secondary and primary students having transferred to other schools solely by whether the students are with SEN or not is inappropriate and can be misleading.

Distribution of students with SEN in three bandings under the Secondary School Places Allocation

8. "Banding of a student or secondary school" is a misconception. In brief, the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System is designed for, among other objectives, allocation of a Secondary One place to each participating student in an orderly manner to reduce undue pressure on students when seeking admission to Secondary One through the SSPA System. The so-called "banding" is merely an intermediary product in the computer-processing of school choice during the Central Allocation (CA) of the SSPA System to differentiate the order of allocation of participating students to a secondary school when the number of students making the choice to the secondary school exceeds the CA quota of the school. To avoid labelling of students and schools, and adverse impact on learning and teaching in schools, there is a consensus in the school sector that any information related to the "banding" of students should not be disclosed. The EDB has been, through various means of parent education, calling for parents' consideration of the needs, aptitudes and abilities of children when making school choice to reduce unnecessary competition for school places and alleviate undue pressure on students. In other words, secondary schools have no "banding of students". The EDB also does not have the number of students (including students with SEN) studying in secondary schools of different "banding".

Arrangements and resources for supporting students with SEN in schools under the English Schools Foundation

9. The English Schools Foundation (ESF) currently operates five secondary schools, nine primary schools and a special school¹. These schools provide learning support for children with SEN according to their learning needs. At the Annex of this reply, ESF has provided details on the arrangement and resources for supporting students with SEN in its mainstream schools (such as the South Island School).

Advice Sought

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

Education Bureau
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¹ In the 2013/14 school year, the annual tuition fee of ESF schools (including the special school) is \$70,000 for students of Year 1 to 6, \$101,400 for Year 7 to 11 and \$106,300 for Year 12 and 13.

**Arrangements and resources for supporting students
with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools
operated by the English Schools Foundation (ESF)**

(a) Arrangements for supporting students with SEN in ESF schools

The ESF adopts the inclusive approach whereby students with SEN are integrated in mainstream schools wherever possible, with accommodation in learning content, process, outcome and environment, having regard to the students' needs, with a view to facilitating their full participation in school life and activities.

2. The ESF adopts a framework of six levels of adjustment (briefly explained in the table below) based upon identification of needs from Adjustment Levels 1 to 6 for the provision of appropriate intervention to match with student's needs. These levels move from the most comprehensive and extensive adjustments at level 6 to the least comprehensive adjustments at level 1, which match with relevant extent of interventions. The identification of the SEN of students is carried out by the school, Educational Psychologists of the ESF and where appropriate, the Assessment and Review Panel (ARP) of the ESF. Support for students with SEN at levels 1 to 4 in mainstream schools is elaborated in the ensuing paragraphs.

Levels of Adjustment	Type of school attended	Intervention required
Level 1 - 2	Mainstream school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide minimal adjustments during normal class time ● Supported by specialist teachers or by educational assistants with limited time
Level 3 - 4	Learning Support Centres in mainstream school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Require more extensive adjustments and pull-out support ● Students either participate in small group learning or participate in mainstream classes where appropriate
Level 5 - 6	Special school – Jockey Club Sarah Roe School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Require most extensive adjustments ● Various therapy services including speech and language therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy are required

(b) Mode of operation with adjustment levels in ESF mainstream schools

3. Level 1 students are students of mainstream schools requiring help by teachers for access to part of the curriculum they are not able to master. They may need small group teaching support within a mainstream classroom. Mainstream teachers are provided with information about the students, skills as well as strategies for teaching students with SEN, including guidance to parents for students' learning individual subjects in specific groups, writing frames, sentence starters, graphic organizers, word banks, vocabulary lists, etc. Teachers with professional qualification of SEN will serve as consultants to teachers of mainstream classes.

4. Level 2 students are mainstream students who need more support. Teachers will adapt the learning content for them with in-class support of a mainstream classroom Educational Assistant (EA) to enable them to access the mainstream lessons. These students would require some withdrawal into specialist groups especially for the core subjects. Withdrawal may be for specific intervention, normally literacy and numeracy focus but also for organisation and social skills. The school would formulate Student Support Plan for students of this group and EA in-class support mostly concentrate around this group of students. Qualified special education teachers would teach literacy, numeracy and/or social skills.

5. Level 3 students may require a small class environment, with support from specialist teacher and EA. Level 3 students show mild to moderate learning difficulties. With the right support to enable them to access the curriculum, they can still be included into mainstream class learning successfully. For the areas of needs that require withdrawal, students are taught by specialist teachers in a small group setting within or beyond the mainstream classroom. There could be a combination of modes for support, including withdrawal for specific support or alternative curriculum, EA support in mainstream and discrete small group lessons, individual education plans, specific social skills programmes and behaviour programmes. Students may participate in some academic subjects with their mainstream peers (English, Mathematics, Science and Languages), depending largely on their abilities. They need to have certain independence and be able to understand the routines and rules. The discrete groups are taught by special education teachers.

6. Level 4 students require a small class environment, with support from specialist teacher and EA. Level 4 students show moderate to severe learning

difficulties. With the right support, they can be successfully included into mainstream classes with their curriculum strengths. Inclusion has to be meaningful and appropriate. With regard to areas of significant needs where withdrawal is required, students are taught by specialist teachers in a small group setting. There will usually be a combination of withdrawal for alternative curriculum as well as mainstream participation. In secondary schools, the mainstream participation tends to be for practical lessons (Design Technology, Physical Education, Art, Drama and Music). The core academic subjects (English, Mathematics and Science) are often taught in small groups by teachers with special education qualification. The curriculum consists of elements of Personal Growth, Social Education, Life Skills, Community Access and Vocational Training. These students pursue a most fulfilling portfolio coursework that has a SEN focus instead of taking the mainstream curriculum leading to obtainment of qualifications.

(c) Learning Support Centres (LSCs)

7. Since the 1980s, the ESF gradually set up LSCs to provide inclusive support services for students studying in mainstream schools but with significant learning needs. Most of the students in LSCs have a mild to moderate intellectual disabilities, learning difficulties and/or autism spectrum disorder that require more extensive support from teachers. Starting from the 2013/14 school year, all ESF mainstream schools have set up LSCs to provide educational support to students with SEN.

8. The LSC classes generally adopt the pull-out mode, i.e. pull-out for provision of intensive support for students with SEN who may not be able to catch up with the major subjects. For all other subjects, they are integrated with other students. Often students with LSC placements are identified to have needs of intervention at both level 3 and level 4 in different areas of their learning.

(d) Resources

9. LSCs are operated through the provision of government subvention and with funding and resources provided by the ESF. In the 2013/14 school year, ESF offers 105 primary LSC places and 108 secondary LSC places respectively to support students with SEN. The total expenditure per annum on LSCs for the 13 ESF schools (excluding Island School) in the 2012/13 school year amounts to \$24 million.

10. Each LSC class, with either 7 students in the primary level or 8 students in the secondary level, is supported by a full-time teacher and one EA. Parents may employ at their own expense additional EAs to assist in the LSC or in the mainstream classes for their children with learning difficulties.

11. For students with speech and language impairment or other needs, parents may employ private therapists to work in the school setting at the parents' expense. They may also seek paid-services from the Therapy Centre of ESF which was set up in 2011. The Therapy Centre of ESF is a resource centre of ESF serving its students on a self-financed basis and sharing experiences with both local and international school sectors.