

For discussion  
on 8 June 2015

## **Legislative Council Panel on Education**

### **Progress on Enhancing Chinese Learning and Teaching for Non-Chinese Speaking Students**

#### **Purpose**

The 2014 Policy Address announced a series of measures to step up support for ethnic minorities (EM), including enhanced support for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students<sup>1</sup> in learning the Chinese language. This paper aims to brief Members on the progress of implementation of relevant support measures.

#### **Chinese Language Curriculum**

##### *Implementation of the “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework” and Professional Support*

2. The Government is committed to encouraging and supporting NCS students’ integration into the community, including facilitating their early adaptation to the local education system and mastery of the Chinese language. In the 2014/15 school year, the Education Bureau (EDB) has implemented the “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework” (“Learning Framework”) in primary and secondary schools. The “Learning Framework” aims to help NCS students overcome the difficulties of learning Chinese as a second language with a view to facilitating their effective learning of Chinese and enabling them to bridge over to mainstream Chinese Language classes. Through a series of teacher professional development programmes<sup>2</sup> launched before the commencement of the school year, teachers (including principals, vice-principals, curriculum leaders, Chinese Language panel heads

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<sup>1</sup> For the planning of educational support measures, students whose spoken language at home is not Chinese are broadly categorised as NCS students. In the 2014/15 school year, there are about 16 900 NCS students (8 700 at primary level and 8 200 at secondary level) attending public sector schools and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools.

<sup>2</sup> About 40 seminars and workshops have been organised since June 2014.

and teachers) of primary and secondary schools admitting NCS students have initially grasped the strategies for the implementation of the “Learning Framework”, as well as use of the “Chinese Language Assessment Tools” (Assessment Tools) in conjunction with the “Learning Framework” and curriculum planning tools<sup>3</sup> to plan for the implementation of the “Learning Framework”. Findings of the post-course evaluation surveys showed that over 98% of the participating teachers were satisfied with the professional development programmes and considered that the knowledge gained could be applied to practical classroom teaching. EDB will continue to organise diversified and progressively advanced professional development programmes to ensure that all teachers teaching NCS students are provided with adequate training opportunities to enhance their professional capability in teaching Chinese as a second language. Besides, EDB launched in March 2014 the “Professional Enhancement Grant Scheme for Chinese Teachers (Teaching Chinese as a Second Language)” under the Language Fund to encourage continual professional development of serving Chinese Language teachers and enhance their professional capability in teaching the Chinese language to NCS students. Details of schools’ implementation of the “Learning Framework” are in paragraphs 8 to 11 below.

3. In the 2014/15 school year, EDB has stepped up the school-based professional support services through diversified modes, including on-site support provided by EDB professional support teams and support rendered through the University-School Support Programmes, Professional Development Schools Scheme and School Support Partners (Seconded Teacher) Scheme financed by the Education Development Fund. The foci of support services include supporting schools in adapting the school-based curriculum and development of learning and teaching materials with reference to the “Learning Framework” and Assessment Tools as well as enhancing teachers’ professional capacity through development of professional learning communities and experience sharing with a view to helping NCS students learn the Chinese language more effectively. In the 2014/15 school year, a total of 42 primary schools and 30 secondary schools have participated in the afore-mentioned professional support services.

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<sup>3</sup> Coupled with the provision of the “Learning Framework”, EDB has provided schools with the Chinese Language Assessment Tools in conjunction with the “Learning Framework” and full sets of learning materials that include learning modules and Second Language Learning Packages to help teachers adapt the Chinese Language curriculum according to the learning progress of individual NCS students. EDB has also provided curriculum planning tools to help school principals, middle managers and curriculum leaders decide on the mode(s) to implement the “Learning Framework”. The complementary packages have been uploaded onto EDB’s designated webpage “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework” which will be updated where necessary.

### *Applied Learning Chinese (for NCS Students)*

4. We appreciate that all students (including NCS students) are different in backgrounds and aptitudes. Their expectations, needs and aspirations also vary. Capitalising on the promising experience of other Applied Learning subjects (for instance recognition by post-secondary institutions, enhancement in students' motivation in learning, pegging with the Qualifications Framework (QF) etc.), EDB has introduced an Applied Learning Chinese (for NCS Students) (ApL(C)) subject by phases at the senior secondary levels from the 2014/15 school year to provide NCS students with an additional channel to acquire an alternative recognised qualification, in addition to the mainstream Chinese Language curriculum and other internationally recognised Chinese language qualifications (for example, General Certificate of Secondary Education), which would enhance their further studies opportunities and employability.

5. In tandem, we provide a new student grant for ApL(C) to fully subsidise schools to offer ApL(C) courses. Two ApL(C) courses (Service Industry and Hospitality) were rolled out in February 2015<sup>4</sup>. The first cohort of graduates will complete the courses in 2017.

6. ApL(C) has gained recognition of various parties. In addition to the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education qualification, ApL(C) courses are pegged at QF Levels 1 to 3. On further studies, University Grants Committee-funded institutions and post-secondary institutions have accepted "Attained" in ApL(C) as an alternative Chinese qualification for NCS students in meeting the basic admission requirements. Regarding career pursuits, the Civil Service Bureau has accepted "Attained" and "Attained with Distinction" in ApL(C) as meeting the Chinese language proficiency requirements of relevant civil service ranks.

### *Vocational Chinese Language Courses*

7. Regarding NCS school leavers, the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) has commissioned local post-secondary institutions to develop and operate Vocational Chinese Language courses.

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<sup>4</sup> When the ApL(C) courses were rolled out in February 2015, about 150 NCS students studying in Secondary 4 enrolled for the two courses offered from the second term of the 2014/15 school year. The number of NCS students enrolled in the courses concerned constitutes about 10% of the NCS students at Secondary 4 and is close to our estimation as NCS students are expected to have achieved about Level 4 or above of the "Learning Framework" at the point of entry.

These courses, expected to be launched in the first quarter of 2016, aim at enhancing NCS school leavers' capability and confidence in reading, writing, listening and speaking in Chinese. On successful completion of the courses, attendants will obtain qualifications recognised as QF Level 1 / Level 2, which will enhance their employability.

## **Schools' Implementation of the "Learning Framework"**

8. To facilitate schools' implementation of the "Learning Framework" and creation of an inclusive learning environment in schools, EDB has provided all schools admitting 10 or more NCS students with an additional funding ranging from \$800,000 to \$1,500,000 for a school year<sup>5</sup>. We have confined the funding as purpose-specific to ensure that it is solely used for supporting NCS students' learning of the Chinese language. In the 2014/15 school year, a total of 173 public sector schools and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools (including 100 primary schools and 73 secondary schools) are provided with the additional funding. For schools admitting a handful (i.e. 1 to 9) of NCS students, their NCS students will benefit from an immersed Chinese language environment. In addition, starting from the 2014/15 school year, these schools will also implement the "Learning Framework" with regard to their NCS students' learning performance in Chinese and may apply for additional funding on a need basis to organise diversified after-school support programmes. In the 2014/15 school year, a total of 56 schools (including 24 primary schools and 32 secondary schools) have applied and have been granted the additional funding.

9. Specifically, all schools admitting 10 or more NCS students and receiving the additional funding have used the Assessment Tools as required and adjusted the learning targets and teaching strategies with reference to the learning progress so described in the "Learning Framework" as well as the learning performance and progress of their NCS students. The schools concerned have adopted diversified modes of intensive learning and teaching, which include pull-out learning, split-class / group learning, after-school

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<sup>5</sup> The funding model is as follows:

<u>Number of NCS students</u>	<u>Additional funding (\$ million)</u>
10 – 25	0.80
26 – 50	0.95
51 – 75	1.10
76 – 90	1.25
91 or more	1.50

consolidation, etc.<sup>6</sup> and about 80% of the schools concerned have adopted two or more modes. In this connection, except individual schools which have procured relevant services, schools have in general deployed the additional funding to appoint additional teachers / teaching assistants (ranging from 1 to 7). Besides, according to schools' annual plans on the use of the additional funding, all schools have assigned a dedicated teacher as the coordinator to facilitate planning of the overall support strategies for their NCS students. More than 70% of the schools have assigned middle managers (such as vice-principals, panel heads, etc.) to serve as coordinators to facilitate internal coordination in the planning and deployment of school resources and manpower, and ensure sustainable development of the support measures, including the arrangements for teachers to participate in training programmes relevant to the "Learning Framework". In this connection, about 90% of the schools have indicated readiness to continue to arrange for their teachers to join the diversified and progressively advanced professional development programmes with a view to enhancing their professional capability in teaching Chinese to their NCS students.

10. The dedicated team set up in EDB has examined schools' annual plans on the use of the additional funding and will verify them against the annual school reports to be submitted after the end of the school year. The dedicated team also conducts supervisory visits and collects feedback through questionnaires, interviews, etc. from major stakeholders (including principals, coordinators of support measures for NCS students, Chinese Language teachers teaching NCS students, NCS parents and NCS students of each school concerned as well as non-governmental organisations, where appropriate) to validate the implementation mode(s) of the "Learning Framework" and use of the additional funding of each of the schools concerned.

11. According to the feedback collected from major stakeholders of each school, we note that in the 2014/15 school year, the Chinese Language teachers

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<sup>6</sup> The major intensive learning and teaching modes adopted by schools are summarised as follows:

<b>Intensive learning and teaching modes adopted</b>	<b>Number of primary schools</b>	<b>Number of secondary schools</b>	<b>Total number of schools</b>
Pull-out learning	61	41	102
Split-class/group learning	24	29	53
After-school consolidation	91	63	154
Increasing Chinese Language lesson time	25	13	38
Learning Chinese across the curriculum	11	8	19
Co-teaching with 2 or more teachers / teaching assistants to provide in-class support	31	5	36

concerned have adapted the teaching materials with reference to their NCS students' learning performance based on the Assessment Tools<sup>7</sup> and the supporting materials of the "Learning Framework" uploaded onto EDB's webpage. As observed by the teachers concerned, under the intensive modes of Chinese learning and teaching, NCS students have actively participated in learning activities and taken the initiative to raise questions. They are also able to understand the teaching contents and more confident in learning Chinese. Most of the NCS students found small group learning and learning with local peers conducive to their effective learning of Chinese. Some of them pointed out that other outside classroom activities such as watching television programmes, reading Chinese stories, etc. could facilitate their learning of Chinese. Most of the NCS parents, on the other hand, indicated readiness to revise their children's daily schedule to allow them with more opportunities to learn Chinese, such as participating in after-school extended Chinese learning programmes. We (including schools) believe that with the use of the Assessment Tools for continuous assessment of NCS students' learning performance and adoption of diversified modes of intensive Chinese learning and teaching according to the learning progress under the "Learning Framework" for NCS students to learn Chinese in a small-step manner, NCS students (in particular those currently studying at junior primary levels) are generally able to learn Chinese effectively and bridge over to mainstream Chinese Language classes.

## **Creation of an Inclusive Learning Environment in Schools**

12. In addition to the implementation of the "Learning Framework", schools receiving the additional funding are also required to make optimal use of the funding to create an inclusive learning environment in schools. The schools concerned have generally deployed about 10% of the additional funding provided for appointment of EM assistants and/or procurement of translation services to strengthen communication with NCS parents and organise multi-cultural activities. Regarding individual schools which have admitted more NCS students, some have, in collaboration with the tertiary institution, set up the Chinese Language Learning Support Centre in their schools to strengthen the support to the students concerned. They have also actively engaged their NCS students in community activities with a view to enhancing their interaction with their Chinese-speaking peers and broadening their exposure to Chinese.

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<sup>7</sup> EDB has commissioned the University of Hong Kong to conduct analyses on NCS students' overall learning performance in Chinese under the Assessment Tools. Details are at [Annex](#).

13. On the other hand, to facilitate NCS parents' understanding of the local education system including the relevant support services, we will continue to update the series of key information already provided in major EM languages and arrange dedicated briefing sessions for NCS parents on key subjects such as admission to kindergartens (including the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme and fee remission programmes), allocation of Primary One and Secondary One school places, etc.. We will also re-examine the dedicated website for NCS parents / students to enable NCS parents to have more readily available information about the general situation in mainstream schools to encourage their active participation in visits to schools and choose schools with an immersed Chinese language environment taking into account the aspirations and needs of their children. This would in turn facilitate NCS children's integration into the community and mastery of the Chinese language for further studies and career opportunities in Hong Kong.

### **Special Schools Admitting NCS Students**

14. Starting from the 2014/15 school year, we have extended the coverage of the additional funding to special schools admitting NCS students<sup>8</sup>. In the 2014/15 school year, 23 special schools have been provided with the additional funding. Among these schools, a few schools which offer ordinary school curriculum have enhanced the support for their NCS students' learning of Chinese with reference to the "Learning Framework". EDB is developing the "Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Adapted Learning Framework" (for NCS Students with Intellectual Disabilities) ("Adapted Framework") for special schools which are not offering the ordinary school curriculum. The "Adapted Framework" is developed on the basis of the planned domains and the 8 Levels under the "Learning Framework". In tandem, it makes reference to the supplementary guide to the Curriculum Guide on Chinese Language for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) for basic education and senior secondary levels and the specific features of NCS students' learning of Chinese to cater for the specific needs of NCS students with ID. It aims to facilitate teachers' understanding of the learning progress of NCS students with ID and enhance the learning and teaching effectiveness. The development of the "Adapted Framework" is expected to complete by the end of 2016.

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<sup>8</sup> The funding model for special schools offering ordinary school curriculum and admitting 10 or more NCS students is the same as that for ordinary schools (i.e. Footnote 5). Special schools offering ordinary school curriculum and have 6 to 9 NCS students, and special schools offering adapted Chinese curriculum and have 6 or more NCS students are provided with an additional funding of \$650,000.

15. In the interim before the implementation of the “Adapted Framework”, we will continue to organise seminars for teachers of special schools admitting NCS students with ID to keep them abreast of the latest development of the “Adapted Framework” and facilitate their understanding of the underpinning concepts and strategies of teaching Chinese to NCS students with ID. In this regard, we have invited two special schools to share their school-based experience in supporting NCS students with ID (for instance, curriculum planning and production of school-based teaching aids) to help teachers grasp the specific learning and teaching strategies in teaching NCS students with ID.

16. On the other hand, school-based professional support services have been provided to special schools admitting NCS students with ID through the School Support Partners (Seconded Teacher) Scheme and school-based professional support programmes offered by EDB<sup>9</sup>. Participating schools having taken into account their school-based development and learning difficulties of NCS students with ID have collaborated with EDB’s support team and the teachers seconded to conduct collaborative lesson planning and lesson observation cum reflection to develop learning and teaching resources as well as teaching aids suitable for NCS students with ID with a view to enhancing their effective learning of Chinese. The schools concerned have, according to their school-based circumstances, adopted small group learning, individual tutoring or pull-out learning during Chinese Language lessons to support their NCS students’ learning of Chinese, and/or formed professional learning communities and created an inclusive learning environment for NCS students with ID to enhance their awareness of local customs and culture.

### **Promotion of Early Integration**

17. NCS students’ early start in learning Chinese is critical to their adaptation to mainstream curriculum and integration into the community, the earlier the better. In this regard, EDB will continue to encourage NCS parents to send their children to local kindergartens with a view to facilitating their early exposure to, and learning of, the Chinese language as well as smooth transition to mainstream primary schools. In the 2014/15 school year, about 7 000 NCS students are studying in about 450 local kindergartens<sup>10</sup>. As regards learning and teaching, it is considered more effective for kindergartens to create a

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<sup>9</sup> In the 2014/15 school year, 7 special schools have participated in the School Support Partners (Seconded Teacher) Scheme and another 6 special schools have joined the school-based professional support programmes offered by EDB.

<sup>10</sup> Among the some 7 000 NCS students studying in local kindergartens, about 5 000 (over 70%) are studying in 380 kindergartens joining the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme.



language-rich environment and adopt an integrated approach in learning language. In this connection, EDB has commissioned the University of Hong Kong to provide teacher professional development programmes and on-site support through the “University-School Support Programme: Supporting Kindergartens in the Teaching and Learning of Chinese for NCS Children” (2012/13 to 2014/15 school years) with a view to enhancing teachers’ professional capabilities in teaching NCS children and enhancing the effectiveness of NCS students’ learning of Chinese. In the 2015/16 and 2016/17 school years, EDB will launch a new University-School Support Programme aiming at enhancing teachers’ professional capabilities in teaching Chinese to NCS children and supporting NCS students’ smooth transition from kindergartens to primary schools.

18. Besides, EDB’s professional team will continue to offer intensive on-site support to kindergartens. Starting from the 2014/15 school year, the support services have focused on “Promoting early integration of ethnic minority children in kindergartens” under which the support team collaborates with teachers in formulating school-based targets and support to help EM children adapt to local school life and enhance the learning of Chinese to bridge over to primary schools in a smooth manner. In the 2014/15 school year, 61 kindergartens are supported under the afore-mentioned University-School Support Programme, among which 12 kindergartens are in parallel receiving on-site professional support from EDB’s professional team. EDB has also consolidated the experience of supporting kindergartens admitting NCS children from the 2011/12 to 2013/14 school years and published a booklet entitled “照顧差異、促進共融 – 支援非華語兒童的經驗”, which has been uploaded onto the EDB website for the sector’s reference.

19. On the other hand, the Quality Education Fund (QEF) has funded the University of Hong Kong to conduct a project on “Development of Chinese Language Learning Progression Framework for NCS Children in Kindergartens in Hong Kong” for two school years (i.e. from the 2013/14 to 2014/15 school years) with a total of 15 participating kindergartens which have admitted NCS children. The project aims to gain an in-depth understanding of NCS children’s learning of Chinese in local kindergartens. In tandem, kindergartens may apply for funding from the QEF under the prioritised theme of “Promoting Whole Child Development in Kindergarten Education”, “Catering for Learners’ Diversity” and “Support for Students with Diverse Needs” to address their NCS students’ needs in physical, cognitive, personal, intellectual, social and aesthetic aspects, and to create a caring and inclusive environment or develop strategies to

cater for learners' diversity<sup>11</sup> for quality education. Separately, the Language Fund will continue to commission non-governmental organisations to organise district-based programmes for NCS children aged 3 to 12 to motivate them to learn Chinese through fun activities.

20. There are views on extending the “Learning Framework”, which has been implemented in primary and secondary schools starting from the 2014/15 school year, to kindergartens. EDB will draw reference from the relevant information (including the experience of various support measures and findings of relevant studies funded by the QEF) to further explore the way forward of learning and teaching of Chinese for NCS children in the context of kindergarten education, taking into account views of stakeholders.

21. Since its establishment, the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education (the Committee) had been conducting in-depth studies with multiple perspectives on various issues concerning kindergarten education. The Committee has submitted its report to the Government on 28 May 2015. The recommendations include, among others, measures to step up the support to NCS children in kindergartens. EDB is studying the report and will consult the public before formulation of policies and specific measures as appropriate.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

22. At the curriculum level, we will review the “Learning Framework” (in particular the supporting materials) on an on-going basis and refine them in due course having due regard to views and experience in different school contexts. The “Learning Framework” would also be reviewed, as appropriate, at an interval of 3 years upon completion of each Key Stage (e.g. Primary 1 to 3, Primary 4 to 6, Secondary 1 to 3). First-hand information (including curriculum planning, learning, teaching and assessment, etc.) collected through observation of schools' implementation of the “Learning Framework” and discussion with teachers will be used as the basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the relevant support measures.

23. According to the advice of research and language experts, EDB has drawn up the research framework to evaluate the effectiveness of various support measures for NCS students to ensure the quality of the support measures

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<sup>11</sup> For instance, a kindergarten has adopted the theme of building up NCS children's communication and thinking in Cantonese, and through the collaboration among an education psychologist, the school head and teachers developed diversified modes of game-based activities and encouraged NCS parents to use more Cantonese in daily communication with their children.

and refine individual measures where appropriate. Data collection and associated research work under the research framework will start upon completion of the 2014/15 school year when initial data on the performance of NCS students and feedback on the impact of various support measures are available. With reference to the advice from the experts, the support measures concerned will be reviewed based on both quantitative (such as data on the overall learning performance of NCS students including results of the Territory-wide System Assessment) and qualitative (such as stakeholders' views on support measures collected through questionnaire surveys and group interviews, etc.) information.

Education Bureau  
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## **Learning Performance of Non-Chinese Speaking Students in Chinese in the 2014/15 School Year**

All schools admitting 10 or more non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students and receiving additional funding have reported the results of their NCS students' performance under the Chinese Language Assessment Tools (Assessment Tools) as required. Schools have also provided their NCS students' scripts of the Assessment Tools<sup>Note</sup> to facilitate our refinement of the Assessment Tools and further understanding of NCS students' learning performance in the Chinese language.

2. In the 2014/15 school year, based on feedback from schools and analysis of the scripts, in gist, the overall performance in reading and writing of NCS students studying at the same class level varied considerably as their duration of and pace in learning Chinese were different. For NCS students with relatively higher ability, at junior primary levels, they were generally able to grasp the relationship of time, place and people of the text. They could broadly understand the content of the paragraphs and the text with analysis and extract the key messages in applied writing (broadly at Level 2 to Level 3 of the "Learning Framework" (Reading)). At senior primary levels, they could grasp the characters of the people involved with reference to their behaviour and point out the main theme of the text (broadly at Level 3 to Level 4 of the "Learning Framework" (Reading)). Nonetheless, NCS students generally read texts of about 280 to 350 words while local students at senior primary levels could read texts of about 1 000 words. On writing (referring to composition in general and applied writing), NCS students generally performed better in applied writing. For composition in general, NCS students demonstrating relatively higher ability at junior primary levels were able to write short articles on events familiar to them with proper presentation in paragraphs to express feelings / views (broadly at Level 2 of the "Learning Framework" (Writing)). At senior primary levels, they mastered descriptive skills in writing narrative articles (broadly at Level 3 of the "Learning Framework" (Writing)). Should the number of words of a composition be taken as an indicator, NCS students could write about 100 words on average at senior primary levels while their local counterparts were able to write about 400 words.

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<sup>Note</sup> The Chinese Language Assessment Tools cover the four domains of character recognition/reading, character writing/writing, speaking and listening. In light of the general concern about NCS students' abilities in reading and writing, this Annex has focused on these two aspects.

3. Regarding secondary schools, at junior secondary levels, NCS students with relatively higher ability could sum up the contents, grasp the main ideas of the paragraphs and main theme of the text (broadly at Level 3 to Level 4 of the “Learning Framework” (Reading)). However, they had genuine difficulties in understanding classical texts (文言文). Besides, they could read texts of about 550 to 600 words while their local counterparts were able to read at least 1 200 words. At senior secondary levels, there was no obvious progress in their reading. On writing, at junior secondary levels, they were able to have coherent and detailed narration and description with sensible presentation and relatively rich and accurate use of vocabulary (broadly at Level 4 of the “Learning Framework” (Writing)). At senior secondary levels, their content of writing was rich and substantiated with elaborative ideas demonstrating fine narration and description to express their feelings (broadly at Level 5 to Level 6 of the “Learning Framework” (Writing)). Should the number of words in writing be taken as an indicator at senior secondary levels, NCS students could generally write 150 to 250 words while their local counterparts were generally able to write about 550 words.

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