

Panel on Constitutional Affairs

Meeting on 16 November 2015

Re: An outline of the topics in the third report of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Supplementary Information provided by the Administration

Our response to the discussion on “Enhancing education opportunities for ethnic minorities (“EMs”) children and promoting their social mobility through education” has been incorporated in LC paper No. CB(4)545/13-14(02) on “Enhanced Chinese learning and teaching for NCS students” and LC paper No. CB(4)1098/14-15(03) on “Progress on Enhancing Chinese Learning and Teaching for Non-Chinese Speaking Students” discussed at the Panel on Education meeting on 14 April 2014 and 8 June 2015 respectively.

In brief, 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. Coupled with the complementary support measures which include enhancement to teachers’ professional development in teaching Chinese as a second language for Chinese Language teachers, funding support and professional support to schools, we ensure that all NCS students have equal opportunities in learning Chinese on par with their Chinese-speaking counterparts.

We appreciate that all students (including NCS students) are different in backgrounds and aptitudes. Their expectations, needs and aspirations also vary. 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.

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. As regards learning and teaching, it is considered more effective for kindergartens to create a 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 has launched 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. 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.

Education Bureau
January 2016

For discussion on
14 April 2014

**Legislative Council Panel on Education
Enhanced Chinese Learning and Teaching for
Non-Chinese Speaking Students**

Purpose

The 2014 Policy Address has announced a series of measures to step up support for ethnic minorities (EM) in education and employment. This paper aims to elaborate on how the curriculum design and teaching of the Chinese language would be enhanced from the 2014/15 school year to help non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students¹ learn Chinese and to overcome the difficulties of learning Chinese as a second language with a view to enabling them to bridge over to mainstream Chinese Language classes, and to invite Members' views on the implementation details of the complementary support measures. The objectives are to enhance the learning and teaching of NCS students and create an inclusive learning environment in schools so as to facilitate their integration into the community.

Chinese Language Curriculum

2. Capitalising on the experience in supporting NCS students (the support measures by category with elaboration at the [Annex](#)), the Education Bureau (EDB) will, starting from the 2014/15 school year, provide primary and secondary schools with the “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework” (“Learning Framework”) to further address the concern about NCS students’ learning of “Chinese as a second language”. Developed from the perspective of second language learners, the “Learning Framework” provides a systematic set of objectives and expected learning outcomes that describes the learning progress of NCS students at different learning stages. Teachers may set progressive learning targets, learning progress and expected learning outcomes using a “small-step” learning approach to enhance the learning effectiveness of NCS students. In parallel, module exemplars, assessment tools and supporting learning and teaching materials will be provided to help teachers systematically adapt the Chinese Language curriculum

¹ For the planning of educational support measures, students whose spoken language at home is not Chinese are broadly categorised as NCS students. For reference, in the 2013/14 school year, there are about 15 900 NCS students (8 300 at primary level and 7 600 at secondary level) attending public sector schools and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools, among them about 6% are Chinese, 34% Pakistani, 16% Nepalese and 14% Indian.

according to individual learner's needs in a progressive manner to help NCS students overcome the difficulties of learning Chinese as a second language. The fact that the "Learning Framework" makes the learning progress of NCS students more explicit could help teachers and NCS students jointly formulate appropriate learning targets and expected progress with a view to bridging over to mainstream Chinese Language classes.

3. Premised on having no alternative Chinese Language curriculum and public examination with pre-set simpler contents and lower standards, the "Learning Framework" applicable in the learning and teaching of Chinese at school is a "learning Chinese as a second language" curriculum. As the "Learning Framework" provides a systematic set of learning targets, learning objectives and expected learning outcomes at different learning stages according to the curriculum, it also serves as a reference for evaluation of learning effectiveness, which complements the Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for NCS Students. Coupled with the complementary support measures elucidated in the ensuing paragraphs, we ensure that all NCS students have equal opportunities in learning Chinese on par with their Chinese-speaking counterparts. In parallel, we will require schools to arrange their NCS students to sit for the Territory-wide System Assessment (Chinese) with a view to collecting relevant objective data on their basic competencies for research purposes, which would in turn help review the implementation of the Learning Framework².

4. We appreciate that like all other students, NCS students are different in backgrounds and aptitudes. Their expectations, needs and aspirations in respect of learning the Chinese language also vary. We will continue to subsidise eligible NCS students to obtain other internationally recognised Chinese qualifications³. These qualifications are accepted as alternative Chinese qualifications for consideration for admission to local post-secondary institutions and universities. Besides, we will introduce an Applied Learning (Chinese) subject by phases, starting from the 2014/15 school year, as an

² From 2014 onwards, the EDB will not release to individual primary schools the number of students and school percentage of students attaining basic competency. For secondary schools, the current policy remains unchanged, i.e. a supplementary report with attainment rates which excludes the performance of NCS students, will be provided to individual secondary schools having NCS students participated in the assessment. Hence, the requirement for NCS students to sit for the Territory-wide System Assessment (Chinese) would not impose undue pressure on schools and students.

³ The EDB will continue to subsidise eligible NCS students to take the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) (Chinese) Examination, and the Chinese Language examinations of the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), General Certificate of Education (GCE) AS-Level or GCE A-Level for acquiring internationally recognised Chinese qualifications, which are accepted as alternative Chinese qualifications for consideration for admission to local post-secondary institutions and universities.

alternative qualification for NCS students to opt for at senior secondary levels. The contents of the subject would be pegged at the Qualifications Framework (QF) Levels 1 to 3 with the results recorded in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE). We are collaborating with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the qualifications concerned would be recognised for further studies and employment under the multiple pathways. In short, NCS students may choose to sit for the HKDSE (Chinese Language) Examination or study the Applied Learning (Chinese) subject and/or attain other internationally recognised Chinese qualifications subject to their learning performance and aspirations. NCS school leavers will also benefit from the development of Vocational Chinese Language courses recognised under the QF to enhance their employability.

Complementary Support Measures

5. To facilitate schools' implementation of the "Learning Framework", we will step up the support measures in 3 major areas: (a) enhanced teachers' professional development in teaching Chinese as a second language for Chinese Language teachers; (b) enhanced funding support to schools for providing intensive learning of Chinese for NCS students and creating an inclusive environment in schools (including strengthening communication with NCS parents so that they would encourage their children to learn Chinese for better integration into the community); and (c) enhanced professional support for schools.

(a) Teachers' Professional Development

6. The EDB has launched the Professional Enhancement Grant Scheme under the Language Fund in the first quarter of 2014 to enhance Chinese Language teachers' professional capability in teaching Chinese as a second language. In tandem, we will enhance teachers' professional development with more training courses and experience sharing opportunities on teaching Chinese as a second language for Chinese Language teachers irrespective of the number of NCS students admitted in school. We will also organise different thematic seminars and workshops to facilitate teachers' understanding of the underpinning philosophies and mastery of the pedagogy in teaching NCS students, including interpretation of the "Learning Framework" and use of assessment tools, professional knowledge on teaching Chinese as a second language, relevant learning and teaching strategies, etc. Besides, opportunities for professional exchange for teachers of NCS students would be provided to ensure that teachers are well-versed with the "Learning Framework" and assessment tools before the commencement of the 2014/15 school year.

(b) *Enhanced Additional Recurrent Funding to Schools*

New Funding Model

7. As announced in the 2014 Policy Address, the additional recurrent funding to schools will be significantly increased to about \$200 million a year starting from the 2014/15 school year to facilitate schools' implementation of the "Learning Framework" and creation of an inclusive environment in schools. It is worth to note that the EDB abolished in the 2013/14 school year the so-called "designated schools" system⁴ (i.e. confining the provision of additional recurrent funding to a certain number of schools admitting NCS students) with a view to removing the misconception arising from the "designated school" label which is in fact a misnomer and to raising schools' awareness to support NCS students' learning of the Chinese language. Instead, all schools admitting 10 or more NCS students have been provided with an additional recurrent funding ranging from \$300,000 to \$600,000 per annum⁵. We have, on one hand, made it explicit that schools should be accountable for meeting the needs of their NCS students by formulating school-based learning and teaching strategies to support their NCS students' effective learning of Chinese through optimal use of the additional funding so as to facilitate their academic and career pursuits as well as integration into the community. On the other hand, we have been encouraging NCS parents to send their children to mainstream schools. Revising the funding arrangement will hopefully widen NCS parents' school choice.

8. Capitalising on the experience in the implementation of the afore-mentioned revised funding support to schools in the 2013/14 school year, we will require schools implementing the "Learning Framework" from the 2014/15 school year to adopt the Chinese Language Assessment Tools in conjunction with the "Learning Framework" to differentiate the learning performance of their NCS students. Schools should then follow the

⁴ From the 2006/07 to 2012/13 school years, schools admitting a critical mass of NCS students, having experience in taking care of NCS students, ready to partner with the EDB to develop school-based support measures and share experiences with other schools were provided with an annual additional funding ranging from \$300,000 to \$600,000 depending on the number of NCS students admitted, and professional support services for these schools to develop specific school-based support programmes and Chinese Language learning and teaching materials, and share with other schools admitting NCS students through the school support network that the EDB had formed, so that all NCS students would benefit. These schools were generally referred to as the so-called "designated schools".

⁵ In the 2013/14 school year, the number of schools concerned is 151 (63 secondary schools and 88 primary schools). Another 430 schools have admitted a handful of NCS students (200 secondary schools and 230 primary schools).

progressive “small-step” learning approach and module exemplars at different levels of learning as set out in the “Learning Framework”, make use of the supporting learning and teaching materials, and adopt diversified intensive learning modes as appropriate (including pull-out learning, split-class/group learning, increasing Chinese lesson time, co-teaching, learning Chinese across the curriculum, after-school consolidation, etc.) with a view to helping NCS students, especially those at junior levels, learn Chinese systematically and bridge over to mainstream Chinese Language classes as early as possible. In other words, schools will not be allowed to adopt an across-the-board Chinese Language curriculum with pre-set simpler contents and lower standards for their NCS students.

9. Based on the funding model⁶ in the 2013/14 school year, we propose to increase the additional recurrent funding to schools admitting 10 or more NCS students starting from the 2014/15 school year to enable schools to meet the following requirements:

- (a) Assign a dedicated teacher to coordinate the implementation of the “Learning Framework” to facilitate NCS students’ learning of Chinese, including adoption of the Chinese Language Assessment Tools to assess and then peg the learning performance of NCS students against the “Learning Framework” and based on the results, to set learning targets and draw up appropriate teaching strategies; selection of appropriate learning and teaching materials; and compilation of related school plan as well as progress and evaluation reports. The coordinator will also be responsible for arranging additional teaching staff for implementing intensive learning modes as appropriate (see paragraph 8 above);
- (b) Promote the awareness of supporting NCS students and create an inclusive environment in schools through appointment of additional EM assistants or procurement of translation services as appropriate to strengthen communication with NCS parents, whereby NCS students’ Chinese learning would be better supported through home-school cooperation; and
- (c) Appoint additional teaching staff for implementing different intensive learning modes (see paragraph 8 above) with a view to enabling NCS students to bridge over to mainstream Chinese Language classes as early as possible.

⁶ The funding model in the 2013/14 school year for schools admitting 10 or more NCS students is as follows:

<u>Number of NCS students</u>	<u>Additional recurrent funding</u>
10-30	\$300,000
31-60	\$400,000
61-90	\$500,000
91 or more	\$600,000

10. Besides, we, drawing reference to the prevailing class size of most primary schools (i.e. 25 students), propose to reduce the number of students for each funding tier under the existing funding model and provide schools with additional resources according to the number of NCS students admitted. This is to enable schools to adopt diversified intensive learning modes with regard to NCS students’ learning targets and strategies and/or strengthen “enrichment and remedial” when implementing the “Learning Framework”. For the revised funding mode under consideration, the amount of funding for the first tier under the new funding model is proposed to be \$800,000. The amount of funding for each subsequent funding tier will then be increased according to the number of NCS students admitted as afore-mentioned with the ceiling of the additional recurrent funding capped at \$1.5 million. Details are as follows:

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

11. To discourage over-concentration of NCS students in individual schools so as to provide an immersed Chinese language environment for NCS students, we propose to maintain the ceiling of “91 NCS students or more” of the funding model of the 2013/14 school year. In other words, all schools admitting 91 or more NCS students will be provided with the maximum additional recurrent funding (i.e. the afore-mentioned ceiling of \$1.5 million). Based on past experience of these schools, given that their student profile is relatively homogeneous, with an additional recurrent funding of about \$1.5 million, these schools are able to provide diversified intensive learning modes to cater for NCS students with different learning performance, and enhance their learning of Chinese through “enrichment and remedial”.

12. With the proposed additional recurrent funding, schools may flexibly deploy the resources to support NCS students in learning Chinese during lessons and/or after school to meet their individual needs. In other words, the Project of After-school Extended Chinese Learning for NCS Students currently funded by the Language Fund will be regularised and subsumed in the additional recurrent funding for eligible schools from the 2014/15 school year.

Provision for Special Schools

13. We propose extending the coverage of the additional recurrent funding to special schools. While we are examining the needs and circumstances of NCS students' learning of Chinese in special schools specifically on how the "Learning Framework" should be implemented or adapted as appropriate, we propose providing an additional recurrent funding to special schools admitting 6 or more NCS students under the new funding model, having due consideration to the circumstances in special schools. The funding model proposed in paragraph 10 above will be applicable to those special schools offering the ordinary curriculum and admitting 10 or more NCS students (i.e. the amount of funding to be determined according to the number of NCS students admitted). For special schools which do not offer the ordinary curriculum and have admitted 6 or more NCS students, and those which offer the ordinary curriculum but have admitted only 6 to 9 NCS students, an additional recurrent funding of about \$650,000 will be provided to facilitate enhanced support for their NCS students in learning Chinese and creation of an inclusive environment in schools.

Optimal Use of the Additional Recurrent Funding

14. To ensure schools' optimal use of the additional recurrent funding, the funding will be solely used to support NCS students in learning Chinese. The EDB will confine the funding concerned as purpose-specific. Moreover, schools will be required to submit an annual plan on support to their NCS students. The plan should cover, among others, NCS students' learning performance as revealed in the assessment through using the Chinese Language Assessment Tools, teaching strategies to be adopted with regard to their NCS students' learning performance and progress and the expenditure involved, overall summative assessment results of all NCS students at the end of a school year specifically the number of NCS students who are expected to bridge over to mainstream Chinese Language classes (in the case of secondary schools, it should include data on the anticipated progression of students under the multiple pathways as appropriate), and other complementary support measures with a breakdown on the expenditure. Should a school allow Chinese-speaking students to participate in individual support measures for NCS students (including split-class/group teaching, pull-out learning, etc.), it should specify the details in its plan including the percentage of NCS and Chinese-speaking students, allocation of resources and justifications. The EDB will set up a dedicated team for implementation and monitoring of the enhanced funding support for schools.

15. Schools may make use of the additional funding to adopt various intensive learning modes to cater for the needs of their NCS students in Chinese learning. They may also provide other support related to the learning of Chinese such as collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide after-school support to consolidate what their NCS students have learnt in Chinese Language lessons and/or to conduct activities to promote an inclusive learning environment, procurement of learning and teaching materials, development of self-learning materials, enhancing teachers' capability in supporting NCS students, etc. In other words, we propose allowing flexibility for schools to deploy the resources to meet school-based needs provided that the additional funding is to be used solely for supporting NCS students' learning of Chinese.

Schools Admitting More NCS students

16. Under the current arrangements of the Primary One Admission System, in addition to choosing public sector schools in their residing school nets in the same manner as their local counterparts at the Central Allocation stage, NCS students may also choose the 8 primary schools traditionally admitting more NCS students. There are views from some stakeholders that this additional choice of picking schools from the 8-school list should be removed. In this regard, we are open-minded and are prepared to review the current practice subject to the views of the EM communities and stakeholders concerned, and having due consideration to the worries and needs of NCS students and parents. Besides, some stakeholders have proposed capping the number of NCS students admitted to a school and/or setting a ratio of NCS and Chinese-speaking students. In light of the practical difficulties and the needs of some EM parents and concerns of some schools, we propose to provide more opportunities to expose the NCS students concerned to an immersed Chinese language environment in the following paragraph.

17. To enable NCS students studying in schools with a relatively high concentration of NCS students to learn and grow together with Chinese-speaking students, we will actively encourage the schools concerned to form learning circles for Chinese learning activities (such as buddy reading programmes) in collaboration with schools admitting a larger number of Chinese-speaking students, and/or apply for funding under the Quality Education Fund to launch programmes for promoting awareness of cultural diversity (for example, engaging NCS students in community services) with a view to exposing NCS students more to Chinese through learning activities outside school and interaction with their Chinese-speaking peers. Besides, we will propose to the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research to

consider extending the existing district-based Chinese programmes for NCS children aged 3 to 9 to cover NCS primary and secondary students with a view to further motivating them to learn Chinese through learning experiences outside schools. We will also explore having the Chinese Language Learning Support Centre commissioned to a university to set up centres in these schools to facilitate the NCS students concerned to gain easy access to the after-school Chinese learning activities.

Support to Schools Admitting a Handful of NCS Students

18. As regards schools admitting a handful of NCS students (i.e. 1 to 9 for mainstream schools and less than 6 for special schools), past experience has revealed that most NCS students can benefit from the immersed Chinese language environment in schools. These schools normally complement their NCS students' learning of Chinese after school or during holidays as appropriate. As such, these schools have not been provided with any additional resources. To strengthen support for NCS students in these schools, in particular helping them overcome the difficulties of learning Chinese as a second language, we propose providing a formal platform for these schools to apply for additional funding to support their NCS students after school starting from the 2014/15 school year. Based on the experience of the prevailing time-limited Project of After-school Extended Chinese Learning for NCS Students funded by the Language Fund and implemented since the 2010/11 school year, it is proposed that each successful applicant school be provided with an additional funding⁷ for organising diversified after-school activities to support NCS students in learning Chinese, such as training of the Chinese learning skills in learning Chinese, Chinese learning groups, guided story reading, Chinese culture appreciation, etc., to consolidate what they have learnt in Chinese Language classes. We will continue to encourage these schools to optimise the use of their immersed Chinese language environment and deploy other resources flexibly with holistic planning according to their school-based circumstances to support their NCS students' mastery of the Chinese language as appropriate.

(c) School-based Professional Support

19. Starting from the 2014/15 school year, the EDB will step up school-based professional support services through diversified modes to support schools in adapting the school curriculum according to the "Learning Framework" coupled with the use of assessment tools and supporting materials; exploring various intensive learning modes; and encouraging sharing among

⁷ Under the Project of After-school Extended Chinese Learning for NCS Students, schools with 15 to 19 participating NCS students are provided an additional funding of about \$50,000 per annum.

schools and development of learning communities, etc. In addition to the services offered by the EDB's school-based support teams, support will also be rendered through the University-School Support Programmes, Professional Development Schools Scheme and School Support Partners (Seconded Teacher) Scheme. Schools may apply for the support services according to their circumstances and development needs.

Promotion of Early Integration

20. NCS students' early exposure to, and learning of, Chinese in daily life and at school is critical to their bridging over to mainstream Chinese Language classes, the earlier the better. We will continue to invite NGOs, through the Language Fund, to organise district-based programmes for NCS children aged 3 to 9 to motivate them to learn Chinese through fun activities such as games and creative arts. Separately, feedback from participants of the refined Summer Bridging Programme in 2013 was promising: participating NCS parents were more prepared to collaborate with schools in supporting their children's learning of Chinese. We will continue to encourage more NCS parents to participate in the Summer Bridging Programme.

21. We encourage NCS parents to send their children to kindergartens offering a local curriculum. Apart from inviting all kindergartens to participate in the school-based professional support services provided by the EDB on an annual basis, we will continue to enhance the school-based professional support and professional development of kindergarten teachers through the University-School Support Programme and the Quality Education Fund projects.

Monitoring and Evaluation

22. In addition to the dedicated team to be set up in the EDB to ensure schools' implementation of the "Learning Framework" and monitoring of the enhanced additional recurrent funding for schools to support NCS students mentioned in paragraph 14 above, we are inviting research and language experts to formulate a research framework to facilitate the evaluation of the effectiveness of various support measures for NCS students in Chinese learning to ensure the quality of the support services and refine individual measures where appropriate. We will continue to engage stakeholders (including NGOs) and report to the Legislative Council Panel on Education the progress of the implementation of support measures as appropriate.

Views of Stakeholders

23. We have consulted stakeholders on the above proposed implementation details, including the Special Needs Groups Task Force under the Commission on Poverty, relevant school sponsoring bodies, school councils, schools, and relevant NGOs, and will continue to collect views from EM communities/representatives. We have also briefed the Equal Opportunities Commission the major proposed measures subsequent to the announcement of the 2014 Policy Address. Stakeholders and the community are generally positive to the proposals and find them in right direction whereby enhanced measures should be implemented in a prudent manner with evaluation to be conducted.

Advice Sought

24. Members are invited to comment on the above proposals. We will announce the finalised implementation details in May this year for schools to prepare for implementation in the 2014/15 school year.

Education Bureau
April 2014

Educational Support Measures for Non-Chinese Speaking Students Implemented in Recent Years

Educational support measures provided for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students by the Education Bureau (EDB) since the 2006/07 school year by category are set out as follows:

(1) Provision of additional resources for schools admitting NCS students

- From the 2006/07 to 2012/13 school years, schools admitting a critical mass of NCS students, having experience in taking care of NCS students, ready to partner with the EDB to develop school-based support measures and share experiences with other schools were provided with an annual additional funding ranging from \$300,000 to \$600,000 depending on the number of NCS students admitted, and professional support services for these schools to develop specific school-based support programmes and Chinese Language learning and teaching materials. These schools needed to share their experience with other schools admitting NCS students through the school support network that the EDB had formed, so that all NCS students would benefit. These schools were generally referred to as the so-called “designated schools”.
- The EDB abolished in the 2013/14 school year the so-called “designated schools” system afore-mentioned with a view to removing the misconception arising from the “designated school” label which is in fact a misnomer and to raising schools’ awareness to support NCS students’ learning of the Chinese language. Instead, all schools admitting 10 or more NCS students have been provided with an additional recurrent funding ranging from \$300,000 to \$600,000 per annum. We have made it explicit that schools should be accountable for meeting the needs of their NCS students by formulating school-based learning and teaching strategies to support their NCS students’ effective learning of Chinese through optimal use of the additional funding so as to facilitate their academic and career pursuits as well as integration into the community.

(2) Chinese Language Curriculum, Teachers’ Professional Development and School-based Professional Support

- Issue of the Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum

for NCS Students to help teachers adapt the Chinese Language Curriculum.

- Provision of professional development programmes for Chinese Language teachers teaching NCS students and school-based professional support to schools.

(3) After-school Support in Chinese Learning

- Operation of the Chinese Language Learning Support Centres to offer remedial programmes after school and during holidays for those NCS students who have a late start in learning Chinese, develop teaching resources, and organise workshops for experience sharing with teachers.
- Implementation of the time-limited Project of After-school Extended Chinese Learning for NCS Students starting from the 2010/11 school year to provide funding to schools other than those with school-based support programmes specifically arranged for NCS students to put in place diversified extended Chinese learning programmes under the Language Fund. Starting from the 2013/14 school year, all schools may apply for the funding.

(4) Summer Bridging Programme

- Offering Summer Bridging Programme to NCS Primary 1 entrants and students proceeding to Primary 2, Primary 3 and Primary 4 to help them consolidate that they have learnt at Key Stage 1 and prepare for their transition to Key Stage 2.
- Starting from 2013, the programme has been refined to allow NCS parents accompanying their children with a view to enhancing their exposure to, and use of, Chinese and support for their children.

(5) Alternative Chinese Qualifications

- Starting from 2008, the University Grants Committee-funded institutions have accepted alternative Chinese Language qualifications including the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and General Certificate of Education (GCE) of eligible NCS students for consideration for admission under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System.
- Subsidising eligible school candidates sitting for the GCSE (Chinese) Examination since 2010 to the effect that the fee level of the

examination payable by the subsidised school candidates is on par with the Chinese Language paper in the defunct Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination and Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination.

- Starting from 2013, the examination subsidy coverage has been expanded to include other non-local Chinese examinations such as the IGCSE, GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level and GCE Advanced Level.

(6) Promotion of Early Integration

- Provision of support for kindergartens admitting NCS students, including University-School Support Programme projects financed by the Education Development Fund in respect of the learning and teaching of Chinese for NCS children implemented for 3 years since the 2012/13 school year; and school-based professional support services.
- District-based programmes in collaboration with non-governmental organisations since the 2012/13 school year to motivate NCS children to learn Chinese through fun activities such as games and creative art, etc. under the Language Fund.

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) students¹ 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 programmes² launched before the commencement of the school year, teachers (including principals, vice-principals, curriculum leaders, Chinese Language panel heads

¹ 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.

² 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 tools³ 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.

³ 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 2015⁴. 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.

⁴ 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 year⁵. 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

⁵ 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.⁶ 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

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

Intensive learning and teaching modes adopted	Number of primary schools	Number of secondary schools	Total number of schools
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 Tools⁷ 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.

⁷ 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 students⁸. 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.

⁸ 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 EDB⁹. 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 kindergartens¹⁰. As regards learning and teaching, it is considered more effective for kindergartens to create a

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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' diversity¹¹ 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

¹¹ 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
June 2015

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^{Note} 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.

^{Note} 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.
