

**Legislative Council
Subcommittee on Children's Rights**

Response to motions of the Meeting on 4 November 2017

Provision of subsidies for primary school students with special educational needs for the purpose of using the relevant community support services

The response of the Education Bureau

The Education Bureau (EDB) has been providing public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools with additional resources, professional support and teacher training to facilitate their implementation of the Whole School Approach to align school policies, culture and practices in rendering support to students with special educational needs (SEN) through the 3-Tier Intervention Model. Schools should flexibly deploy various resources to render appropriate tier of support together with related strategies in the daily teaching and learning activities for students based on their needs. In gist, Tier-1 support refers to the use of basic provision to provide quality teaching in regular classroom, hence providing early support for students with mild or transient learning difficulties. Tier-2 support refers to “add on” intervention, such as pull-out or after-school remedial programmes and hired professional services, for students with persistent learning difficulties. Tier-3 support refers to intensive individualised support for individual students with severe learning difficulties.

2. Schools will tap external expertise through hired services, and strengthen their professional capacity in catering for students with SEN. They would monitor the quality and effectiveness of the support services and complement aptly in classroom teaching so that students with SEN are supported by concerted effort of different parties. Professional staff from the EDB will also pay visits to schools to render professional advice on schools’ support measures and their effectiveness, etc.

3. Owing to the fact that parents may not have sufficient information and professional knowledge in choosing appropriate service providers such as those for children with autism and speech therapy services, and the services provided by respective providers may not be able to go with the teaching and learning activities at school, providing parents with subsidies to purchase services direct may not truly benefit students with SEN, besides burdening schools with difficulties in planning support services. We are of the view that

the existing mode of school-based support has proven to be effective and can meet the needs of students. It is also in line with the established practice worldwide. Providing schools with additional resources to hire services for students, where necessary, could ensure that students would benefit from the supplemental support.

The response of the Labour and Welfare Bureau / Social Welfare Department

4. The policy objective of the Low-income Working Family Allowance (to be renamed as the Working Family Allowance on 1 April 2018) Scheme is to encourage self-reliance of low-income families through employment, with a focus on supporting families with children and youths to ease intergenerational poverty. Apart from providing a working hour-linked allowance for low-income families fulfilling the working hour requirements, a Child Allowance is especially provided for each eligible child or youth in the eligible family. As the policy objective of the Scheme is to encourage self-reliance of low-income families through employment, we have no plan to delink the Child Allowance with working hour requirements. The Government will continue to provide appropriate support for children according to their needs through various programmes.

**Education Bureau
Labour and Welfare Bureau
Social Welfare Department
December 2017**