



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局
Education Bureau

Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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Ms Joanne MAK
Clerk to Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms MAK,

**Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities
Meeting on 12 December 2016**

Thank you for your letter of 24 November 2016. The Education Bureau (EDB), referring to the discussion of the Subcommittee at the meeting on 23 November 2016, would like to provide the supplementary information with elaboration on the related issues as follows:

(1) Demographic characteristics of ethnic minorities

According to the 2011 Population Census, the ethnic minority (EM) population in Hong Kong, excluding foreign domestic helpers, stood at 192 400, accounting for 2.9% of the whole population. Children under age 18 made up 26.2% of the EM population. Most EMs were born outside Hong Kong while about 30% (30.8%) were locally born. The proportion of South Asians born in

Hong Kong was higher¹ (especially for Pakistanis and Nepalese). For details, please refer to the “2011 Population Census Thematic Report: Ethnic Minorities” and the “Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report on Ethnic Minorities 2014”².

According to the enrolment figures collected by EDB, in the 2015/16 school year, there were about 12 000³ non-Chinese speaking⁴ (NCS) students at kindergarten (KG) levels (accounting for about 6.5% of the total student population of KGs)⁵. As regards NCS students studying in public sector⁶ and Direct Subsidy Scheme secondary and primary schools, there were about 8 800 and 8 900 NCS students respectively (accounting for about 2.7% and 3.1% of the relevant total student population of secondary and primary schools respectively).

The Government ensures equal opportunities in school admission for all eligible (i.e. Hong Kong residents reaching the age of 5 years 8 months) children (including NCS children) in primary one of public sector schools, regardless of their race. Education policies and support measures are underpinned by the principle of teaching students according to their ability and aptitude, but not the race or place of birth of the students and parents concerned, etc. To help NCS students overcome the difficulties of learning Chinese as a second language, EDB has, starting from the 2014/15 school year, implemented the “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework” (“Learning Framework”) to step up the support for NCS students in learning the Chinese language systematically⁷. With the results of NCS students’

¹ While many of the South Asian (SA) groups were locally born and raised, the data show that nearly 10% (9.2%) of SA adults born in Hong Kong had less than 10 years’ residence, which was visibly higher than the corresponding 4.5% among all EM adults born in Hong Kong. This reflects the situation of “locally born but not locally raised”, which was more visible for Nepalese with the corresponding share at 13.5%, while the shares for Indians and Pakistanis were 4.0% and 8.5% respectively.

² Please refer to the minutes of meeting of the Subcommittee on Poverty held on 15 March 2016 for relevant discussion.

³ Figures include the number of NCS students in the KGs run by the English Schools Foundation and other international KGs.

⁴ For the planning of educational support measures, students whose spoken language at home is not Chinese are broadly categorised as NCS students.

⁵ About 4 900 NCS students studied in KGs joining the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme.

⁶ Special schools are not included.

⁷ Starting from the 2014/15 school year, to facilitate schools’ implementation of the “Learning Framework” and creation of an inclusive learning environment, EDB has provided all schools admitting 10 or more NCS students with the enhanced funding ranging from \$800,000 to \$1,500,000 per year depending on the number of NCS students admitted to adopt diversified intensive learning and teaching modes as appropriate with a view to helping NCS students bridge over to mainstream Chinese Language classes as early as possible. For details, please refer to Annex 3 of Legislative Council Paper No. CB(2)208/16-17(01).

performance under the Assessment Tools in conjunction with the “Learning Framework” and the questionnaire survey from major stakeholders, it is noted that generally speaking, over 70% of NCS students in primary schools had studied in local KGs, compared with only 30% in secondary schools in the 2015/16 school year. The NCS students having studied in local KGs generally have better listening and speaking skills as compared with the NCS students who did not.

(2) Enhanced support measures

The 2014 Policy Address announced a series of measures to step up the support for EMs. For education, the policy intent of the enhanced support is to help NCS students learn Chinese systematically with a view to enabling them to bridge over to mainstream Chinese Language classes as soon as possible, while diversified choices are provided under the local education system to cater for their different situations (including the different performance of NCS students in Chinese Language even studying at the same level), interests and aspirations. In tandem, they are encouraged to study in “mainstream schools” to benefit from the immersed Chinese language environment which facilitates their mastery of the Chinese language and integration into the community.

(3) Admission to schools

Regarding admission to schools, having due consideration to the worries and needs of some NCS students, stakeholders in general agree with the flexible arrangement adopted since 2005 (i.e. for admission to primary one in the 2005/06 school year). Under the arrangement, the NCS children joining the Primary One Admission (POA) may indicate in the application form that “they cannot use Chinese as the learning medium” and in turn they are allowed to choose from eight primary schools traditionally admitting more NCS students in other school nets in addition to schools in their residing school net for the Central Allocation. In tandem, EDB has strongly appealed to parents of NCS students, through the Notes to Parents for POA, for sending their children to schools with an immersed Chinese language environment to facilitate their mastery of the Chinese language. The Notes have been translated into major EM languages for reference by parents of NCS students.

To further support parents of NCS students to learn more about the

“mainstream” schools, alongside the dedicated briefing sessions⁸ (with simultaneous interpretation services) conducted for parents of NCS students during the course of POA every year, briefing sessions on school choices on request of individual KGs, primary schools, etc. are also organised. In addition to encouraging schools to keep on enriching the contents of their English School Profiles and school websites to help parents grasp more information about the schools, EDB will also require schools provided with the additional funding⁷ to include in their annual school reports how their school-based support measures are disseminated to stakeholders. Parents of NCS students, like other parents, are encouraged to join the on-site school visits organised by individual schools and Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations on a district basis to learn more about the schools so as to make informed choices.

(4) Enhanced funding for schools

Premised on the aforementioned policy intent, when planning for provision of additional funding for schools to step up their support for NCS students, schools are generally divided into two types, viz. schools admitting a handful of NCS students (i.e. having 1 to 9 NCS students in the school) and schools admitting more NCS students or with relatively higher concentration of NCS students (i.e. having 10 or more NCS students in the school). From the 2014/15 school year, notwithstanding that the NCS students in schools having a handful of NCS students have benefitted from the immersed Chinese language environment of the school, these schools may apply for an additional funding of \$50,000 per year to offer after-school Chinese language support programmes to help their NCS students consolidate what they have learnt in classes in light of their needs. The funding is calculated with reference to the market price of the tutor for after-school support and the number of classes of this kind generally offered in a school year. Besides, NCS students may join the after-school remedial programmes offered by the Chinese Language Learning Support Centres commissioned to the University of Hong Kong by EDB.

(5) Articulation to multiple pathways

Recognised alternative Chinese Language qualifications

⁸ An average of 9 relevant briefing sessions were organised annually in the past few years.

To facilitate further studies and career pursuits, NCS students at senior secondary levels with regard to their situations may sit for examinations of other recognised alternative Chinese Language qualifications apart from the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) (Chinese Language) Examination. The number of candidates (including NCS students) sitting for examinations of the recognised alternative Chinese Language qualifications and the number of NCS students subsidised⁹ in the past 3 years (i.e. from the 2013/14 to 2015/16 school years) are tabulated at Annex 1.

Vocational Training Council (VTC) courses

VTC offers a wide range of vocational and professional education and training courses. All applicants, who have met the admission requirements, will be considered irrespective of their race or ethnic origin. Undergraduate programmes offered by the Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong as well as the higher diploma programmes offered by the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education, Hong Kong Design Institute and International Culinary Institute of VTC mainly use English as the medium of instruction. For eligible NCS students who do not possess the HKDSE Chinese Language qualification, other recognised alternative Chinese Language qualifications or Applied Learning Chinese (for Non-Chinese Speaking Students) under HKDSE will be considered.

To cater for the diverse needs of NCS students, VTC has also provided them with dedicated subvented vocational and professional education and training programmes¹⁰, including diploma courses in business, design, hotel and tourism for secondary school leavers, Applied Learning courses for senior

⁹ Internationally recognised alternative Chinese Language qualifications include those under the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and General Certificate in Education (GCE). The examination fees of these examinations for eligible NCS students are on par with that of HKDSE (Chinese Language) Examination. Needy NCS students may be granted full or half remission of the subsidised examination fees. Eligible NCS students are those who have fulfilled the following specified circumstances:

- (a) students who have learned Chinese Language for less than 6 years while receiving primary and secondary education; or
- (b) students who have learned Chinese Language for 6 years or more in schools, but have been taught an adapted and simpler Chinese Language curriculum not normally applicable to the majority of students in local schools.

¹⁰ The information of the dedicated programmes can be found at the VTC webpage (<http://www.vtc.edu.hk/ncs>). The number of NCS students of VTC from the 2013/14 to 2015/16 academic years is tabulated at Annex 2.

secondary students, basic vocational Chinese and short courses on specified trades. These programmes range from a few weeks to three years in duration. Youth College (Yeo Chei Man) was set up under VTC in the 2012/13 academic year to provide diversified study opportunities for students, including dedicated vocational and professional education and training programmes for NCS students and dedicated support services to NCS students. In the 2015/16 academic year, VTC offered about 20 dedicated full-time and part-time programmes for NCS students to cater for their specific learning needs and about 800 NCS students were enrolled in these programmes.

NCS students of VTC's pre-employment programmes enjoy various support services which aim to help them cope better with study and adapt to campus life. These services include academic and learning support such as student orientations, additional tutorial classes, counselling and coaching, peer support through the peer mentorship scheme and various student activities for promoting a culture of inclusion and integration into the community as well as advisory support for further studies and career development.

(6) Teachers' professional development

Regarding the support for Chinese Language teachers to teach NCS students, generally speaking, teacher education institutions will make reference to relevant policies and documents such as the curriculum guides issued by the Curriculum Development Council when designing and developing the initial teacher education (ITE) programmes. The ITE programmes shall meet the needs of the prospective teachers in their future career in education. Prospective teachers are equipped with professional knowledge, pedagogy and attributes in teaching students of different backgrounds and needs. Regarding the training for prospective teachers on teaching NCS students, the Hong Kong Education University (EdUHK) has been offering elective courses on Teaching Chinese as a Second Language in its Bachelor of Education (Honours) (Chinese Language) Programme. For instance, in the 2015/16 school year, the elective courses offered include Instructional Design and Development of Chinese Language for NCS students. In addition to the relevant courses, EdUHK has been organising a variety of activities to raise prospective teachers' awareness on cultural diversity (such as Day Camp for NCS students with prospective teachers serving as tutors). Besides, elective courses such as Intercultural Communication and Story Reading in Chinese to NCS Children are also offered

to prospective teachers.

With the implementation of the “Learning Framework”, EDB has been organising diversified and progressively advanced professional development programmes for teachers to help schools implement the “Learning Framework” and enhance teachers’ professional capability of teaching Chinese as a second language. Apart from organising training programmes related to the implementation of “Learning Framework”, EDB has also commissioned EdUHK to organise a 5-week full-time “Certificate in Professional Development Programme on the Teaching of Chinese Language for Non-Chinese Speaking Students” course which includes practicum, sharing and lesson observation. In the past three years, a total of about 50 teachers enrolled in the course. Besides, starting from the 2014/15 school year, teachers can pursue relevant courses through the “Professional Enhancement Grant Scheme for Chinese Teachers (Teaching Chinese as a Second Language)”. Up till now, a total of about 60 serving Chinese Language teachers have been approved for earmarking of grant under the above Scheme.

(7) Diversified intensive learning and teaching modes

Regarding the intensive learning and teaching modes (including pull-out learning)¹¹ adopted by some of the schools concerned⁷ with a view to enabling NCS students to bridge over to mainstream Chinese Language classes as early as possible, some stakeholders are concerned that this learning and teaching mode may lead to de facto segregation of NCS students, which is not conducive to their learning of the Chinese language.

Pull-out learning is one of the support strategies to help NCS students

¹¹ The major intensive learning and teaching modes adopted by schools in the 2015/16 school year 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	67	54	121
Split-class / group learning	36	35	71
After-school consolidation	107	67	174
Increasing Chinese Language lesson time	30	18	48
Learning Chinese across the curriculum	15	8	23
Co-teaching with 2 or more teachers / teaching assistants to provide in-class support	51	19	70

overcome their learning difficulties. Targeting at the learning problem, it enables closer teacher-student interaction to facilitate teachers' deeper understanding of the students and adoption of appropriate teaching strategies whereby students' learning motivation and language proficiency can be improved. Schools may adopt different arrangements for pull-out learning to reduce gradually the lessons for pulling-out when students make progress and eventually arrange them to learn in the original class.

(8) Coordination of the education support for NCS students

The education support for NCS students' learning of the Chinese language straddles across curriculum (i.e. the "Learning Framework"), teachers' professional development and professional support, provision of additional funding for schools, etc. To ensure targeted and appropriate support, it is not feasible to designate one single division to take up the task. Instead, the concerted effort of different divisions with relevant expertise within EDB is required to coordinate policy planning as well as devise and implement relevant measures. Starting from the 2014/15 school year, a dedicated team has also been set up in EDB to monitor schools' use of the additional funding for implementation of the "Learning Framework" to ensure optimal use of the funding by the schools concerned. The Hotline (3540 7447) has been set up and NCS students and parents are welcome to contact EDB for enquiries.

Yours sincerely,



(Ivan SO)

for Secretary for Education

Number of candidates sitting for examinations of the recognised alternative Chinese Language qualifications and number of non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students subsidised from the 2013/14 to 2015/16 school years

Examinations of Recognised Alternative Chinese Language Qualifications	Number of candidates (including NCS students) sitting for the examinations (Number of NCS students subsidised)		
	2013/14 school year	2014/15 school year	2015/16 school year
General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) Chinese	968 (900)	1 068 (995)	1 076 (1 000)
International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) Chinese	193 (48)	196 (53)	267 (91)
General Certificate in Education (GCE) Advanced Subsidiary Level (AS-Level) Chinese	198 (175)	289 (273)	301 (289)
General Certificate in Education (GCE) Advanced Level (A-Level) Chinese	145 (99)	175 (150)	179 (156)
Total	1 504 (1 222)	1 728 (1 471)	1 823 (1 536)

Number of Non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students of the
Vocational Training Council (VTC) from the 2013/14 to 2015/16 academic years

Academic Year	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16	
	New Intake	Total	New Intake	Total	New Intake	Total
Ordinary Programmes	74	138	126	188	129	226
Programmes dedicated for NCS students	763	880	838	957	714	807
Total	837	1 018	964	1 145	843	1 033

Remark: Figures include the number of NCS students of all VTC programmes (including full-time and part-time vocational and professional education programmes from post-secondary 3 up to degree levels).