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Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities

**Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 27 February 2018**

Education for children of ethnic minorities

Purpose

This paper summarizes the previous discussion on education for children of ethnic minorities ("EMs") at meetings of the Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities ("the Subcommittee") and the Panel on Education ("the Panel").

Background

2. Under the current arrangements, non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") students¹ (notably EM students), like their local counterparts, may choose to enrol in any public sector primary and secondary school through the school places allocation systems. Starting from the 2013-2014 school year, the Administration abolished the so-called "designated schools" system² as it might have given rise to certain labelling effect. Instead, all schools admitting 10 or more NCS students have been provided with an annual additional funding, depending on the number of NCS students admitted, to enhance their support for Chinese learning and teaching of NCS students. The funding model is as follows:

<u>Number of NCS students admitted by the school</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

¹ According to the Administration, for the planning of educational support measures, students whose spoken language at home is not Chinese are broadly categorized as NCS students.

² Before the 2013-2014 school year, the Administration provided an additional recurrent grant to some schools which traditionally admitted a higher proportion of NCS students to facilitate their implementation of school-based support measures to cater for their NCS students. These schools were generally referred to as "designated schools".

As at November 2016, the provisional number of schools provided with the additional enhanced funding ranging from \$800,000 to \$1,500,000 in the 2016-2017 school year is 213 (including 116 primary and 97 secondary schools).

3. The Education Bureau ("EDB") implemented the "Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework" ("Learning Framework") in primary and secondary schools from the 2014-2015 school year. The "Learning Framework" aims to help NCS students 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 master the Chinese language.

4. With effect from the 2017-2018 school year, EDB has implemented the free quality kindergarten ("KG") education policy. Under the new policy, EDB has enhanced its school-based professional support services to help KGs³ strengthen their professional capability in teaching NCS students Chinese for a smooth transition to primary education. All KGs can apply for the support services regardless of the number of NCS students admitted. Besides, a grant comparable to the recommended salary of one KG teacher is provided to KGs admitting eight or more NCS students. With the additional resources, KGs can strengthen manpower support and professional training for teachers and develop effective strategies to help NCS students learn through the Chinese medium so as to lay a foundation for studying in local primary schools.

Past discussions by members

5. The major concerns raised by members are summarized below.

Chinese language as a second language curriculum

6. Some members observed that many NCS students could communicate fluently in Chinese verbally, but had considerable difficulties in reading and writing Chinese. They considered provision of an alternative Chinese Language curriculum necessary for NCS students, especially those who did not have an early start in learning Chinese. They urged EDB to make reference to the Chinese curriculum and teaching materials used by local international schools.

³ "KGs" refer to KGs, KG-cum-child care centres and schools with KG classes. In the 2015-2016 school year, there were about 12 000 NCS students studying at K1 to K3 (including those studying at KGs run by the English Schools Foundation and other international KGs), of which about 4 900 were studying at KGs under the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme.

7. From the 2014-2015 school year, EDB provided the "Learning Framework" for NCS primary and secondary students with supporting learning and teaching materials to facilitate their effective learning of Chinese as a second language with a view to enabling them to bridge over to mainstream Chinese language classes. The Subcommittee received views from deputations on, among other issues, the "Learning Framework" at its meeting on 12 December 2016. Members shared the deputations' views that to help NCS students learn the Chinese language more effectively, the Administration should develop a more comprehensive "Learning Chinese as a second language curriculum" with standard teaching materials, guidelines and assessment tools. A motion (see **Appendix I**) for this purpose was passed by the Subcommittee.

8. The Administration advised that EDB had produced a series of Chinese as a Second Language Learning Packages in the form of textbooks, which covered the primary and secondary curricula. The packages were already delivered to schools and students. Schools could either use the complete set of textbooks or adapt them into school-based learning materials to meet the school-based situation. At the Panel meeting on 12 June 2017, the Administration further informed members that additional resources such as the "Chinese Language Assessment Tools" and teaching reference materials, including the series on picture book reading, writing, Chinese festivals, etc., had been uploaded onto EDB's webpage and would be constantly updated.

9. Some members suggested that the Administration should explore ways to boost the enrolment rate of teachers for the in-service training programmes on teaching Chinese language as a second language. The Administration advised that EDB would continue to organize diversified and progressively advanced professional development programmes for teachers. 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 the continual professional development of serving Chinese Language teachers in teaching the Chinese Language to NCS students.

Admission to kindergartens

10. Members considered that NCS students' early start in learning the Chinese language in KGs with an immersed Chinese language environment would facilitate their learning of the Chinese language. In particular, members were gravely concerned that EM parents had reflected that individual KGs had turned down their applications for admitting their children presumably on the grounds of their race or language. The Administration advised that it would be in breach of the law for KGs to do so. EM parents were encouraged to report any such cases to EDB, which would seriously take it up with the KGs concerned. According to the Administration, KGs were advised to provide

assistance to NCS students/parents (such as arranging interpretation services) as far as possible to ensure that their school-based admission mechanism would be fair, just and open. EDB undertook that it would continue to organize, in collaboration with the Equal Opportunities Commission, briefing sessions for KGs on the Race Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 602) and important points to note in admission. Members requested the Administration to put in place monitoring measures to ensure compliance of relevant circulars and guidelines on KG admission arrangements issued by EDB.

11. The Administration advised that with the implementation of the free quality KG education policy with effect from the 2017-2018 school year, participating KGs were required to provide information on their admission arrangements (including admission guidelines and application forms) in bilingual version. The Administration would consider providing additional guidelines to KGs regarding the admission procedures.

Admission to primary and secondary schools

12. The number of NCS students studying in public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools in 2016-2017 school year is about 18 200 (including 9 200 in primary schools and 9 000 in secondary schools). Starting from the 2015-2016 school year, EDB has distributed the English version of the School Profiles to each NCS student to help NCS parents grasp the basic information of all public schools to facilitate their understanding of the types of student support, learning and teaching plans, etc.

13. Some members expressed concern that the Administration had not provided adequate information to assist EM parents in their choice of schools under the Primary One Admission ("POA") System. To prevent over-concentration of NCS students in the former "designated schools", some members suggested setting a certain ratio of NCS students to Chinese speaking students in each school. The Administration considered it not pragmatic to set a ratio of NCS students to Chinese speaking students, as parents of NCS students might take into account various factors (e.g. the location of the schools) in choosing schools for their children. Nonetheless, EDB had strongly appealed to parents of NCS students for sending their children to schools with an immersed Chinese language environment to facilitate their mastery of the Chinese language. NCS children joining POA could indicate in the application form that "they cannot use Chinese as the learning medium" and in turn they would be 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 had revised the Notes to Parents to appeal to parents of NCS students to take into account the aspirations and needs of their children when making school choices and send

their children to schools with an immersed Chinese language environment to facilitate their learning of the Chinese language. The Notes were translated into major EM languages for reference by parents of NCS students.

14. Some members suggested that the Administration should further assist parents of NCS students to learn more about the mainstream schools such as by enriching the contents of the School Profiles. The Administration advised that dedicated phone numbers for enquiries on admission to Primary One under POA and a designated webpage on support services for NCS students had been set up. Besides, dedicated briefing sessions with simultaneous interpretation services were conducted for parents of NCS students in the course of POA every year. EDB would also require schools provided with the additional funding to include in their annual school reports how their school-based support measures were disseminated to stakeholders. Parents of NCS students were encouraged to join the on-site school visits organized 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.

15. The Administration advised that EDB had repeatedly reminded schools to communicate with NCS parents in a proactive manner, including making available schools circulars in English. The commonly-used circulars had been translated into English and were available online for schools' reference. Besides, schools might deploy the additional funding provided for supporting NCS students and other resources available for employing EM assistants or procuring translation services as necessary.

Recognized alternative Chinese Language qualifications and Vocational Training Council courses

16. Some members expressed grave concern that NCS students would be placed in a disadvantaged position when taking the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Examination ("HKDSE") Examination alongside their local counterparts. The Administration explained that NCS students could sit for internationally recognized Chinese Language examinations, such as the General Certificate of Secondary Education and the International General Certificate of Secondary Education. Some members were concerned that the level of the General Certificate of Secondary Examination ("GCSE") (Chinese) was so low as similar to primary two level of the local Chinese curriculum. The Administration explained that the purpose of the alternative Chinese language examinations such as GCSE was to help NCS students meet the general entrance requirements for admission to University Grants Committee-funded institutions by acquiring the necessary Chinese language qualifications which would better tie in with their language abilities.

17. Members also sought further information on the recognition of the attainment in the Applied Learning Chinese (for NCS Students) ("ApL(C)") subject⁴ which was introduced by EDB in phases at senior secondary levels starting from the 2014-2015 school year. The Administration advised that the introduction of the ApL(C) subject would enable NCS students to obtain an alternative qualification in Chinese for further studies and/or employment. According to the Administration, in addition to the HKDSE qualification, ApL(C) courses were also pegged at Levels 1 to 3 of the Qualifications Framework. Post-secondary institutions had accepted "Attained" in ApL(C) as an alternative Chinese qualification for NCS students in meeting the basic admission requirements. For employment purpose, the Civil Service Bureau accepted "Attained" and "Attained with Distinction" in ApL(C) as meeting the Chinese language proficiency requirements of relevant civil service ranks.

18. In response to the enquiries of some members on the support services provided by Vocational Training Council ("VTC") to NCS students, the Administration advised that NCS students of VTC's pre-employment programmes enjoyed various support services which aimed to help them cope better with study and adapt to campus life. These services included 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.

Latest development

19. The Subcommittee will further discuss education for EM children at the next meeting on 27 February 2018.

Relevant papers

20. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in the **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
22 February 2018

⁴ There were about 180 senior secondary students taking ApL(C) in both the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years.

少數族裔權益事宜小組委員會

在2016年12月12日會議上就議程第I項

"少數族裔兒童的教育——'中文作為第二語言'課程的推行進展、少數族裔學生的入學情況，以及為該等學生和取錄該等學生的學校提供的支援措施"通過的議案

"本小組委員會促請政府當局，就'中國語文課程第二語言學習架構'制定客觀清晰的衡工量值指標，以監察其成效並提供改善方案。局方亦應為老師提供更多統一而合適的'學習架構'教材及指引，從而減輕老師不必要的行政負擔，專注做好課堂上的教與學。另外，教育局應收集及公開各中小學的非華語學生數據，以便學者、非政府組織及平機會等作跟進研究，確保局方倡議的融合教育得以有效落實，真正惠及非華語學生。"

動議人：毛孟靜議員

(Translation)

Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Motion passed under agenda item I

"Education for children of ethnic minorities – implementation progress of the 'Chinese language as the second language' curriculum, placement of ethnic minority students and support measures to these students and to schools admitting them" at the meeting on 12 December 2016

"This Subcommittee urges the Administration to formulate a set of clear and objective value-for-money indicators for the 'Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework' in order to monitor its effectiveness and provide improvement plans. In respect of the 'Learning Framework', the Education Bureau ("EDB") should also provide teachers with more unified and suitable teaching materials and guidelines to alleviate the unnecessary administrative burden on teachers, thereby allowing them to focus on bettering teaching and learning in class. Besides, EDB should collect and make public the data relating to non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") students in various primary and secondary schools to facilitate follow-up studies by academics, non-governmental organizations, the Equal Opportunities Commission, etc., so as to ensure that the approach of integrated education as advocated by EDB can be effectively implemented for the real benefit of NCS students."

Moved by : Hon Claudia MO

**Relevant papers on
Education for children of ethnic minorities**

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Education	12.11.2012 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	14.11.2012	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 98 –103 (Written question)
Panel on Education	9.7.2013 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	19.3.2014	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 118 –125 (Written question)
Panel on Education	14.4.2014 (Item VI)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	30.4.2014	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 13 –19 (Written question)
	9.7.2014	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 182 –191 (Written question)
Panel on Education	16.7.2014 (Item VI)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	26.11.2014	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 84 –91 (Written question)
	28.1.2015	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 79 –86 (Written question)
Panel on Education	8.6.2015 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	24.6.2015	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 124 –131 (Written question)

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Subcommittee on Poverty	17.11.2015 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	2.12.2015	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 107 –115 (Written question)
	9.12.2015	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 81 – 82 (Written question)
	16.12.2015	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 141 –145 (Written question)
Subcommittee on Poverty	15.3.2016 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	18.5.2016	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 170 –173 (Written question)
	13.7.2016	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 138 –140 (Written question)
Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities	23.11.2016 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	30.11.2016	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 90 –95 (Written question)
Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities	12.12.2016 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	29.3.2017	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 143 –152 (Written question)