

For discussion  
on 4 June 2021

**Legislative Council Panel on Education**  
**Professional Support Provided to Ordinary Schools**  
**for Implementing Integrated Education**

**Purpose**

This paper aims to brief Members on the progress of various support measures that the Education Bureau (EDB) provided to public sector ordinary schools for the implementation of integrated education (IE) to cater for students with special educational needs (SEN).

**Background**

2. Attaching great importance to IE, the Government, has all along been encouraging schools to adopt the Whole School Approach (WSA) in accordance with five basic principles, namely early identification, early intervention, WSA, home-school co-operation and cross-sector collaboration, to cater for students with SEN. To strengthen ordinary schools' support for students with SEN, the EDB adopts diversified modes, including providing public sector ordinary schools with additional resources, professional support and teacher training, promoting collaboration amongst schools, working in collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), etc. We also review the implementation of relevant measures on an on-going basis and enhance the support strategies and measures in a timely manner. With the advocacy and drive from the EDB, coupled with years of hard work and continuous practices in the education sector, schools have accumulated a considerable experience and achievements in the implementation of IE.

3. Under the IE policy, the SEN of students in ordinary schools are mainly categorised into nine types, including specific learning difficulties (SpLD), intellectual disability (ID), autism spectrum disorders (ASD), attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD), physical disability (PD), visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI), speech and language impairment (SLI) and mental illness (MI). With the increasing awareness of SEN amongst schools and parents, and the continuous improvement in the identification mechanism, the number of students with SEN

identified has been on the rise over the years. In the 2020/21 school year, there are around 56 640 students with SEN in public sector ordinary schools. The number of students by SEN types is as follows:

	SpLD	ID	ASD	AD/ HD	PD	VI	HI	SLI	MI
Primary school	11 220	930	6 880	6 030	130	40	380	2 910	130
Secondary school	12 010	780	4 990	8 550	140	60	270	530	660

4. The EDB provide schools and teachers with various modes of professional support to enable them to gain a deeper understanding of the students’ SEN and grasp effective support strategies. Schools are required to adopt the “intervention before assessment” principle and the “3-tier Intervention Model” to support students with SEN. In a nutshell, tier-1 support refers to early identification and catering for the diverse learning and adjustment needs of all students, including those with mild or transient learning or adjustment difficulties through quality teaching in regular classrooms; tier-2 support refers to additional support/ “add on” intervention, such as small group tutoring, after-school remedial programmes and pull-out remedial programmes for students with persistent learning or adjustment difficulties; and tier-3 support refers to individualised intensive support for students with persistent and severe learning or adjustment difficulties, including drawing up of Individual Education Plans (IEPs). In the 2020/21 school year, after the EDB has reviewed the types of SEN and the tier of support required for students submitted by schools in the middle of the school year, the numbers of students with SEN requiring tier-2 and tier-3 support in the public sector ordinary schools are as follows:

	Tier-2 support	Tier-3 support	Total
Primary school	28 609	2 252	30 861
Secondary school	23 033	1 671	24 704
Total	51 642	3 923	55 565

In response to different types of students with SEN, the EDB has developed evidence-based support programmes and services to help schools provide targeted support to students. At the same time, we provide schools with additional manpower and resources, and strengthen teacher training. Through the synergy of professional support and additional resources, we strengthen the support in accordance with the different needs of different students. Details are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

## **Targeted support provided for students with different SEN**

### SpLD

5. The most common type of SpLD is found in reading and writing, which is also known as dyslexia. Students with SpLD in reading and writing display persistent difficulties in reading, spelling and dictating words, despite having normal intelligence. Their problems are worsened as the demand for reading and writing in learning various subjects increases in higher grades. Some of them may become reluctant to learn owing to repeated failures. The EDB has been collaborating with schools and universities to devise appropriate assessment tools to identify these students and develop suitable teaching and learning resources.

6. Under the READ & WRITE: A Jockey Club Learning Support Network (READ & WRITE) launched through cross-sector collaboration involving the EDB, universities, NGOs and schools, a series of evidence-based teaching strategies and resources have been disseminated to primary and secondary schools for helping students with SpLD. The outcomes of this project have taken root in schools and many of them have devised school-based programmes to support the students concerned. Furthermore, the EDB continues to provide professional support for schools to enhance their support services for students with SpLD. For lower primary students with SpLD, we provide on-site support to facilitate integration of the READ & WRITE resources with the school-based curriculum to enhance tier-1 classroom teaching and devise tier-2 small group teaching. For upper primary and secondary school students, we develop support resources on reading and writing, invite schools to try out and refine them for sharing with other schools, and then upload the resources onto the EDB website. The EDB also organises annual workshops and sharing sessions for teachers to disseminate effective strategies for helping students with SpLD. We also arrange regional parent workshops and provide resources for schools to conduct training programmes for parent, with a view to facilitating parents to collaborate with schools in providing early support for their children with SpLD.

### ID

7. The intellectual development of students with ID is significantly delayed in comparison with typically developing students of the same age. They have notable difficulties in thinking, memory, attention, language abilities, sensory motor skills, temporal and spatial organisation, and adaptive skills in daily life. They mostly attend special schools to receive intensive support whereas some with relatively higher abilities may enrol in ordinary schools.

8. Students with ID attending ordinary schools usually encounter significant difficulties in academic learning, communication, and social and life adaptation. In this connection, the EDB requires ordinary schools to provide them with tier-3 support viz implementation of IEPs<sup>1</sup>. In order to help schools design and implement IEPs, the EDB published the Operation Manual on Individual Education Plans (Primary School Version) and Operation Manual on Individual Education Plans (Secondary School Version) in 2019 and 2020 respectively, setting out the major support strategies, arrangements, and good practices in supporting students with ID, together with a resource guide. In addition, the EDB organises thematic professional development activities for teachers with a view to helping them master the key to supporting students with ID.

9. Besides, should students with ID studying in ordinary schools have severe adjustment difficulties, they may, upon parental consent, attend the short-term attachment programme provided by Special Schools cum Resource Centres (SSRC). On one hand, while the programme allows students to experience schooling in a special school, it lets parents consider if it would be more appropriate for their children to study in a special school. On the other hand, the programme provides teachers of the students' original schools with training and consultation to enhance their professional capacity in catering for students with ID. This enables the teachers to support the returning students more effectively upon their completion of the short-term attachment programme.

### ASD

10. ASD is a developmental disorder caused by malfunctioning of the brain. Students with ASD display impairments in interpersonal relationship and social communication in their daily lives, and behavioural rigidity. Research has shown that the communication, social, emotion management and problem solving skills and abilities of students with ASD can be improved with systematic training underpinned by evidence-based strategies. This also promotes their learning and social adaptation for smooth integration into school, family and community.

11. The EDB implemented the 'Whole School Approach to Providing Tiered Support for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders' Pilot Project (Tiered ASD Project) from the 2011/12 to 2018/19 school years, systematically trying out evidence-driven support model and strategies

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<sup>1</sup> In designing IEPs, schools will consider the views of professional staff (e.g. school-based educational psychologist and school-based speech therapist) to formulate appropriate learning targets (e.g. in respect of academic studies, classroom behaviour, social communication, behaviour and emotion management, and self-esteem), corresponding instructional strategies and support measures, and success criteria. Students' progress and the effectiveness of the plans will be reviewed with parents regularly so that timely adjustment to the plans can be made, where appropriate, thus providing positive learning experience for the students and boosting their progress.

by phases from lower primary to senior secondary levels. The strategies in the Tiered ASD Project include: creation of ASD-friendly classroom (tier-1 support), arrangement of small group training on social adaptive skills after lesson (tier-2 support), and one-on-one intensive training (tier-3 support) for students with relatively marked adjustment difficulties. The practices were consolidated into three support manuals (with instructional resource packages and CD-ROMs) appropriate for primary, junior secondary and senior secondary levels. These manuals were distributed to all primary and secondary schools in the territory in 2015, 2018 and 2021 respectively. Premised on the effectiveness of the Pilot Project, the EDB has deployed additional resources with effect from the 2020/21 school year to provide school-based support to primary and secondary schools by phases to implement the Tiered ASD Project. A support team led by educational psychologists (EPs) of the EDB provides on-site practice-based coaching and arranges situated learning for teachers. Through the provision of consultation, case discussion, lesson observation and feedback, workshops and inter-school network sharing, the confidence, skills and abilities of the school personnel in implementing the ASD support strategies are enhanced. We envisage that by the 2023/24 school year, about 400 ordinary schools, which have clustered 70% of students with ASD, would have completed the Project.

12. The above-mentioned Tiered ASD Project also includes tier-2 support, which adopts a ‘Non-governmental Organisation and School Collaboration’ approach, using school-based small group training on social adaptive skills to help improve the abilities of the students with ASD to perform social communication, emotional regulation and learning adaptation. In the course of observing the professional staff from the NGO demonstrating the effective support measures, the professional competence of the school personnel is enhanced. The related services include provision of emotional support and skills training for parents through consultation and workshops to reduce their stress as caregivers. About 530 primary and secondary schools will receive this kind of support in the 2021/22 school year.

### AD/HD

13. Students with AD/HD have deficits in their executive function<sup>2</sup>, leading to difficulties in classroom learning, social interactions, observation of rules, etc. These students need various modes of support, mainly medical and psycho-educational support, in connection with the use of appropriate teaching strategies and accommodations. Under the 3-tier Intervention Model, schools should start with quality classroom teaching (tier-1 support) and strengthening of executive skills

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<sup>2</sup> Executive function is mainly responsible for controlling behaviours and thoughts, and planning and executing a series of actions.

(tier-2 support). Some students may also need individual training and coaching (tier-3 support). The EDB has published the “Development of Executive Skills” resource package to facilitate primary schools’ arrangement of tier-2 support, and the “Enhancement of Executive Skills: A Classroom-based Approach” resource package to help them enhance tier-1 support. For secondary schools, the EDB has published the “Coaching Programme on Executive Skills” to help schools understand the ways to set goals and conduct self-reflection with students through tier-3 individual coaching. The EDB regularly conducts workshops and seminars to enable teachers to use the above resources effectively in supporting students with AD/HD.

14. To support parents, the EDB has published the “Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder: Parent Education Series” resource leaflet for parents of primary and secondary school students to introduce the treatment and support strategies for nurturing their children with AD/HD appropriately. In recent years, the EDB has conducted workshops for parents of primary school students in different districts to equip them with the basic support strategies. After compiling the workshop materials, we will provide resources for school-based EPs to conduct school-based parent workshops. We will continue to develop related teaching resources for reference by schools and parents.

## PD

15. Owing to their physical impairment, students with PD may have restrictions in their daily activities. Their learning ability may also be affected. In general, students with PD enrolled in ordinary schools have relatively mild disability and problems. With appropriate support, they can adapt to daily life and the learning environment, and engage in various learning activities to enrich their learning experience and realise their potential.

16. Teachers provide appropriate support to students with PD through the 3-tier Intervention Model based on real life situations and their needs. If necessary, schools may apply for the Top-up Fund from the EDB for procuring special furniture and equipment or carrying out minor conversion works for students with disabilities, such as construction of ramps, conversion of toilets, or purchase of tailor-made desks and chairs. The professional officers of the EDB conduct regular visits to schools to advise on the support measures. When necessary, ordinary schools may also consult the schools for children with PD on how to cater for the needs of these students. On top of the above, teachers may collaborate with other professionals such as school-based EP, school-based speech therapist (SBST) and school social worker to provide support and counselling for students with PD who exhibit difficulties in learning, emotion or adjustments.

## VI

17. For students with VI studying in ordinary schools, teachers will provide them with appropriate support under the 3-tier Intervention Model according to their real situation and needs. If necessary, schools can apply for the Top-up Fund from the EDB to procure suitable assistive aids for students with VI according to the recommendations of the professionals, e.g. closed-circuit television magnifiers and Braille displays, to promote their learning.

18. Moreover, the EDB implements the “Resource Support Programme for Visually Impaired Students” through providing additional resources to the school for children with VI to employ resource teachers (RTs) and braillists to offer support services for the students with VI in ordinary schools. The school for children with VI arranges RTs to visit schools regularly to follow up on the students’ learning and provide them with various services, such as individual counselling, rehabilitation training, use of assistive equipment for learning and braille transcription of learning materials. The RTs also offer professional advice to teachers on support strategies, teaching adaptation, special examination arrangements, etc., in order to enhance the support for students with VI.

## HI

19. HI can be caused by congenital or acquired factors. It is classified into five degrees: mild, moderate, moderately-severe, severe and profound. Children with HI may encounter difficulties in the development of speech and language, communication, learning, psychosocial ability, etc. The professional officers of the EDB visit schools to render school-based support and advice with a view to addressing the needs of students with HI in five aspects, including auditory, communication, learning, psychosocial and use of hearing devices. They also introduce related resources, recommend appropriate support strategies, and assist schools to implement school-based support programmes to facilitate students’ integration into school life. Depending on the needs of individual students with HI, schools may apply for the Top-up Fund to procure the wireless transmission system for them in order to enhance their listening and communication effectiveness. Furthermore, starting from April 2019, instead of outsourcing the hearing aid fitting services, the EDB has deployed educational audiologists to provide the services free of charge for students with HI direct if needed. They also give professional advice and guidance to parents so that they can help their children with HI use the hearing aids effectively, and promote their children’s learning effectiveness and adaptation.

20. Subject to parental consent and the assessment of the EDB, if students with HI in ordinary schools display persistent difficulties in adaptation, learning or communication after provision of school-based support, they will be arranged to receive the “Enhanced Support Service for Students with Hearing Impairment” (ESS) provided by the school for children with HI. Under ESS, the experienced RTs provide guidance to students with HI and share experience and teaching strategies with their teachers in ordinary schools through case conferences, workshops, seminars, class observation, etc. so as to enhance the students’ speech, language, communication and social skills and increase the effectiveness in learning and communication for better adaptation to school life. The RTs also equip parents with the required knowledge, skills and strategies in supporting their children with HI more effectively. The EDB has also developed various resource packages, information leaflets and guidelines to provide teachers and parents with knowledge, strategies and skills in supporting students or children with HI.

### SLI

21. Oral language is a tool for communication and learning. It is also the foundation for reading and writing. Students with SLI, owing to the difficulties in language abilities, articulation accuracy, fluency in speech and/or use of voice, the development of their communication, social and learning abilities is affected. With early identification and timely support, their speech, language and communication abilities can be enhanced, and they can learn more effectively and develop social skills.

22. The EDB has provided public sector ordinary schools with additional resources to allow schools to arrange School-based Speech Therapy Service (SBSTS) for students with SLI. The public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools have utilised the Enhanced Speech Therapy Grant (ESTG) or the Learning Support Grant (LSG) to procure SBSTS or form school clusters to employ SBSTs. As observed, SBSTs employed by school clusters have provided longer service time and the SBSTS arranged was more comprehensive, diversified and intensive. Hence, to provide more curriculum and learning related individual and group therapy for students with SLI, we have implemented the Enhanced SBSTS by creating SBST posts in schools from the 2019/20 school year. Under the Enhanced SBSTS, SBSTs have more capacity to collaborate with teachers and school professionals, incorporating the elements of speech therapy into learning and teaching and school activities, so that students could have more opportunities to apply relevant language skills. Specialists (Speech Therapy Services) of the EDB visit schools regularly to advise on the implementation of SBSTS and the professional performance of SBSTs. The EDB organises thematic talks, workshops, sharing sessions, etc. every year, to assist SBSTs in developing and



implementing SBSTS for schools. We have also been developing resources on various themes for application and reference of SBSTs, teachers, school professionals and parents.

## MI

23. Students with MI display various problems which may be manifested in mental condition, thinking, social interaction, emotion and behaviour. We should provide different levels of support in accordance with the condition and needs exhibited in individual students. The EDB has been encouraging schools to adopt the WSA directed at three levels, namely Universal, Selective and Indicated to promote mental health amongst students and enhance support for students with mental health needs. To cater for students who have been diagnosed with MI and those who have been identified as having mental health problems, the EDB urges public sector schools to enhance the collaboration between the guidance team and the student support team (SST) so that they could jointly decide the tier of support and strategies for the students concerned. The LSG has also been provided to schools so that they could use the additional resources to strengthen their support for these students in the learning, social, emotional and behavioural aspects. Schools can use these resources to organise school-based training, such as gatekeeper training for teachers, parents and students to raise their awareness of mental health/ MI and equip them with the skills to identify and respond to students who require additional support.

24. In addition, the Food and Health Bureau, in collaboration with the EDB, the Hospital Authority (HA) and the Social Welfare Department (SWD), has launched the “Student Mental Health Support Scheme” since the 2016/17 school year. In each participating school, the core members (including school coordinator, school social worker and psychiatric nurse) will establish a multi-disciplinary platform, in collaboration with school-based EP, social worker from respective social service unit, psychiatric team of HA, parents etc., to provide appropriate support services for students with mental health needs. It is expected that the number of schools participating in this Scheme will increase from the current 150 to about 210 schools in the 2021/22 school year.

25. The EDB has provided public sector schools with the “Professional Development Programme for Mental Health”, which includes 3-day elementary training for teachers at large and 5-day in-depth training for designated teachers, with a view to raising their awareness of mental health and enhancing their professional knowledge and skills in identifying and supporting students with mental health needs. Up to the 2019/20 school year, about 730 teachers have completed the elementary training and about 640 designated teachers have completed the in-depth training. Besides, the EDB organises related talks, seminars and sharing sessions for teachers

every school year. The EDB has also published different resources for reference of teachers and school personnel.

### **Additional manpower and resources**

26. In the 2018/19 school year and before, the additional resources provided by the EDB to schools were mainly the LSG<sup>3</sup>, the Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme (IRTP)<sup>4</sup> and the IE Programme<sup>5</sup>. In the 2018/19 school year, out of 845 public sector ordinary schools, there were 217 primary schools and 381 secondary schools adopting the LSG. The remaining 239 primary schools<sup>6</sup> implemented the IRTP/ IE Programme, and 8 secondary schools implemented the IE Programme. Schools adopting the LSG had the cash grant calculated according to the number of students with SEN (including the number of academically low achievers in primary schools) and the tier of support they required, to employ contract teachers and/or teaching assistants and procure professional services for supporting students with SEN. We have reviewed the implementation of those measures and collected feedback from schools. It is considered that the utilisation of LSG by schools to employ contract teachers lacked stability, which impacted on the continuity of support measures and the transfer of knowledge, skills and experiences amongst teachers. While the IRTP or IE programme provided schools with additional teachers, there was a lack of flexibility in the use of cash grant, and schools had difficulty in arranging more diversified support services.

### Enhanced measures on IE

27. The EDB consulted with the education sector, conduct internal review, drew on the strength of the LSG, the IRTP and the IE Programme and reviewed the need of schools in supporting students. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, a series of enhanced measures on IE have been implemented, allowing schools to have a stable teaching force, resources that can be deployed flexibly and enhanced professional support to better support schools on the

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<sup>3</sup> The LSG was calculated based on the number of students with SEN (including academically low achievers in primary schools) enrolled at the school and the tier of support they required and there was a ceiling.

<sup>4</sup> The target students of the IRTP were academically low achievers, students with SpLD and those with ID. Schools were provided with one to three additional regular teaching post(s) and a recurrent grant in accordance with the number of such students.

<sup>5</sup> Schools participating in the IE programme, an additional regular teaching post would be provided if a school admitted five or more students with ID, HI, VI, PD or ASD; and one additional learning support assistant would be provided if a school admitted eight or more target students.

<sup>6</sup> Amongst them, 99 primary schools adopted the mixed mode of operating one IRTP while receiving the LSG (including migration mode, i.e. adopting the mixed mode and taking a grace period of a maximum of six school years to fully adopting the LSG). For primary schools adopting the mixed mode and migration mode, the ceilings of the LSG were capped at \$350,000 and \$600,000 per school per annum respectively.

implementation of IE. The enhanced measures include: the enhanced LSG; upgrading the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) post to promotion rank for public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools with a comparatively large number of students with SEN; extending the Enhanced School-based Educational Psychology Service (SBEPS); implementing the Enhanced SBSTS; and the provision of support grant for non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) Students with SEN. Various enhancement measures are being implemented as planned. Details are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

### LSG

28. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, the LSG has been extended to all public sector schools, replacing the IRTP and IE Programme. The LSG unit grant rate for tier-3 support has increased significantly to four times the rate for tier-2 support. Schools have additional regular teaching post(s) converted/ provided on account of LSG reaching the threshold(s) and the remaining amount of LSG would still be allocated in the form of cash grant<sup>7</sup>. Those teaching posts are titled Special Educational Needs Support Teacher (SENST). In other words, on the one hand, schools can employ regular teachers to provide stable support services, and at the same time receive the cash grant to procure other professional services, teaching resources or equipment. At present, all public sector ordinary schools can flexibly deploy the LSG, and are provided with one to three additional regular teaching posts of SENST(s) in accordance with the LSG provision. In this regard, in the 2020/21 school year, the EDB has provided a total number of 1 140 SENST teaching posts to 844 public sector ordinary schools (including 389 secondary schools and 455 primary schools). Schools need to arrange SENST(s) to serve as member(s) of the SST, work closely with SENCO, and support students with SEN through diversified modes (such as collaborative teaching, in-class support, and small group teaching). Schools also need to flexibly

<sup>7</sup> In the 2019/20 school year, the tier-2 unit grant rate is \$15,000 and the tier-3 unit grant rate is \$60,000. The arrangements for additional teaching post(s) converted/ provided are as follows:

Total amount of LSG	Additional teaching post converted	Additional teaching post(s) provided
Below threshold 1	Nil	Nil
Reaching threshold 1 but below threshold 2	1 post	Nil
Reaching threshold 2 but below threshold 3	1 post	1 post
Reaching threshold 3	1 post	2 posts

After converting the additional post, schools keep the remaining LSG. In the 2019/20 school year, the specific amounts for thresholds 1, 2 and 3 are \$600,000, \$1,600,000 and \$2,200,000 respectively, which will be adjusted annually according to the change in the Composite Consumer Price Index.

utilise the LSG to procure professional services or increase manpower (such as teaching assistants) to cater for students with SEN.

### *SENCO*

29. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, all public sector ordinary schools have been provided with SENCO to assist the school principal and vice-principal(s) specifically to implement the WSA to IE. From the 2019/20 school year onwards, the SENCO posts in public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools with a comparatively large number of students with SEN<sup>8</sup> have been upgraded to promotion rank<sup>9</sup> to enhance their professional capacity in leading the SSTs in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of schools' IE policies and support measures. In the 2020/21 school year, over 80% of the SENCO posts in public sector ordinary schools have been upgraded to a promotion rank. The EDB organises the "Professional Development Programme for Special Educational Needs Coordinators", which lasts approximately 120 hours, for new-to-role SENCOs, and also arranges professional development activities for SENCOs regularly, such as networking activities and sharing sessions, to promote professional exchanges. According to our observation and understanding, SENCOs are generally able to lead the SSTs to arrange appropriate support for students strategically, enhance the collaboration with other subject panels in various aspects, further promote home-school cooperation and cultivate an inclusive school culture.

### *SBEPS*

30. Starting from the 2016/17 school year, the EDB has provided SBEPS to all public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools. Through regular school visits, school-based EPs provide support at the school system, teacher support and student support levels in order to strengthen schools' capacity in catering for students' diverse educational needs, and appropriately cover developmental, preventive and remedial work based on the development needs of schools. For example, at the school system level, professional advice on the planning and review of school-based support services based on the needs of schools is provided. At the teacher support level, professional advice to teachers and school personnel to facilitate the design and implementation of IEP for students requiring intensive individualised support is rendered. At the student support level, psycho-educational assessment for students is provided; or intervention for students is

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<sup>8</sup> That is the total amount of the LSG of a school reaching threshold 1.

<sup>9</sup> That is Senior Graduate Master/ Mistress in secondary schools or Primary School Master/ Mistress in primary schools.

devised in collaboration with the school personnel (such as teachers, student guidance personnel, school social workers).

31. Starting from the 2016/17 school year, the EDB has implemented the Enhanced SBEPs, by progressively enhancing the ratio of EPs to schools from 1:7 - 1:10 to 1:4 at schools admitting a comparatively large number of students with SEN, to strengthen the support to schools with more days of visit paid by the school-based EPs. In the 2020/21 school year, about 25% of public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools have been provided with the Enhanced SBEPs, while the ratio of EPs to schools for the remaining schools is about 1:7 to 1:8. Depending on the supply and demand of EPs, we expect that in the 2023/24 school year, about 60% of the public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools will be provided with the Enhanced SBEPs, while the related ratio of the remaining 40% of schools will be enhanced to 1:6.

#### *Enhanced SBSTs*

32. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, the EDB implements the Enhanced SBSTs by creating SBST posts in the public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools by phases. This allows schools to form school clusters to employ SBSTs so that more stable, sustainable, diversified and intensive SBSTs could be provided to develop the speech, language and communication abilities of students with SLI and those with other SEN. In the 2020/21 school year, the EDB has created 200 SBST posts in 377 public sector ordinary schools. In the 2021/22 school year, the EDB will further create around 80 SBST posts in 170 more public sector ordinary schools. For public sector ordinary schools that have not yet implemented the Enhanced SBSTs, the EDB will continue to provide them with additional grants to arrange SBSTs for their students in need.

#### *Grant for Supporting NCS Students with SEN*

33. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, the EDB has provided the public sector ordinary schools with the Grant for Supporting Non-Chinese Speaking Students with SEN. In the 2020/21 school year, 281 public sector ordinary schools have been provided with the NCS-SEN Grant. Schools utilise the grant to employ teaching assistants, purchase translation services, procure social and emotional management training services, implement inclusive programmes, etc., so as to strengthen the support for NCS students with SEN, enabling them to adapt to school life and transit to different stages of learning smoothly.

### *Transition at different stages*

34. If relevant information of students with SEN (such as SEN type and support arrangements, etc.) can be transferred in a timely manner to the schools that they will be attending, it will facilitate the schools' early understanding of their learning needs and arrangement of support services, thus continuing or deepening the support for them and increasing the effectiveness. As such, the EDB all along has set up mechanisms to assist schools in transferring the SEN information of students at different stages, including from kindergarten to primary schooling, primary to secondary schooling, transfer amongst primary or secondary schools, and from secondary schooling to post-secondary education.

35. To further enhance the effectiveness of the transfer of SEN information from pre-school to primary schooling, starting from the 2017/18 school year, the EDB and the SWD, together with the Department of Health (DH) and the HA have strengthened collaboration. With the assistance of the EDB and the consent of the parents, the Child Assessment Centres under the DH and the HA will send the assessment information of pre-school centres/ kindergartens of the children with special needs to the primary schools that they are going to attend. The pre-school rehabilitation service units subvented by the SWD will also submit the progress report of these children to the primary schools concerned. Schools will scrutinise the assessment information and progress reports of the students, contact parents about their recent development and behavioural performance and provide appropriate support according to their needs. Schools will inform parents of related arrangements in order to get them involved. Apart from this, the EDB has been implementing the 'Early Identification and Intervention Programme for Primary One Students with Learning Difficulties' in all public sector primary schools to help them establish an identification mechanism. Identification tools and supplementary teaching materials are also provided to schools to ensure Primary One students with learning difficulties are identified and supported at an early stage. The EDB staff pay regular visits to schools to understand the planning and implementation of support measures and offer professional advice.

### **Professional development of teachers**

36. Teacher's professional capacity is of vital importance to the effective implementation of IE and support for students with SEN. Currently, the EDB provides serving teachers with Basic, Advanced and Thematic Courses (BAT Courses) on supporting students with SEN, and training targets are set. Schools are required to arrange teachers to attend the BAT Courses in a systematic manner for enhancing the effectiveness in the implementation of IE in schools.

## **The way forward**

37. In terms of professional support, we will strengthen teacher training. After reviewing the progress of teacher training and having consulted different stakeholders, starting from the 2021/22 school year, each of the public sector schools is required to have 80% to 100% of teachers completed the Basic Course; 20% completed the Advanced Course; and 25% completed the Thematic Courses in six years. Online Basic Course will be conducted to allow teachers to study flexibly. The training places for both Advanced and Thematic Courses will also be increased so that schools could arrange more teachers to receive structured training in special education with a view to enhancing their professional capacity in catering for students with SEN.

38. Moreover, professional officers of the EDB will visit schools regularly to advise on various issues relating to IE. We will continue to conduct professional development activities for SENCOs, SENSTs, school-based EPs and SBSTs on a regular basis to share good practices and enhance their professional capacity in various aspects, such as promotion of IE, resource management and deployment, and learning and teaching strategies. We will also develop diversified teaching resources and support programmes specific to various SEN through cross-sector collaboration so that schools and teachers can deepen their understanding of students' SEN and grasp evidence-based support strategies, thus providing students with appropriate support services and enhancing their learning effectiveness.

39. In light of the importance of early identification in supporting students with SEN, we will continue to monitor the transfer of SEN information from pre-primary to primary schooling and from primary to secondary schooling to ensure the effectiveness of support for students with SEN at different learning stages. In addition, we are proactively establishing the SEN information transfer mechanism between secondary schools and post-secondary institutions to ensure that students with SEN in post-secondary institution can receive on-going support as appropriate.

40. Home-school cooperation is one of the basic principles advocated by the EDB in promoting IE. We will continue to encourage schools to enhance home-school communication and cooperation through setting up systematic and regular communication mechanisms. The EDB will release information on special education support to parents in a timely manner to strengthen their support roles and knowledge. Along with the above initiatives, the EDB will launch a new "Integrated Education and Special Education Information Website" in late 2021. Parents, schools and the public can obtain SEN information more easily online and know more about schools' good practices and experiences in implementing IE.

41. Overall speaking, Hong Kong is actively promoting the WSA to IE, which is in line with the global development and trend in education. With years of substantial practice, we and the education sector are delighted to see the achievements attained in IE. We will continue to help schools foster a harmonious and inclusive culture, and review, deepen and promote various measures on an ongoing basis in order to enable the inclusive culture to take root on campus.

**Advice Sought**

42. Members are invited to note the content of this paper and offer views on the measures to help public sector ordinary schools promote IE and support students with SEN.

**Education Bureau**

**May 2021**