

For discussion
on 3 September 2021

Legislative Council Panel on Education
Progress on Supporting Chinese Learning and Teaching for
Non-Chinese Speaking Students

Purpose

The Government is committed to encouraging and supporting the integration of non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students¹ into the community, including facilitating their early adaptation to the local education system and mastery of the Chinese language. Starting from the 2014/15 school year, the Education Bureau (EDB) has implemented a series of support measures which include the implementation of the “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework” (“Learning Framework”) in primary and secondary schools, the substantial increase of the additional funding to schools, and the provision of learning and teaching resources, teacher training and professional support to schools, etc. Over the past few years, EDB has been enhancing the related measures in an on-going manner, with a view to further facilitating schools’ support for NCS students’ learning of Chinese, and the creation of an inclusive learning environment. This paper aims to follow up the deliberations at the Panel meeting held on 26 June 2017² and set out the progress of the implementation of measures for supporting Chinese learning and teaching for NCS students.

Promotion of Early Integration

2. EDB encourages parents of NCS children to arrange for their children to study in kindergartens (KGs) with an immersed Chinese

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 2020/21 school year, the number of NCS students studying in public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools accounts for about 3% of all students of the schools concerned.

² Agenda Item III of LC Paper No. CB(4)1534/16-17.

language environment for exposure to and learning of Chinese as early as possible. As from the 2017/18 school year, EDB provided KGs joining the KG education scheme (Scheme-KGs) and admitting 8 or more NCS students with an additional grant comparable to the mid-point salary of the salary range for one KG teacher to facilitate KGs' support for NCS students. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, EDB has further enhanced the measure by providing a 5-tiered funding ranging from about \$50,000 to about \$800,000 to Scheme-KGs according to the number of NCS students admitted. For details, please refer to Annex 1. In the 2020/21 school year, more than 440 KGs were provided with the additional funding.

3. According to their school plans and school reports submitted, all of the Scheme-KGs provided with the above-mentioned funding have assigned a teacher to coordinate support measures for NCS students. In addition, the KGs deploy the resources for appointing additional teachers or teaching assistants (including teaching assistants of different races), procuring professional services outside school (including translation/interpretation services), organising cultural integration activities, etc. As observed in our visits, the KGs concerned could enhance the support for NCS students in diversified modes, such as adapting the curricula and teaching strategies, arranging for teaching assistants to provide in-class support, and implementing small group learning or individual teaching as necessary.

4. To facilitate parents' understanding of the support provided for NCS students by KGs, starting from 2018, EDB has added a column "Support to NCS Students" in the Profile for KGs and KG-cum-Child Care Centres. All Scheme-KGs are required to provide summary descriptions of their support measures in the Profile. Regarding KG admission, EDB has reminded KGs via various channels that they must ensure equal opportunities for all children to be admitted to KGs, and their school-based admission mechanisms must be fair, just and open, and compliant with the relevant anti-discrimination ordinances. EDB has also reminded KGs to state explicitly on their school webpages that during interviews with NCS children, translation or interpretation services can be arranged for applicants as necessary. Alternatively, the parents and children can be accompanied by a Chinese-speaking relative or friend to facilitate

communication. Besides, KGs should state explicitly on their school webpages their support measures for NCS students. To further assist Scheme-KGs in enhancing their school webpages and ensure parents can access and make reference to both the Chinese and English versions of the KGs' information on their webpages, EDB provided a one-off website enhancement grant to all Scheme-KGs in the 2020/21 school year. In addition, EDB has also set up a hotline to facilitate parents of NCS children in making enquiries about matters relating to KG admission. Publicity materials on KG admission arrangements have also been translated into languages of diverse races for reference of parents of NCS children.

Support Measures in relation to the Chinese Language Curriculum

The “Learning Framework”

5. Starting from the 2014/15 school year, EDB has implemented the “Learning Framework” in primary and secondary schools, with a view to helping NCS students overcome the difficulties in learning Chinese and master the Chinese language. Based on the mainstream Chinese Language curriculum, the “Learning Framework” is designed from the perspective of second language learners. With reference to the expected learning performance clearly set out at different learning levels of the “Learning Framework”, teachers can set progressive learning targets, progress and expected learning outcomes so as to enhance the learning effectiveness of NCS students. Taking into consideration the views of teachers and language experts, EDB refined and updated the “Learning Framework” in January 2019. In this connection, diversified learning and teaching resources have been developed to provide teachers with guidance and support in curriculum planning, learning and teaching, and assessment. All of these resources, covering the Chinese Language curriculum at the primary and secondary levels as well as different learning levels of the “Learning Framework”, have been uploaded to the EDB webpage. Among others, EDB has developed a set of learning and teaching materials, including student textbooks, workbooks and teaching reference materials, for NCS students at the primary levels. The whole set of materials has been uploaded to the EDB webpage and distributed to schools. Schools can further adapt the above-mentioned teaching materials to cater for the learning needs of NCS students.

6. All primary and secondary schools admitting 10 or more NCS students have implemented the “Learning Framework” and assigned at least one dedicated teacher to coordinate and plan the school’s overall strategies to support NCS students’ learning of Chinese. According to the information which EDB has collected from the schools, many of them (about 70% to 80%) have assigned middle managers (such as vice-principals and panel heads, etc.) to coordinate matters relating to NCS students’ learning of Chinese, as well as the management of school resources and manpower, to ensure the sustainable development of the support measures. In recent years, a significant number of schools (about 35%) have even set up coordination teams and engaged more of the teachers concerned in the planning and implementation of school-based support measures. In addition, in light of students’ performance assessed under the the “Chinese Language Assessment Tools for NCS Students” (Assessment Tools)³, the teachers concerned are able to develop school-based curricula/teaching materials, as well as adopt and adapt complementary resources, which include making reference to and adapting the learning and teaching resources provided by EDB where necessary, developing school-based teaching materials in accordance with the “Learning Framework”, and/or adopting teaching materials published by publishers or universities/post-secondary institutions, etc. The schools concerned also adopt different learning and teaching strategies and organise various activities (such as verse/prose speaking and essay writing competitions) to enhance NCS students’ motivation, confidence and performance in learning.

7. As regards the learning and teaching of Chinese for NCS students with intellectual disabilities, EDB has also devised the “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Adapted Learning Framework (for NCS Students with Intellectual Disabilities)” (“Adapted Framework”). Starting from the 2018/19 school year, the Adapted Framework has been implemented in all special schools admitting 6 or more NCS students and not adopting an ordinary school curriculum. The Adapted Framework helps teachers get a good grasp of the learning progress of NCS students with intellectual disabilities. It also enables teachers to make adaptations

³ In conjunction with the “Learning Framework”, the Assessment Tools facilitate teachers in assessing the overall attainment of NCS students.

to cater to the learning needs of NCS Students with mild, moderate and severe intellectual disabilities.

Applied Learning Chinese (for Non-Chinese Speaking Students)

8. To meet NCS students' diverse needs and expectations in the learning of Chinese, starting from the 2014/15 school year, EDB has offered Applied Learning Chinese (for non-Chinese speaking students) (ApL(C)) at the senior secondary levels to provide NCS students with an additional channel to obtain an alternative Chinese language qualification. ApL(C) results are reported in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) certificate. In addition to the HKDSE qualification, ApL(C) is also pegged at the Qualifications Framework (QF) Levels 1 to 3 to prepare students for further studies and career pursuits. In the three recent cohorts (i.e. the 2019-21, 2020-22 and 2021-23 cohorts), about 130 to 180 students have taken the course. In the 2021 HKDSE, over 85% of the candidates were reported as "Attained" or above, and over 20% of the candidates were reported as "Attained with Distinction". As regards the QF, about 85% of the students were awarded qualifications at QF Level 3 while most of the remaining students obtained certificates for individual modules. To enhance the implementation of the course, EDB has gathered information on the implementation of ApL(C) from students, schools and course providers through course reviews and curriculum development visits, etc. The results show that the students consider the course effective in enhancing their competence in using Chinese and facilitating their personal growth. Schools and course providers also welcome the implementation of ApL(C) and recommend the course. Moreover, the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications also conducts quality assurance visits to assess the quality of the course. Expert group opines that ApL(C) meets the standard of applied learning. In general, different stakeholders have provided positive feedback on ApL(C).

Additional Funding for Schools to Implement the "Learning Framework"

9. Starting from the 2014/15 school year, EDB has substantially increased the additional funding to primary, secondary and special schools

to facilitate schools' implementation of the "Learning Framework" and the creation of an inclusive learning environment, with a view to further enhancing the support for NCS students' learning of Chinese. All public sector schools and DSS schools offering the local curriculum and admitting 10 or more NCS students, and special schools admitting 6 or more NCS students, are provided with an additional funding ranging from \$0.65 million to \$1.5 million per year depending on the number of NCS students admitted. The funding enables the schools concerned to adopt diversified intensive learning and teaching modes as appropriate and enhance the effectiveness of NCS students' learning of Chinese. As regards ordinary schools admitting less than 10 NCS students, and special schools admitting less than 6 NCS students, they might also apply for an additional funding of \$50,000 per year on a need basis to offer after-school Chinese language support programmes up to the 2019/20 school year. Starting from the 2020/21 school year, all of the schools concerned are provided with an additional funding of \$0.15 million or \$0.3 million per year. With more abundant resources, these schools can choose to hire professional services or appoint additional teachers/teaching assistants so as to enhance the support for NCS students' learning of Chinese and the creation of an inclusive learning environment in light of their school-based circumstances. In other words, all schools admitting NCS students are provided with the additional funding at present. For details, please refer to [Annex 2](#). The amount of the additional funding will be adjusted based on the year-on-year movement of the Composite Consumer Price Index or the annual rate of the Civil Service Pay Adjustment. In the 2020/21 school year, there were about 340 primary schools, 310 secondary schools and 55 special schools admitting NCS students and provided with the additional funding, accounting for 70% of all primary and secondary schools and 90% of all special schools respectively.

10. The primary and secondary schools provided with the additional funding mainly deploy the funding (about 90%) for appointing additional teaching staff and the remaining funding is used for procuring learning and teaching resources as well as professional services, and organising activities for promoting an inclusive learning environment in schools, etc. Among the primary and secondary schools admitting 10 or more NCS students, about 60% to 70% have appointed 3 or more additional teaching staff members to adopt diversified intensive learning and teaching modes,

including pull-out learning, split-class/group learning, after-school consolidation, increasing Chinese Language lesson time, learning Chinese across the curriculum, co-teaching with 2 or more teachers/teaching assistants to provide in-class support. Most of the Chinese Language teachers teaching NCS students concerned (about 90%) find pull-out teaching, split-class/group learning and after-school consolidation effective in helping NCS students learn Chinese. Most NCS students concerned (about 90%) also agree that small group learning and learning with Chinese-speaking peers are more conducive to their learning of Chinese.

Professional Development for Teachers

Teacher Training

11. The implementation of the “Learning Framework” hinges on teachers’ professionalism in catering for the learning diversity of students. To enhance the professional capabilities of Chinese Language teachers to teach NCS students, EDB has all along been providing teachers with diversified professional development opportunities. Teachers can participate in the systematic and diversified professional development programmes which EDB continually organises for them to enhance their understanding of the “Learning Framework” and related teaching strategies. In addition, taking into consideration their personal and school-based development needs, teachers can attend training as appropriate, such as the school-based support services (SBSS) and the learning communities for teachers arranged by EDB or other organisations, training programmes offered by tertiary institutions, and peer experience sharing sessions held within their schools or among different schools, etc. Evaluation results have affirmed that the teachers are satisfied with the seminars and workshops organised by EDB. They consider these seminars and workshops effective in helping teachers adapt the Chinese Language curriculum with reference to the “Learning Framework” and the Assessment Tools, and master the strategies for learning and teaching Chinese as a second language so as to enhance the learning and teaching effectiveness. Moreover, based on the teachers’ feedback, EDB has strengthened the sharing of school-based experiences and teaching exemplars to meet teachers’ needs in respect of learning and teaching.

12. In 2014, EDB launched the “Professional Enhancement Grant Scheme for Chinese Language Teachers (Teaching Chinese as a Second Language)” on a pilot basis under the Language Fund. Through the provision of grant, EDB encourages serving Chinese Language teachers to enrol on courses to strengthen their professional capability of teaching NCS students to learn Chinese. EDB is currently conducting an overall review on the Scheme and gauging views of stakeholders including the teachers participating in the Scheme and their school management. Upon completion of the review, EDB will report the findings to the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research and propose the way forward.

School-based Support Services

13. EDB has been providing diversified SBSS for the schools admitting NCS students. SBSS are an intensive mode of on-site professional development, aiming to enhance the professional capability of Chinese Language teachers in KGs, as well as primary and secondary schools, in teaching NCS students. For instance, the support services for primary and secondary schools generally last for one year. The services include supporting Chinese Language teachers in developing or adapting the school-based curricula, designing appropriate learning materials and adopting diversified assessment modes with reference to the “Learning Framework” and the Assessment Tools, so as to enhance the effectiveness of NCS students’ learning of Chinese and help them cope with the transition across different learning stages. Through the establishment of professional learning communities, EDB also provides a platform for Chinese Language teachers teaching NCS students from different schools for professional exchanges on different themes. In addition, EDB commissions tertiary institutions to provide SBSS to KGs, as well as primary and secondary schools, and through combining research-based pedagogies and classroom practices, caters for the needs of different schools. From the 2018/19 and 2020/21 school years, on average, about 150 primary, secondary and special schools, as well as KGs, admitting NCS students received SBSS every year.

14. Schools participating in the school-based support programmes are

satisfied with the related support services and consider them effective in enhancing learning and teaching effectiveness. The motivation of NCS students in learning Chinese, their repertoire of Chinese words and ability to form characters are improved. Through diversified experiential activities, NCS students and Chinese-speaking students can learn about different cultures, develop an attitude of respect and inclusiveness, and take the initiative to talk more to each other, facilitating mutual understanding and integration. In addition, primary and secondary teachers can better understand the characteristics of NCS students' learning of Chinese, especially their learning difficulties. They are also more confident in adapting the school-based curricula or developing school-based teaching materials with reference to the "Learning Framework", using diversified teaching strategies, and through assessments for learning, analysing the learning performance, needs and progress of NCS students from different aspects in an on-going manner, so as to skilfully expand NCS students' repertoire of Chinese words, increase their interest in learning Chinese, and facilitate their transition to the next learning stage. As regards KG teachers, they remark that the support services can help them get a better grasp of the learning difficulties of NCS students and enable them to develop diversified and appropriate learning activities and strategies for NCS students to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes related to various themes and use common Chinese expressions for everyday life, so as to enhance their oral communication skills. Teachers also make use of the time of having NCS students in groups to provide support as appropriate so as to cater for their diversity. In addition, supporting staff assist schools in developing school-based measures in respect of transition and enhancing the professional capability of teachers teaching NCS students in order to enable students to have a smooth transition to local primary schools.

15. In recent years, it is common for the Chinese Language teachers concerned to enhance their professional capability in respect of their own professional development needs through continually participating in professional development programmes of different modes. Under the principles of school-based management, schools have also been reviewing their school-based circumstances and analysing their own development needs, as well as those of their teachers, which will then be prioritised so as to devise appropriate teacher professional development plans

accordingly, which may include applying for SBSS, to enhance the learning and teaching effectiveness. As a matter of fact, according to the information which EDB has collected from the schools, in the 2019/20 school year, more than 90% of the primary and secondary schools admitting 10 or more NCS students arranged for their teachers to participate in related training, peer observation, collaborative lesson planning and or have professional exchanges with other schools, etc. EDB officers will continue providing concrete and professional advice to schools, with a view to strengthening their self-reflection culture and leading sustainable development under the spirit of the School Development and Accountability Framework. To further facilitate the professional development of Chinese Language teachers teaching NCS students Chinese as a second language, EDB will pay due regard to the differences in school-based circumstances and teachers' professional development needs, and deliberate on and explore the need for setting training requirements for primary, secondary and special schools admitting NCS students via existing engagement and consultation channels.

Professional Development of Kindergarten Teachers

16. As regards the professional development of KG teachers, EDB revised the frameworks for the Certificate/Higher Diploma (Early Childhood Education), Bachelor Degree of Education (Early Childhood Education) and Postgraduate Diploma in Early Childhood Education in 2018, including elements of catering for the needs of NCS students. At the same time, EDB has strengthened in-service training on support for NCS students for teachers and set a teacher training target, requiring all Scheme-KGs admitting 8 or more NCS students to have at least one teacher attended the basic course as recognised by EDB by the 2018/19 school year. Besides, all Scheme-KGs admitting NCS students (regardless of the number) should meet the above-mentioned training target by the 2020/21 school year. The above-mentioned training targets were already achieved in the 2018/19 and 2020/21 school years respectively. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, EDB has provided advanced courses for teachers who have completed the basic course to further enhance the professional capability of teachers in developing school-based support measures, setting learning and teaching strategies and creating an inclusive learning environment in schools.

Other Support for NCS Students' Learning of Chinese

17. Apart from the major curriculum support measures, EDB has also implemented other supplementary measures to support NCS students' learning of Chinese, including Chinese remedial programmes and summer bridging programmes. Since 2007, EDB has commissioned a tertiary education institution to offer Chinese remedial programmes after school hours and during holidays for NCS students at Primary 1 to Secondary 6 who have a late start in learning Chinese to help students raise their level of proficiency in the Chinese language and facilitate their integration into school life and learning. In the 2020/21 school year, about 920 NCS students in total from 120 schools enrolled in the programmes. In addition, since 2004, EDB has invited schools to organise summer bridging programmes. At present, the summer bridging programmes help newly admitted NCS Primary 1 students adapt to the use of Chinese as the medium of instruction in the classroom setting, and NCS students progressing to Primary 2, Primary 3 and Primary 4 consolidate what they have learnt about Chinese at Key Stage 1 and prepare for their transition to Key Stage 2. Parents of NCS students can accompany their children during the programmes, with a view to enhancing their exposure to and use of Chinese, and hence the support for their children. In 2021, a total of about 1 280 NCS students from about 30 schools participated in the programmes.

To Facilitate Parents of NCS Students in Making School Choices and Strengthen Parent Education for Parents of NCS Students

18. EDB has been actively encouraging parents of NCS students to arrange for their children to study in schools which provide an immersed Chinese language environment. This is conducive to their children's learning of Chinese as well as integration into the community. To provide parents with more comprehensive information about making school choices, starting from the 2015/16 school year, the Committee on Home-School Co-operation (CHSC) has published the English printed version of the School Profiles for distribution to parents of NCS students studying at Kindergarten 3 and Primary 6 levels via KGs and primary schools for their easy access to the information therein. Starting from the 2018/19 school

year, a separate column on “Education Support for NCS Students” has been added to the School Profiles for schools to provide information on their support for NCS students. All public sector schools and DSS schools that admit NCS students and are provided with additional funding are required to specify under this column their support measures. The School Profiles are uploaded to the Chinese and English versions of the CHSC webpage. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, EDB has further enhanced the newly added column by requiring the schools concerned to provide more information on the relevant support measures. In addition, all relevant information related to the education system and schools is published in Chinese and English, with translation into languages of different races provided where applicable. We will also continue to organise dedicated briefing sessions with simultaneous interpretation services for parents of NCS students.

19. Parents play a vital role in the development and learning of their children. As such, EDB provides a series of parent education programmes especially for NCS parents to help them support their children’s learning, encourage their children to master the Chinese language and help them have more comprehensive understanding of the multiple pathways available to their children. In the 2020/21 school year, EDB commissioned a non-governmental organisation and a post-secondary institution to provide diversified parent education programmes for parents of NCS students, including interactive talks, workshops, exhibitions, community visits, etc., with a view to meeting the different needs of parents of NCS students and fostering their engagement in the programmes. In the 2020/21 school year, about 1 300 parents of NCS students are benefitted.

Conclusion

20. Looking back at the implementation and development in the past few years, we are pleased to see the experience gradually accumulated by schools and teachers as well as the steady development in supporting NCS students’ learning of Chinese. In fact, with the implementation of the series of enhanced measures for supporting NCS students since the 2014/15 school year, the number of primary and secondary schools admitting NCS students has increased from about 590 in the 2013/14

school year to about 650 in the 2020/21 school year, accounting for about 70% of the schools in the territory. In view of the above, the Government's policy intent of encouraging and supporting the integration of NCS students into the community, including facilitating their early adaptation to the local education system, is being attained progressively.

21. EDB will, as always, continue to review the implementation of various support measures along the professionalism of education and the learning needs of students, including the launch of a longitudinal study as additional reference for supporting NCS students' learning of Chinese. In tandem, EDB will collect views from the school sector and different stakeholders and take into consideration the recommendations of the Director of Audit's Report recently released in order to refine the implementation of the measures. With the introduction and consolidation of various support measures, we believe that we are on track for further promoting NCS students' mastery of the Chinese language and integration into the community.

Education Bureau
September 2021

The Amount of Additional Funding Provided for KGs

Number of NCS students	Full-year provision for the 2021/22 school year (\$)
1 to 4	51,710
5 to 7	198,960 (at a rate of about 0.5 KG teacher)
8 to 15	397,920 (at a rate of about 1 KG teacher)
16 to 30	596,880 (at a rate of about 1.5 KG teachers)
31 or more	795,840 (at a rate of about 2 KG teachers)

**The Additional Funding Models for
Ordinary Primary and Secondary Schools, and Special Schools**

Number of NCS students	Full-year provision for the 2021/22 school year (\$)		
	Ordinary primary and secondary schools	Special schools	
		With NCS students taking an ordinary school curriculum	Without NCS students taking an ordinary school curriculum
1 to 5	151,050	151,050	
6 to 9	300,000	650,000	650,000
10 to 25	800,000		
26 to 50	950,000		
51 to 75	1,100,000		
76 to 90	1,250,000		
91 or more	1,500,000		