

Press Releases

LCQ15: Provision of education to non-Chinese speaking students

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Yuen-han and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Michael Suen, in the Legislative Council today (February 20):

Question:

Regarding the provision of education to non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") students, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the criteria for selecting schools designated for receiving intensive on-site support to enhance the learning and teaching of NCS students (whether the criteria include the number of NCS students in the school concerned and the need for providing support due to insufficient teachers with relevant experience); details of the related on-site support; the channels and ways to become a "designated school"; in the past two years, the annual expenditure on the provision of intensive on-site support to each of the "designated schools" by the Government, and the number of schools which had applied to become "designated schools" but were rejected by the authorities;

(b) which university had been commissioned by the Education Bureau ("EDB") to run the Chinese Learning Support Centre; in the past three years, of the respective numbers of primary and secondary schools which had been provided with remedial programmes after school hours or during holidays by the Centre, the respective numbers of primary and secondary schools which had been assisted in developing related teaching resources and provided with professional advice by the Centre, and the annual expenditure of the Centre;

(c) in the past three years, of the total number of Primary 1 to Primary 4 NCS students participated in the 4-week Summer Bridging Programme provided by EDB, the percentage of such students in the total number of NCS students, the annual expenditure of the Programme, and whether EDB had conducted any evaluation on the teaching efficacy of the Programme; if it had, of the evaluation results; and

(d) although the Executive Summary of the Consultation Paper on Developing a "Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for Non-Chinese Speaking Students" is available in both Chinese and English, why the Consultation Paper proper is available only in Chinese but not English; whether the authorities will consider providing the English version of the Consultation Paper proper and extend the consultation period for the Paper; if not, how the authorities ensure that ethnic minority groups, NCS students and their parents who are illiterate in Chinese can fully understand the contents of the Paper and respond to it, so that the Guide, which is to be issued in future, can actually and effectively facilitate NCS students to learn Chinese?

Reply:

Madam President,

(a) There are 19 "designated schools" in the 2007/08 school year. When selecting the "designated schools", the Education Bureau ("EDB") will take into account a number of factors including whether the schools have admitted a critical mass of non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") students, the experience and capability of the schools in taking care of the NCS students, their readiness to

partner with EDB to develop supporting teaching materials for such students and share their experience with other schools admitting NCS students, etc. EDB will also consider the spread of the "designated schools" to ensure that they can cater for the needs of NCS students in various districts. In accordance with the above criteria, EDB will invite suitable schools to become "designated schools" and the process does not involve the submission of applications. If individual schools wish to become "designated schools", they may approach us to express their interest.

EDB provides on-site support to these "designated schools" through regular visits by our officers who assist the schools to develop school-based Chinese Language curriculum, formulate teaching strategies, revise school-based teaching materials, design learning and assessment activities and conduct collaborative lesson planning, etc. School-based professional development activities with experience sharing are also arranged for the schools to enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching and the continued professional development of teachers.

The above school-based support services for "designated schools" are provided by different sections of EDB and the deployment of staff may be adjusted having regard to the needs of individual schools. The relevant manpower resources and expenses are subsumed in the overall expenditure of EDB and a breakdown of expenditure by items is not available.

(b) EDB has commissioned the University of Hong Kong to operate the Chinese Learning Support Centre ("the Centre"). The Centre has started operation since April, 2007 at the borrowed premises of 5 "designated schools", offering remedial programmes after school hours or during holidays for NCS students, in particular those in secondary schools, who have a late start in the learning of Chinese. In the 2007/08 school year, about 250 NCS students have been recruited and divided into 14 groups to facilitate learning. The Centre also participates in the development of related teaching resources for reference and use by all schools with an intake of NCS students. Moreover, workshops and experience-sharing sessions aiming at providing training and professional advice are organised for the teachers of NCS students.

The Centre has an estimated expenditure of approximately \$5 million in the 2007/08 school year.

(c) Starting from summer 2007, the 4-week Summer Bridging Programme previously confined to incoming NCS Primary 1 entrants has been extended to cover also NCS students proceeding to Primary 2, Primary 3 and Primary 4, in order to help the students consolidate what they have learnt at the early Key Learning Stage. During the summer of the past three years, a total of some 1,800 NCS students have participated in the Summer Bridging Programme organised by the schools concerned with funding support from EDB, representing some 60% of the total number of NCS students eligible for the programme. The related expenditure for the past three years was about \$400,000, \$400,000 and \$1.03 million respectively.

EDB staff visit the schools during the course of the programme. We also review the post-programme self-evaluation reports submitted by the schools. The outcome indicates that school heads, teachers, parents and students are positive about the programme. They believe that the programme can help NCS students integrate into mainstream schools.

(d) The Consultation Paper on Developing a "Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for Non-Chinese Speaking Students" mainly discusses professional issues concerning the curriculum and learning and teaching. Given this focus, the Consultation Paper proper is first published in Chinese to facilitate consultation with the teaching profession such as Chinese Language teachers

teaching NCS students and educationalists specialising in the Chinese Language. The English version is expected to be available in end February. Noting that some measures mentioned in the Paper will be of interest to the parents of NCS students and even members of the community who are concerned about the learning of the Chinese Language by NCS students, we have prepared an Executive Summary in both Chinese and English for early reference by members of the public. The Executive Summary is also being translated into major ethnic minority languages. We will also publish the full text of the finalised Supplementary Guide in both Chinese and English. Apart from publishing the Consultation Paper, we have met with stakeholders including primary and secondary school heads and teachers, tertiary scholars, educational bodies, school councils and non-governmental organisations providing services for the ethnic minorities since mid-January, explaining in detail the contents of the Paper and listening to views expressed by various sectors. We aim to finalise the Supplementary Guide as soon as possible to strengthen the support for NCS students and enhance the effectiveness of their learning of Chinese Language. This being the case, we have no plan to extend the consultation period at this stage.

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