

Research Report on the Adequacy of School Information in School Profiles for Ethnic Minorities

《學校概覽能否為少數族裔
選校提供足夠資訊之調查》
研究報告

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Research on the Adequacy of School Information in School Profiles
for Ethnic Minorities

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學校概覽能否為少數族裔選校提供足夠資訊之調查

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Executive Summary

The Education Bureau (EDB) Committee on Home-School Co-operation (CHSC) publishes *Primary School Profiles* and *Secondary School Profiles* to provide reference materials for parents enrolling children in Primary One and for Primary Six parents participating in the Secondary School Places Allocation System respectively. The objective of this research is to investigate if information in the EDB school profiles is adequate and enables ethnic minority parents to make an informed school choice.

97 profiles of primary schools (PS profiles) and 86 profiles of secondary schools (SS profiles) in Yau Tsim Mong, Yuen Long and Eastern districts were examined, including both Chinese and English versions. Information related to the teaching and learning of non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students were recorded and coded for frequency analysis. To further evaluate the accessibility of school information to ethnic minority parents who do not read Chinese, language used in websites of the schools in the studied profiles were recorded and analysed.

Research Findings

1. Only 11.3% (11) of PS profiles and 10.5% (9) of SS profiles mentioned information directly relating to the support for NCS students and parents. A comparison with statistics provided by the Education Bureau reveals that **not all schools that admit NCS students include information in the *school profiles* on support measures for NCS students. Parents of NCS students cannot access information relevant to the teaching and learning support for their children, and hence, frequently not able to make informed decision on school choice.**
2. Information on support to NCS students and parents in the schools profiles were fragmented and unsystematic – the kinds of information provided varied greatly between school profiles, and relevant information was scattered across various sections in each profile. This would **pose additional barrier for parents who are less competent in Chinese or English to navigate information in the school profiles and their access to information is hindered.**
3. Among the 11 PS profiles that included relevant information, 63.6% (7) presented different information in Chinese and English versions; similar problem happened with 22.2% (2) of the 9 SS profiles that provided information on the support for NCS students. **The inconsistency of school information in the two language versions**

may cause confusion to parents during school selection and unfairness to parents who can only read either Chinese or English.

4. Websites of the same schools were examined. 88.7% (86) of primary school websites and 50% (43) of secondary school websites provided **only Chinese version**. It shows that **school websites cannot serve as a reliable source of additional school information on top of school profiles** for these parents.

Policy Suggestions

1. The EDB and CHSC should **add a section on the ‘dedicated support to NCS students and parents’ in school profiles**, to facilitate a more direct way for NCS parents to look for school information.
2. The **transparency of school support information on NCS support should be improved**. The information listed in the proposed section should include after school support for NCS students (such as homework classes, and remedial classes), Chinese class arrangement for NCS students, language of school notices, Chinese to NCS students ratio, and options and arrangement of various alternative Chinese qualifications that are available in schools for students with adapted Chinese curriculum.
3. The EDB and CHSC should **step up its monitoring role** during the collection of information for school profiles. They should ensure the information from both Chinese and English school profiles are the same, and inspect if the schools which received funding/ NCS students have included their support measure to NCS students in the profile.
4. The EDB and CHSC should actively **consult stakeholders, including parents**, on the review of contents and layout of the profiles to better facilitate an effective way of conveying school information through school profiles.
5. EDB should **provide schools with resources and technical support to develop a manageable and fully bilingual website**.

研究撮要

教育局轄下的家庭與學校合作事宜委員會（家校會）每年均出版《小學概覽》和《中學概覽》，為將參與「小一入學統籌辦法」或「中學學位分配辦法」子女的家長提供參考資料。是次調查目的是了解這些學校概覽能否為少數族裔家長提供足夠的學校資訊，協助他們作出知情的學校選擇。

是次研究檢視了油尖旺、元朗和東區的學校，共 97 份小學概覽和 86 份中學概覽，包括中文和英文版本，並記錄和分析當中有關非華語學生的學與教的資料。為了進一步評估未能閱讀中文的家長能否從學校網站獲得學校資訊，是次調查亦記錄和分析了學校概覽內的學校網頁語言。

研究結果

1. 只有 11.3%（11 份）的小學概覽和 10.5%（9 份）的中學概覽有提及與支援非華語學生和家長直接相關的資料。與教育局的數據比較，顯示有已經取錄非華語學生的學校沒有在學校概覽內披露其對非華語學生支援措施的資料。非華語學童的家長或未能獲得與他們子女學與教有關的資訊，繼而難以在知情的情況下作出選校的決定。
2. 學校概覽內與非華語學童和家長相關的資料零散及缺乏系統：不同學校概覽所提供的支援非華語內容的類別差異甚大；即使在同一份學校概覽內，與支援非華語學童相關的資料亦散落於不同欄目中。對於中文或英文能力稍遜的家長，這或會為他們閱覽學校概覽時造成額外的障礙，令他們難以獲得資訊。
3. 在有提及支援非華語學生相關資料的 11 份小學概覽中，63.6%（7 份）的中文和英文版本的內容有差異；9 份有非華語學生相關內容的中學概覽中，有 22.2%（2 份）也出現類似的情況。兩個語言版本之間的內容差異，對只能閱讀中文或英文的家長並不公平，亦有機會令家長在選校時造成混亂。
4. 分析學校網頁的結果顯示，其中 88.7%（86 個）小學網頁和 50%（43 個）中學網頁只提供中文資料。換言之，學校網頁不能在學校概覽以外，為家長提供可靠的額外資訊。

政策建議

1. 教育局和家校會應在學校概覽內加入「給予非華語學生和家長的支援」一欄，以幫助非華語家長更直接地獲取相關資訊。
2. 為提高學校為非華語學生提供支援措施的透明度，在建議增加的一欄內，教育局應列出各項學校應列明的支援措施，包括為非華語學生提供的額外學習支援（如功課輔導班、補習增潤班等）、中文班的措施（如是否提供不同程

度的中文，或分班安排）、學校通告的語言、華裔及非華裔學生的比例、學校是否有調適課程以支援學生選擇其他中文資歷的考試（中學適用）。

3. **教育局及家校會**應加強其在為學校概覽收集學校資訊時的**監管角色**。他們應確保中英文的學校概覽內的資訊均等及相同，並檢視有獲取額外資助或已取錄非華語學生的學校，是否有在其概覽內列出相關支援措施。
4. 教育局及家校會應更全面及主動**諮詢持份者**對學校概覽的內容及格式之意見，**包括**作為用家的**家長**，以令概覽能更有效地發揮為公眾提供學校資訊的作用。
5. 教育局應為學校提供**資源及技術支援**，以協助學校提供一個易於管理及**雙語**的學校網頁。

1. Introduction

Established in 2001 and incorporated in 2005, Hong Kong Unison Limited (hereinafter ‘Unison’) is a non-governmental charitable organization with the mission to promote racial equality and advocate for change so that all ethnic minority residents of Hong Kong have equal opportunity and equal access to public services and information. Education for ethnic minorities has long been one of Unison’s strategic work priorities. ‘Education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights.’¹ If ethnic minority children do not have adequate proficiency in Chinese, higher education is likely to be hampered and their ability to integrate into the Hong Kong society and exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms will be limited.

The Education Bureau (EDB) states that their policy intent is to ‘encourage parents of non-Chinese speaking (NCS)² students to send their children to schools with an immersed Chinese language environment as early as possible to facilitate their mastery of the Chinese language’.³ To obtain information on mainstream schools during school selection, parents frequently refer to school profiles published by the Committee on Home-School Co-operation (CHSC) during Primary One Allocation (POA) or Secondary School Place Allocation (SSPA). Apart from general characteristics like location, school ethos, religion, etc., there are some factors which concern specifically local ethnic minority parents in school selection.⁴ However, ethnic minority parents have been finding it hard to access these information since not all schools include such information in the school profiles; hence they are not able to make an informed school choice for their children even though they intend to send their children to a school with immersed Chinese language environment. In this research, Unison explores if the current EDB system enables ethnic minority parents with an informed school choice with adequate school information from the school profiles.

¹ CESCR Committee, General Comment 13, 1999, Para.1.

² While Hong Kong Unison works mainly on issues concerning ethnic minorities, the present research uses the term ‘non-Chinese speaking’(NCS) students to loosely refer to ethnic minority students, since the Education Bureau categorized students whose spoken language at home is not Chinese are broadly categorized as NCS students for the planning of the educational support measures. Education Bureau Circular No. 8/2014, Ref: EDB(EC)5/2041/07.

³ LegCo Question No.21 (Written reply) Asked by Fernando Cheung (29 March, 2017)

⁴ For example, overall and Chinese class arrangement, support to NCS students in schools, if the schools have developed any integration policy, measures to facilitate home-school cooperation with NCS parents, options and arrangement of various alternative Chinese qualifications in secondary schools such as GCSE, GCE AS/AL, etc

2. **Background**

2.1. Research rationale

Unison would like to find out if information pertinent for ethnic minority parents to make informed school choice is included in school profiles and if the EDB needs to develop new strategies and/or spend extra effort to encourage schools to provide ‘NCS-relevant’ information in the school profiles.

2.2. EDB’s measures to facilitate informed school choice for parents of NCS students

2.2.1. **Primary and Secondary School Profiles**

The CHSC publishes both Primary (PSP) and Secondary School Profiles (SSP) annually to provide essential school information so as to enable them to choose a suitable school for their children (for primary school)⁵ and to provide comprehensive school information for parents' reference (for secondary school).⁶ A reminder is sent by CHSC to all mainstream schools (government, aided, and DSS) in March and June respectively for PSP and SSP to provide information in both Chinese and English on learning and teaching such as the medium of instruction, mode of teaching, learning and teaching strategies, curriculum tailoring, adaptation for primary schools and medium of instruction, whole-school language policy as well as school-based curriculum for secondary schools.⁷ CHSC conducts annual review on the profiles in February.⁸ Starting from the 2015/16 school year, each K3 and P6 NCS student can obtain a copy of the **English version of the school profiles** of the student’s district. The EDB has *encouraged* schools to enrich the contents in the profiles and **school websites**.

2.2.2. **List of publications relevant to admission/allocation disseminated/ published by the EDB⁹**

- Non-Chinese Speaking Parent Information Package: Your Guide to Education in Hong Kong
- Notes on Education Support Measures for Non-Chinese Speaking Students
- Tips for Parents of Non-Chinese Speaking Students (Primary)

⁵ Government press release on ‘Primary School Profiles 2017 to be released’ - <http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201709/01/P2017083101046.htm>

⁶ Government press release on ‘Secondary School Profiles 2017/2018 to be released tomorrow’ - <http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201712/06/P2017120500640p.htm>

⁷ Letter from the Committee on Home-School Co-operation to Unison on 10 Aug, 2017. (27) in EDB(HSC)/ISS/20/2(2)

⁸ ditto

⁹ LC Paper No. CB(2)208/16-17(01)

- Information Notes on Primary One Admission System Specifically for Non-Chinese Speaking Students
- Primary One Admission – Notes on How to Complete the ‘Application Form for Admission to Primary On’
- Primary One Admission – Notes to Parents on Central Allocation
- Secondary School Places Allocation System – Notes Specifically for Non-Chinese Speaking Students in the form of Frequently Asked Questions
- Secondary School Places Allocation System – Notes for Parents on Application for Secondary 1 Discretionary Places
- Secondary School Places Allocation System - Notes for Parents on Central Allocation

2.2.3. **Enhanced Funding Support to Schools to implement the ‘Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework’ (hereinafter ‘Learning Framework’ and ‘NCS funding’)¹⁰**

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 adopt diversified intensive learning and teaching modes as appropriate such as pull-out teaching, split-class/group learning, after-school consolidation, etc. with a view to helping NCS students bridge over to mainstream Chinese Language classes as early as possible. Since 2014/15 school year onwards, EDB has increased the funding to about \$200 million per year to facilitate their implementation of the Learning Framework and creation of an inclusive learning environment in schools.

2.2.4. **Obtaining information on individual public sector school**

Regarding information on individual public sector school, EDB has been helping schools to publicize their **open days** by uploading such information on the website of the CHSC so as to enable parents to know more about the schools before making school choices. EDB also advises parents to **contact individual school** to see if a school visit can be arranged.

2.2.5. **Briefing sessions for school admission**

Dedicated briefing sessions with simultaneous interpretation services have been organised for parents of NCS students but these sessions are usually not widely publicize; specific support

¹⁰ LC Paper No. CB(2)208/16-17(01) Legislative Council Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities, Education for Children of Ethnic Minorities

relating to ethnic minority students in schools cannot be provided. A designated webpage on the education services for NCS students is available, but without information on individual schools.¹¹

2.2.6. Regional Education Offices

One of the objectives of the Regional Education Office (REO) is to provide education-related services to the public at the district level, including to ethnic minority parents. If parents wish to know more details about particular schools, the frontline officers of REO will answer parents' enquiries and provide appropriate assistance.¹²

2.3. Parents' opinion on factors affecting their school choice

Unison conducts outreach and parents workshops regularly to understand parents' thoughts, situation and concerns on education issues, and also guide and facilitate their understanding of the education system, policy and recourse to improve their children's learning situation. According to the parents' feedback in Unison's parents talk on school selection, parents concluded a list of information which they deem important in school selection apart from the general school information. The list includes:

- whether the schools get NCS funding;
- whether the schools provide an adapted Chinese curriculum and teaching materials for NCS students;
- Chinese class arrangement for NCS students;
- afterschool and other Chinese support for NCS students;
- alternative examination in Chinese language (for secondary school only);
- other support for NCS students;
- learning performance of current NCS students;
- support to parents of NCS students;
- integration policy in relation to NCS students; and
- teacher training related to the learning and teaching of NCS students

¹¹ LC Paper No. CB(2)208/16-17(01) Legislative Council Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities, Education for Children of Ethnic Minorities

¹² Letter from the Secretary of Education to Unison on 14 November, 2017. (50) in L/M 169/17 to KT/ADM/123/101 Pt.2

2.4. Practicality of EDB suggestions to facilitating school choices

Some of the measures in obtaining school information suggested by the EDB are not useful nor pragmatic. For example, ethnic minority parents shared with us that although they managed to find out dates of open days, information sessions like talks or tours were conducted in Cantonese only, and most of the time teachers were not comfortable communicating in English. When parents called the REO to find out details about particular schools, they were advised to call individual schools for information; it is not only inconvenient to schools but also impractical for parents to contact each school one by one in a district in order to make an informed choice, especially given the language barrier faced by some parents. Although schools with more than 10 NCS students are given an additional recurrent funding to develop school-based support measures, parents of NCS students have no way of finding out which schools receive the funding.

2.5. Previous EDB responses on the provision of school information relevant to ethnic minority parents

The CHSC claims that the information in the school profiles are **provided by schools** and the **EDB has already encouraged schools** admitting NCS students to provide more information in the Profiles on measures supporting the learning of NCS students,¹³ including curriculum, learning and teaching strategies, and support to students.¹⁴

According to the EDB, **schools have provided information** on various support measures for NCS students **under different sections in the school profiles** such as ‘Curriculum Tailoring and Adaptation’ and ‘School’s Key Concern’ in PSP as well as ‘Whole-school Language Policy’, ‘School-based Curriculum’ and ‘Whole School Approach to Catering for Student Diversify’ in SSP.¹⁵

The EDB maintains that school profile is only one of the ways to find school information, and parents can also **contact the schools directly for specific information**¹⁶ like exploring school websites.

¹³ Letter from the Committee on Home-School Co-operation to Unison on 10 Aug, 2017. (27) in EDB(HSC)/ISS/20/2(2)

¹⁴ Letter from the Secretary of Education to Unison on 13 April, 2017. (15) in L/M 167/17 to KT/ADM/123/101 Pt.2

¹⁵ Letter from the Committee on Home-School Co-operation to Unison on 10 Aug, 2017. (27) in EDB(HSC)/ISS/20/2(2)

¹⁶ Letter from the Secretary of Education to Unison on 13 April, 2017. (15) in L/M 167/17 to KT/ADM/123/101 Pt.2

‘While acknowledging the needs of parents for additional reference information, the sector is of the view that such information should not be provided on a piecemeal basis or simplified to cover only the school names and the number of NCS students admitted in the schools concerned. This is to avoid any misconception and unnecessary labeling effects on schools. Premised on enhancing transparency, EDB and schools are actively exploring relevant arrangements to facilitate parents’ school choice. For instance, **schools that have been provided with additional funding to facilitate NCS students’ learning of the Chinese language should be indicated in the same manner in the ‘Student Support’ column of the school profiles to specify that additional support is provided for their NCS students in learning the Chinese Language.**’¹⁷

3. Research Objectives

- 3.1. To evaluate if the EDB primary and secondary school profiles (hereinafter ‘school profiles’) provide quality school information for ethnic minority parents to make an informed school choice.
- 3.2. To evaluate if there is any discrepancy of information between Chinese and English versions of School Profiles.
- 3.3. To find out the information provided on the support and measures for NCS students and parents to facilitate school choice.
- 3.4. To evaluate if the school websites are accessible to ethnic minority parents who do not read Chinese.

4. Methodology

- 4.1. A total of 97 profiles of government, aided and direct subsidy scheme (DSS) primary schools in Yau Tsim Mong, Yuen Long and Eastern districts (hereinafter ‘target primary schools’) were retrieved from the website of the Committee on Home-School Co-operation of the EDB between August 2017 (printed copies) and November 2017 (electronic copies).¹⁸ A total of 86 profiles of government, aided, CAPUT and DSS

¹⁷ LC Paper No. CB(4)1437/16-17(02), Support for Non-Chinese Speaking Students in Learning the Chinese Language and Making School Choices

¹⁸ CHSC webpage for primary school profiles: http://www.chsc.hk/psp2017/index.php?lang_id=1

secondary schools in the above-mentioned districts (hereinafter ‘target secondary schools’) were retrieved from the CHSC website in December 2017 (electronic copies).¹⁹ Each profile represented information of one school. Both Chinese and English versions of PSP and SSP were collected.

- 4.2. These 3 districts were chosen based on the residential districts of Unison’s service users whose children are going to or already studying in local primary and secondary schools.
- 4.3. Volunteers of Unison were instructed to read through both the Chinese and English versions of the profiles and record all information related to the learning and teaching of NCS students. The recorded information were further sorted under several categories for frequency analysis. The categories included 1) NCS funding, 2) adapted Chinese curriculum and teaching materials for NCS students, 3) Chinese class arrangement for NCS students, 4) afterschool and other Chinese support for NCS students, 5) alternative examination in Chinese language (for SSP only), 6) other support for NCS students, 7) learning performance of current NCS students, 8) support to parents of NCS students, 9) integration policy in relation to NCS students, and 10) teachers’ training related to the learning and teaching of NCS students.
- 4.4. Volunteers were also asked to visit the websites of the PSP (in September 2017) and SSP (in July 2017) and record whether the information on the website was available in Chinese, English, or both Chinese and English.
- 4.5. To enable a more comprehensive analysis of the adequacy of the information in school profiles, Hong Kong Unison sought statistics of the numbers of primary and secondary schools admitting NCS students from the Education Bureau through a legislative councillor. Instead of the numbers of schools that had admitted NCS student, EDB provided the numbers of schools that had received NCS funding from the Bureau. A comparison was made between these figures and the data from school profiles.

5. Findings

5.1. Schools profiles that mentioned information related to the learning and teaching of NCS students

¹⁹ CHSC webpage for secondary school profiles: http://www.chsc.hk/ssp2017/index.php?lang_id=1.

Out of the 97 PSP, 11 (11.3%) mentioned information directly related to the learning and teaching of NCS students. 9 (10.5%) of the 86 SSP (both Chinese and English versions) mentioned relevant information.

Statistics provided by the EDB revealed that in 2016/17 school year, up to 34.0% (33) of primary schools and 29.1% (25) of secondary schools in the studied districts had received NCS funding.²⁰ The number of schools that had provided information related to NCS students in the school profiles is smaller than the number of schools that had received NCS funding (refer to Figure 5.1).

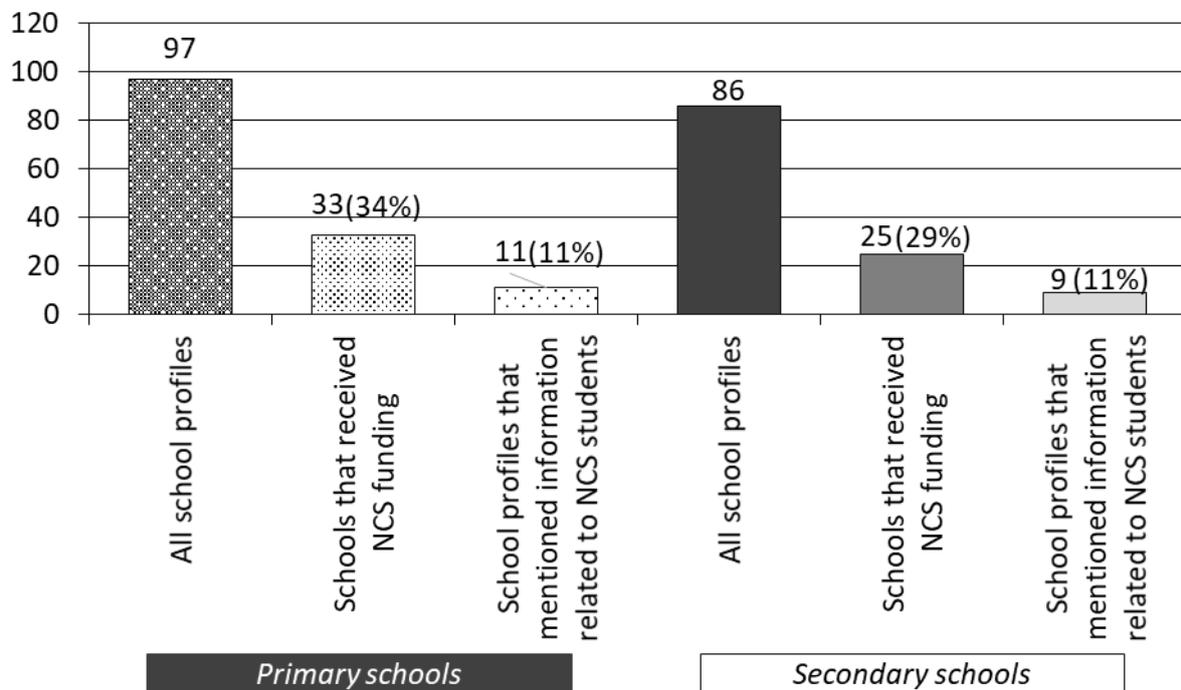


Figure 5.1. The number and percentage of schools that received NCS funding in 2016/17 school year and the number and percentage of school profiles that mentioned information related to NCS students in the studied districts

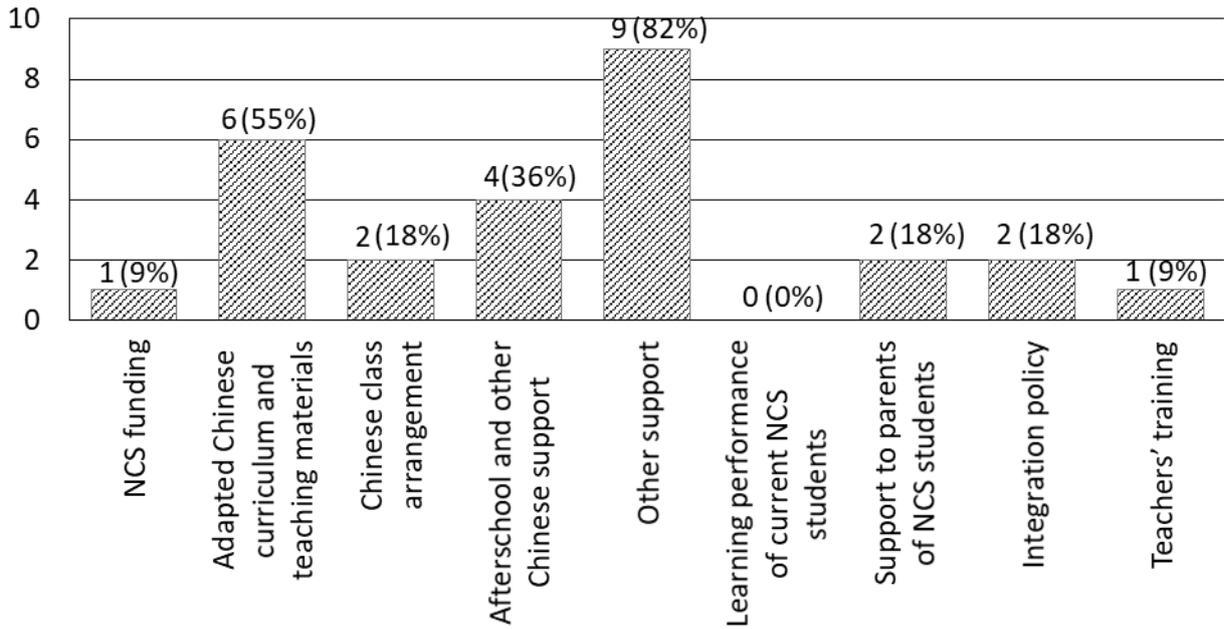
²⁰ Reply titled 'With regard to the additional funding provided to schools admitting non-Chinese speaking students' (dated 10th January, 2018) by the Education Bureau to questions submitted by a member of the Legislative Council. (教育局回覆毛孟靜議員「有關向錄取非華語學生的學校提供額外撥款事宜」的提問 (二零一八年一月十日)。)Ref.: EDB(EC)4/2041/07

²¹ The total numbers of schools in the studied districts as stated in the EDB document mentioned in footnote 19, i.e. 96 primary schools and 87 secondary schools, were different from the total number of schools in the school profiles obtained in this research. Percentages were calculated based on the latter.

5.2. Information related to the learning and teaching of NCS students

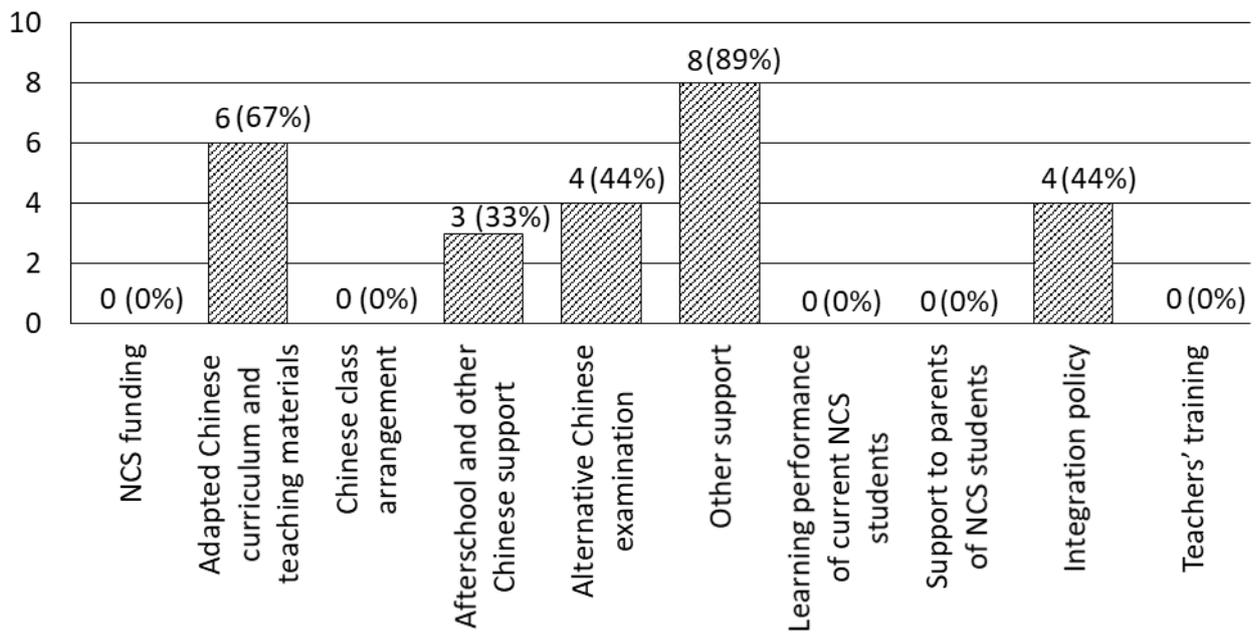
Among the 11 PSP that mentioned information related to support for NCS students, 6 (54.5%) included information on adapted Chinese curriculum and teaching materials for NCS students, and all except two (81.8%) included information on other support to NCS students (outside of support for Chinese language learning); less than two provided information on NCS funding, Chinese class arrangement, support to parents of NCS students, integration policy, and teacher training on the learning and teaching of NCS students respectively; and none of them provided information on the learning progress of NCS students (refer to Figure 5.2a). Relevant information was disclosed under the columns of 'Class Structure', 'Performance Assessment', 'Learning and Teaching plan', 'Student Support', 'Home-school Co-operation and School Ethos', and 'Future Development'.

Among the 9 SSP that mentioned relevant information, 6 (66.7%) included information on adapted Chinese curriculum and teaching materials, and all except one (88.9%) included information on other support to NCS students. One third of them mentioned afterschool and other Chinese support for NCS students, and slightly less than half of them mentioned alternative examination in Chinese language and integration policy related to NCS students. None of them provided information on NCS funding, Chinese class arrangement, learning progress of NCS students, support to parents of NCS students, and relevant teachers training (refer to Figure 5.2b). Relevant information was disclosed under the columns of 'Mission Statement', 'Subjects Offered', 'Class Structure & Chargeable Fees', 'Orientation Activities and Healthy Life', 'Learning and Teaching Plan', 'Student Support', 'Home-School Co-operation and School Ethos', 'Future Development', and 'Others'.



Note: Percentage out of the 11 PSP that had mentioned information related to NCS students.

Figure 5.2a. *The number and percentage of PSP that mentioned specific categories of information*



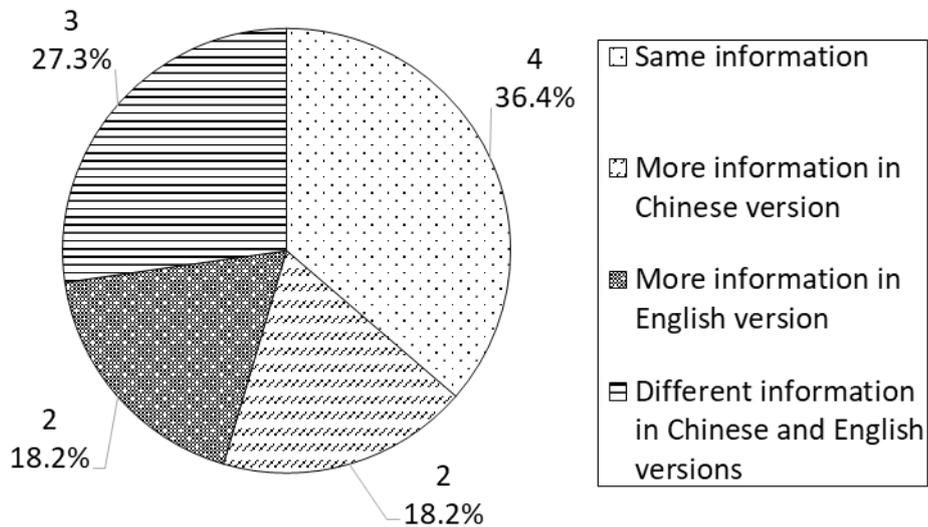
Note: Percentage out of the 9 SSP that had mentioned information related to NCS students.

Figure 5.2b. *The number and percentage of SSP that mentioned specific categories of information*

5.3. Chinese and English versions of school profiles

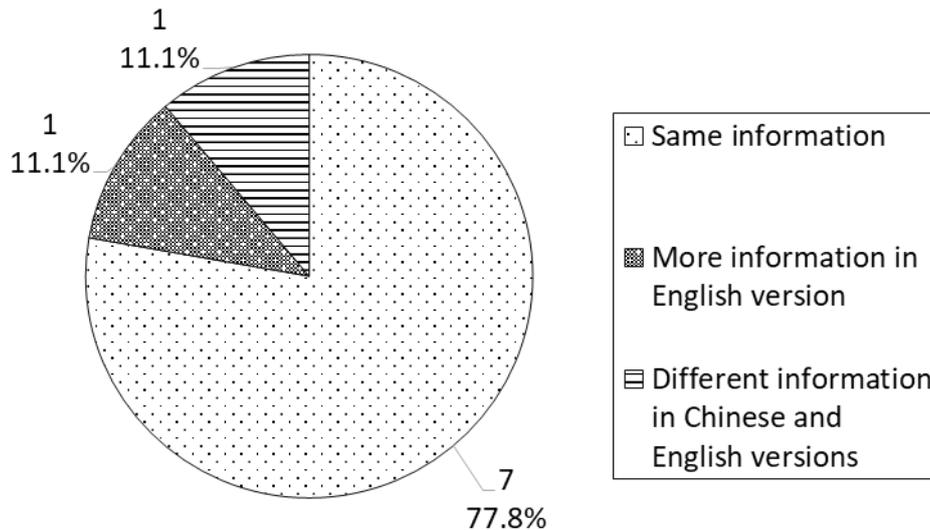
Among the 11 PSP that mentioned information relevant to NCS students, 7 profiles (63.6%) presented different information in Chinese and English versions – 2 profiles (18.2%) offered more related information in Chinese than in English; 2 profiles (18.2%) offered more related information in English than in Chinese; 3 profiles (27.3%) incorporated different information in different languages (refer to Figure 5.3a).

Among the 9 SSP that mentioned information relevant to NCS students, 2 profiles (22.2%) presented different information in Chinese and English versions – 1 profile (11.1%) provided more information in English than in Chinese; whereas the other profile (11.1%) incorporated different information in different languages (refer to Figure 5.3b).



Note: Percentage out of the 11 PSS that had mentioned information related to NCS students

Figure 5.3a. *The number and percentage of PSP that provided same or different information related to NCS students in Chinese and English versions*



Note: Percentage out of the 9 SSP that had mentioned information related to NCS students

Figure 5.3b. *The number and percentage of SSP that provided same or different information related to NCS students in Chinese and English versions*

5.4. Language of school websites

Among the 97 target PS, 86 of them (88.7%) published only Chinese information on the school websites; 1 (1%) published only English information; 3 (3.1%) were partially bilingual; and 7 (7.2%) were fully bilingual (refer to Figure 5.4a).

Among the 86 target SS, 43 of them (50%) published only Chinese information on the school websites; 21 (24.4%) published only English information; 9 (10.5%) were partially bilingual; and 13 (15.1%) were fully bilingual (refer to Figure 5.4b).

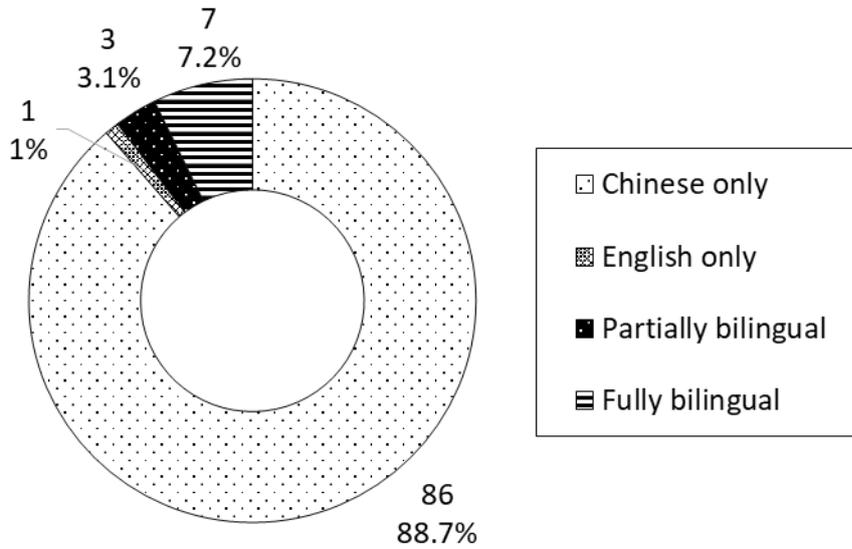


Figure 5.4a. *Language of school websites of target PS*

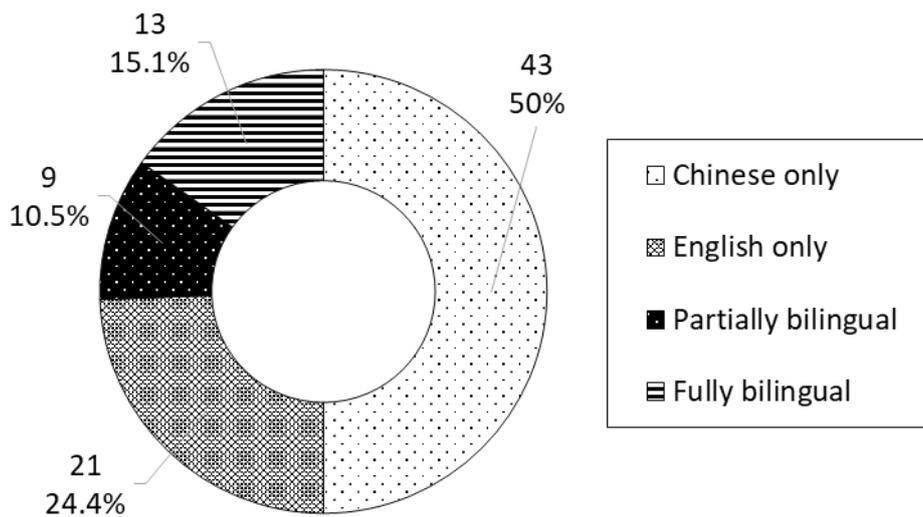


Figure 5.4b. *Language of school websites of target SS*

6. Discussion

6.1. Absence of information in school profiles

The findings of this research revealed that only 11 primary school profiles (11.3%) and 9 secondary school profiles (10.5%) in the studied districts mentioned information related to the education of NCS students. Yet, recent statistics provided by the EDB showed that more schools in the same districts had received NCS funding. The differences in numbers imply that not all schools included school support measures for NCS students in their school profiles.

Parents would not be able to obtain complete information about support for NCS students in different schools and make informed decision for school choice.

6.2. Disorganised information in school profiles

Among those school profiles that mentioned information related to NCS students, information were largely fragmented and unsystematic. Not only that the school profiles varied greatly in the kinds of information provided; relevant information was scattered across various categories in each school profile.

In profiles with relevant information, the information was presented in an unsystematic manner, hampering the usefulness of the profiles to provide information and facilitate school choice; in particular, it pose additional difficulties for parents who are not fluent in Chinese or English to navigate the large amount of information in the profiles; hindering their access to information.

6.3. Inconsistent information in Chinese and English versions of school profiles

Over half of the PSP and about one fifth of the SSP profiles that mentioned information related to NCS students provided varied information in the two languages. This does not only cause confusion to parents during school selection, but is unfair to parents who can only read either Chinese or English.

6.4. Inaccessible school websites

The findings revealed that 88.7% of the websites of target PS and half of the websites of target SS were available only in Chinese. Only a negligible number of target PS (1%) and about a quarter (24.4%) of the target SS had English websites; and only a minimal number of target PS (7.2%) and target SS (15.1%) hosted fully bilingual websites. In other words, many school websites were inaccessible to parents who are not competent in Chinese; as a result, access to additional information relevant to school selection alongside school profiles is limited.

7. Policy Suggestions

- 7.1 There should be a **special section on the ‘dedicated support to NCS students and parents’ in school profiles**, to facilitate a more straight-forward way for NCS parents to look for school information.

- 7.2 The **transparency of school support information on NCS support should be improved**. EDB should **advise a list of NCS support item** for the schools to provide to ensure parents have an informed school choice, which includes after **school support** for NCS students (including homework classes, and remedial classes), **Chinese class arrangement for NCS students, language of school notice** etc. Parents may also want to know about the **Chinese to non-Chinese speaking (NCS) student ratio in school** and if the school has any **experience admitting NCS students**. For secondary school, they especially need to know the **options and arrangement of various alternative Chinese qualifications** (including GCSE, GCE AS/AL, ApL(C) etc.).
- 7.3 Apart from being a coordinator to remind and request schools to provide basic information, the **EDB and CHSC should step up its monitoring role** to ensure the public get the **same school information from both Chinese and English school profiles, and inspect if the schools which received funding/ NCS students have included their support measure to NCS students in the profile**.
- 7.4 School profiles are designed for the public, especially the parents, to read and find out school information. As the stakeholders and the target readers of the profiles, parents should be consulted as well to improve the effectiveness of the profiles. EDB should **actively consult parents**, including promoting the consultation period and conduct focus group to collect parents comments, **on how to better improve the school profile** to facilitate an informed school choice when CHSC is preparing the school profile.
- 7.5 Ideally schools should provide **bilingual website** whenever possible since school website is a substantial platform for the public to understand more about the schools, and not everyone from the public understand both Chinese and English. However, most of the time it is **not feasible for schools** due to the technical difficulties and administrative workload for school staffs, if not a fully bilingual website, admission information and support for NCS students should be at least be in English. **EDB should provide schools with recourse and technical support to develop a manageable and fully bilingual website**. Nonetheless, since not every parents is able to access the internet and navigate schools' website, the most suitable way to provide school information to parents is through **school profile with advanced information**.

8. Research Limitations

- 8.1 The Education Bureau document listed only the number of primary and secondary schools that received additional funding to provide support for Chinese language learning to non-Chinese speaking students, but the overall numbers of schools that had admitted non-Chinese speaking students were not provided. Due to such lack of comprehensive statistics, results of the present research may not fully reflect the adequacy of school information offered by the school profiles.
- 8.2 As of the publication of this report, printed copies of the school profiles of secondary schools were not made available to Hong Kong Unison after a request was sent to the EDB. The results related to the secondary profiles in this report based solely on the electronic copies of the documents, and discrepancies (if any) between the electronic and printed copies of the school profiles could not be identified.

9. Conclusion

The Committee on Home-School Co-operation publishes Primary School Profiles and Secondary School Profiles to provide reference for parents whose child is participating in the Primary One Admission System and in the Secondary School Places Allocation System respectively. The present research examined the Primary School Profiles and Secondary School Profiles of schools from three districts (Yau Tsim Mong, Yuen Long and Eastern district) and analysed the extent to which information in the school profiles is adequate and enables ethnic minority parents to make an informed school choice.

The school profiles are supposed to be a comprehensive and reliable source of information about school policies and practices, and they are crucial to parents' decision on school choice. Unlike mainstream Chinese parents, ethnic minority parents usually have additional concerns on the availability of learning support for NCS students, as well as other school policies such as integration policies and teachers professionalism in the learning and teaching of NCS students. Nonetheless, not only that such information was not made available in the school profiles in an organised and consistent manner, some schools had omitted information of existing support measures provided to NCS students and their parents altogether.

The Education Bureau had publicly advised ethnic minority parents who are unable to seek adequate information in the school profiles to refer to school websites for supplementary reference. It is evident that such practice is not realistic or helpful as most school websites were only available in Chinese.

To ensure adequate and organised provision of school information related to the support for NCS students and parents, the Education Bureau and Committee on Home-School Co-operation should refine the requirement and presentation of information submitted by schools, and actively monitor the quality of information in school profiles. The above should be implemented based on the vision of informed school choice by ethnic minority parents and mainstreaming of ethnic minority children.

