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Minority parents claim kids shut out

Many ethnic minority parents are dissatisfied with the Education Bureau for what they see as a lack of support in the primary school selection process.

Advocacy group Hong Kong **Unison** checked on 99 such parents of kindergarten pupils admitted to primary schools, and more than 70 percent want their children in mainstream rather than racially segregated schools even though bureau rules state that minority parents are free to choose any type of school.

The survey also found 43 percent of respondents are unhappy if there are few Chinese in the school their children attend. Yet few minority parents believe they have much choice in selecting schools, and more than 30 percent are dissatisfied with teaching and support for Chinese learning.

Arianne Baldsime said it is hard to gain information on a school even if you seek advice directly or from the Education Bureau. "It's not like we can talk to someone one on one," she said.

But even if an ethnic minority child is admitted to a mainstream school there can be more struggles.

"Because she looks different they call her Brown," said a Filipino parent with a daughter in a mainstream school. "They sometimes bully her."

Unison also found minority parents face a lack of information on the bureau website. On that, a bureau official told The Standard it will re-examine the website with a view to providing more information for those who are not fluent in Chinese.

Yet **Unison** also claimed the bureau has already refused to provide details about racial distribution between schools. AMIE CHENG

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