

Study on Challenges, Effective Policies, and Best Practices of Ordinary Schools in Educating Students with Special Educational Needs in Hong Kong

Study Brief

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO) and the Code of Practice on Education issued by the EOC, all educational establishments have the obligation to provide equal education opportunities to eligible students, including students with special educational needs (SEN). According to the Education Bureau (EDB), students with SEN refer to students who need special educational support because of learning or adjustment difficulties categorised as: (1) specific learning difficulties (SpLD), (2) attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD), (3) autism spectrum disorders (ASD), (4) speech and language impairment (SLI), (5) intellectual disability (ID), (6) hearing impairment (HI), (7) physical disability (PD), (8) visual impairment (VI), and (9) mental illness (MI).

2. Since the 1999/2000 school year, integrated education has been implemented in all public sector ordinary schools. The targets and beneficiaries of integrated education include not only students with SEN but also other students, parents, and the whole society. The Government adopts a dual-track mode in implementing special education. For students with more severe or multiple disabilities, the EDB will, subject to the assessment and recommendations of specialists and the consent of the parents, refer them to special schools for intensive support services. For other SEN students, the Government integrates them into ordinary schools. In 2016/17, about 42,890 students with SEN studied in public sector primary and secondary ordinary schools.

3. Over the past years, various measures have been introduced to support the learning and teaching of SEN students in ordinary schools. For example, since the 2017/18 school year and by phases in three years, the EDB provides each public sector ordinary primary/ secondary school with an additional graduate post in the teaching staff establishment to facilitate the assignment of a designated teacher by schools as Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO) for supporting integrated education. It has also been planned that, starting from the 2019/20 school year, the Learning Support Grant will be restructured and extended to all public sector ordinary schools and the grant rate for tier-3 support will be increased. Additional permanent teaching posts will be provided for schools with a comparatively large number of students with SEN. In addition, support measures to cater for the needs of students with autism or mental illness have been introduced.

4. Although the afore-mentioned policy initiatives would bring additional manpower and financial resources to support the learning and teaching of students with SEN, the rights to inclusive education and equal education opportunities of this group of students have not been adequately addressed. As reported in a research study on integrated education system commissioned by the EOC in 2012, while a significant minority of school principals, teachers, and professionals expressed disagreement about adopting necessary modification measures to cater for the needs of students with SEN, another half of the school professionals showed unwillingness to accept and support students with severe disabilities. Furthermore, 26% and 31% of students with SEN indicated that they had been bullied and teased by their classmates, while the figures for regular students were 18% and 24% respectively.

INVITATION TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS

5. This commissioned study has three aims: (1) to identify major challenges faced by ordinary schools in educating students with SEN, (2) to assess the effectiveness of Government policies currently in place to facilitate integrated education, and (3) to collect data on best practices of integrated education pioneered by school professionals that would serve as a foundation to suggest further policy interventions. The EOC encourages proposals submitted by research teams with expertise in this specific area.

Specific Objectives

6. Specific objectives of the study are as follows:
- (a) To review local and overseas literatures and studies on approaches and strategies adopted in providing inclusive education to students with SEN;
 - (b) To assess the knowledge of principals, school administrators, and teachers about the DDO, the Code of Practice on Education, and students with SEN;
 - (c) To gauge the views on inclusive education for students with SEN in ordinary schools from principals, school administrators, and teachers;
 - (d) To examine the major challenges faced by schools in implementing integrated education and meeting the needs of students with SEN;
 - (e) To assess the effectiveness of Government policies currently in place to facilitate integrated education and providing equal education opportunities to students with SEN;

- (f) To identify best practices developed by school professionals in achieving the goals of integrated education, meeting the needs of SEN students, and providing them with equal education opportunities through case studies; and
- (g) To give evidence-based policy recommendations for ensuring access to and equity in ordinary school system for students with SEN.

7. Research teams are welcome to cover other specific issues which would facilitate the research exercise. Such suggestions and the related research design should be included in the research proposal and will be counted towards the teams' score in the assessment exercise.

Duration of the Study

8. It is expected that the project will be commenced before the end of September 2019 and completed within a time-frame of 12 months.

Budget of the Study

9. The upper limit budgeted for the research project is capped at HK\$600,000. The amount of fee paid to the commissioned research team will be published in the EOC's website after the completion of the research study.

Briefing Session for Interested Research Teams

10. A briefing session will be held to give an introduction of the current invitation. Research teams who are interested in submitting proposals are welcome. Details and registration method of the briefing session can be found in the EOC's website.

Research Proposal

11. Research teams who are interested in taking up the research project are required to submit a Technical Proposal and a Fee Proposal.

12. The Technical Proposal should include, but not limited to, the following:

- (a) An overview of the research team's perception and understanding of the subject matter of the study;
- (b) A detailed illustration of the approach employed in conducting the study and the analytical framework adopted in achieving the objectives of the study specified above;
- (c) An in-depth discussion of the research design and methods of data collection;
- (d) A description of the pilot survey conducted to verify testing instruments and procedures, the research ethics practices, and the quality control measures used in both fieldwork and office editing;
- (e) A presentation of data processing and data analysis plans;
- (f) A proposed work schedule of the entire study according to the duration specified above;
- (g) A description of the research teams, including the qualifications and experiences of the principal investigator and other key research personnel; and
- (h) Any other information that might assist in the evaluation of the proposal.

13. The Fee Proposal should include a budget plan with breakdown of costs for the research study and the method of payment.

Other Conditions

14. In addition, the research team (including members of the research team and, if any, all interviewers and facilitators) is required to fulfill the following conditions:

- (a) To discuss regularly with EOC staff in designing survey instruments, if applicable, which should be approved by the EOC;
- (b) To provide detailed plans of data analyses; and
- (c) To have basic knowledge of equal opportunity issues and to conduct the study in a sensitive manner when dealing with equal opportunity issues.

Copyright

15. Copyright of the research report, data collected and information derived from the study shall remain the property of the EOC. Subject to the prior approval of the EOC, the research team might be allowed to use the data and information for the purposes of academic research and academic publication.

Presentation of the Results of the Study

16. The research team should present the results of the study according to the following:

- (a) A bilingual (English and Chinese) full report of the study, including if necessary a glossary of definition of terms and technical jargons, should be produced. The format of the report should be agreed by the EOC. As well as an executive summary, the full report should include the following as its contents: research objectives, methodology, findings, discussions, recommendations, and implications.
- (b) Info graphics in bilingual format should be produced to present the research findings.
- (c) A validated and clean data file in a mutually agreed electronic format should be submitted to the EOC.
- (d) Oral presentations of the research results to the EOC and to the public at a media briefing should be made.
- (e) Research progress is subject to monitoring by the EOC. It is imperative to submit progress reports and present results orally as means of evaluation.

Selection Criteria

17. The EOC will consider both the cost and quality of the research proposals concurrently in reviewing the proposals. Selection criteria can be found in the EOC's website.

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL

18. Submission in Two Envelopes

- (a) The **Technical Proposal** and the **Fee Proposal** should be submitted in two separate, sealed envelopes.
- (b) **Technical Proposal Envelope:** One original and three duplicate copies of the Technical Proposal in bilingual (English and Chinese) format should be prepared and submitted in a separate, sealed envelope.
- (c) **Fee Proposal Envelope:** (i) One original and three duplicate copies of the Fee Proposal in bilingual (English and Chinese) format and (ii) one original copy of completed and signed form of “Warranty for Anti-Collusion” (Annex 1) in bilingual (English and Chinese) format should be prepared and submitted in a separate, sealed envelope.
- (d) The two sealed envelopes containing the Technical Proposal and the Fee Proposal (with the completed and signed form of “Warranty”) should be put in one sealed envelope and placed in the HVQT Box at the reception counter of the EOC Office (address as shown below) **before 5:00p.m. on 3 July 2019 (Wednesday)**. The envelope must be marked with the title of the research project but should not bear any indication which may relate the submission to the research team.

Equal Opportunities Commission
16/F., 41 Heung Yip Road,
Wong Chuk Hang,
Hong Kong

19. Research team that has submitted a proposal will be contacted for the electronic version of the Technical Proposal and the Fee Proposal.

20. Research team that has submitted a proposal may be required to give an oral presentation to Members of the EOC.

Equal Opportunities Commission

April 2019

To: Equal Opportunities Commission

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Warranty for Anti-Collusion

- (1) By submitting a tender, the Research Team represents and warrants that in relation to the invitation to tender of “Study on Challenges, Effective Policies, and Best Practices of Ordinary Schools in Educating Students with Special Educational Needs in Hong Kong”:
 - (a) it has not communicated and will not communicate to any person other than the Equal Opportunities Commission the amount of any tender price;
 - (b) it has not fixed and will not fix the amount of any tender price by arrangement with any person;
 - (c) it has not made and will not make any arrangement with any person as to whether it or that other person will or will not submit a tender; and
 - (d) it has not otherwise colluded and will not otherwise collude with any person in any manner whatsoever in the tendering process.

- (2) In the event that the Research Team is in breach of any of representations and/or warranties in Clause (1) above, the Equal Opportunities Commission shall be entitled to, without compensation to any person or liability on the part of the Equal Opportunities Commission:
 - (a) reject the tender;
 - (b) if the Equal Opportunities Commission has accepted the tender, withdraw its acceptance of the tender; and
 - (c) if the Equal Opportunities Commission has entered into contract with the Research Team, terminate the contract.

- (3) The Research Team shall indemnify and keep indemnified the Equal Opportunities Commission against all losses, damage, costs or expenses arising out of or in relation to any breach of any of the representations and/or warranties in Clause (1) above.

- (4) A breach by a Research Team of any of the representations and/or warranties in Clause (1) may prejudice its future standing as the Equal Opportunities Commission’s supplier or service provider.

- (5) Clause (1) shall have no application to the Research Team’s communications in strict confidence with its own insurers or brokers to obtain insurance quotation for computation of the tender price, or with its professional advisers, and consultants or sub-contractors to solicit their assistance in preparation of tender submission.

- (6) The rights of the Equal Opportunities Commission under Clauses (2) to (4) above are in addition to and without prejudice to any other rights or remedies available to it against the Research Team.

Signature of the
Authorized Person
Representing the Research Team: _____

Name of the Authorized
Person (in Block Letters): _____

Organization Chop: _____

Date: _____