

LCQ7: Assisting children of non-local talents in pursuing studies and education in Hong Kong

Following is a question by the Hon Shang Hailong and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (July 3):

Question:

As at the end of April this year, a total of 290 000 applications were received under various talent admission schemes. Among them, nearly 180 000 applications had been approved, and some 120 000 talents had arrived in Hong Kong. It is learnt that many incoming talents have brought along their young children to settle in Hong Kong. Regarding assisting children of non-local talents in pursuing studies and education in Hong Kong, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that in its reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on May 22 this year, the Government indicated that as local primary and secondary schools did not need to report the admission of minor dependants of talents admitted to Hong Kong under the Top Talent Pass Scheme (TTPS) to the Education Bureau (EDB), it did not have statistics on the number of such dependants studying in Hong Kong, whether the Government will consider requesting schools to report the relevant figures to the EDB;

(2) of (i) the vacancy of places in all primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong, together with a breakdown by type of school (i.e. government, aided and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools), and (ii) the vacancy of places in all kindergartens in Hong Kong, together with a breakdown by type of school, in the recent two years;

(3) given that many applicants approved under TTPS have reportedly indicated that as they can hardly obtain information on schools in Hong Kong from official channels in the Mainland, they have to make do with non-official information provided by Mainland key opinion leaders or bloggers, whether the Government has put in place new measures to provide such approved applicants with information on making late admission applications to schools for their children; and

(4) whether it will collaborate with any non-governmental organisations to launch new measures to assist children of talents admitted to Hong Kong under various talent admission schemes in integrating into local school life smoothly during the early period of their arrival; if so, of the details; if not, whether the Government will consider expeditiously initiating relevant collaboration with such organisations?

Reply:

President,

The Government has implemented various talent admission schemes to attract talents from the Mainland and around the globe to come to Hong Kong for development, with a view to facilitating the growth of Hong Kong into an international talent hub and making new contributions to the country's high-quality development. Having consulted the Labour and Welfare Bureau, our consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Shang Hailong is as follows:

(1), (3) and (4) Under the prevailing arrangement, persons who are permitted to reside in Hong Kong as dependents (including but not limited to dependents of successful applicants under various talent admission schemes) are not required to obtain prior permission from the Director of Immigration for receiving education in Hong Kong. They can choose to enrol in primary and secondary schools of different finance types, and the schools concerned are not required to report to the Education Bureau (EDB).

In order to assist talents interested in coming to Hong Kong or newly-arrived applicants under various talent admission schemes in understanding information about education in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Talent Engage (HKTE) publishes information on local education and further studies on its dedicated online platform, covering a brief introduction to the education system in Hong Kong and available options for further studies, etc, and containing hyperlinks to information or lists of Hong Kong publicly-funded primary and secondary schools, as well as the website of International Schools in Hong Kong (internationalschools.edb.gov.hk/en/index.html). If talents have any enquiries about education and further studies, the HKTE will refer them to the EDB for follow-up as appropriate. The EDB website and designated service offices also provide school information and frequently asked questions regarding placement assistance for their reference. The EDB provides placement assistance for children aged 6 to 15 who are eligible to enrol in public sector schools. Parents may also contact individual schools directly to apply for school admission for their children.

In addition, the HKTE actively collaborates with several working partners to introduce information about education in Hong Kong, such as having organised two free themed seminars on topics relating to local education system and study planning in Hong Kong, which enables incoming talents to have a better understanding of the education system in Hong Kong. The HKTE also organises themed seminars and workshops on education in collaboration with experts and organisations in the education sector, and invite talents who have already settled in Hong Kong to share their insights and experiences so as to facilitate exchanges among new arrivals. Details of such activities will be announced on the HKTE's website and social media platforms in due course. On the other hand, local school councils also organise joint exhibitions and talks in the Mainland to provide information to and answer enquiries from the Mainland parents and students who are interested in studying in local schools. Some schools have even arranged school visits, class observations and experiential learning sessions for newly-arrived families and/or those intending to apply to come to Hong Kong with a view to allowing them to directly experience the learning environment

and conditions in Hong Kong.

In respect of support services, the EDB has all along been committed to helping newly-arrived children (including dependents of persons permitted to stay in Hong Kong under different talent admission schemes) adapt to the learning environment in Hong Kong and integrate into the local community. The EDB provides them with support services, including a six-month full-time Initiation Programme arranged by local schools and a 60-hour Induction Programme organised by non-governmental organisations. The contents of these programmes cover language education, learning skills, personal growth and development, and social adaptation. Moreover, the EDB provides public sector schools and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme admitting newly-arrived children with a School-based Support Scheme Grant, so that they can flexibly provide school-based support services, such as afterschool supplementary lessons and orientation activities/guidance programmes/extra-curricular activities, according to the children's needs. Dependants permitted to stay in Hong Kong under different talent admission schemes can benefit from the above support services. We also encourage teachers to pay close attention to the needs and adaptation of the newly-arrived children, and render necessary support to them inside and outside classroom. All in all, schools will provide support services to all newly-arrived children based on their individual needs, rather than the categories of talent admission schemes under which they come to Hong Kong. The EDB does not require schools to report the figures on minor dependants of talents admitted to Hong Kong under the Top Talent Pass Scheme.

(2) The numbers of vacant places by type of schools in secondary and primary schools from the 2022/23 to 2023/24 school years are set out at Annex 1. Regarding kindergartens (KGs), all KGs in Hong Kong are privately run and could flexibly make use of their available registered classrooms to offer half-day or whole-day classes to address the demands of parents. In the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years, KGs joining the Kindergarten Education Scheme (Scheme) and non-Scheme KGs participating in the Admission Arrangements for Nursery (K1) Classes in KGs and agreeing to release information on their vacancies (including Nursery (K1) to Upper KG (K3) half-day and whole-day classes), are set out at Annex 2.