

Education Bureau Circular Memorandum No. 29/2016

From: Secretary for Education To: Heads of all Primary and
Secondary Schools (excluding
ESF and International Schools)

Date: 29 February 2016

2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) and Arrangements for Secondary 3 Territory-wide System Assessment in 2015/16

(Note: This circular memorandum should be read by Heads of all primary and secondary schools, excluding ESF and international Schools, for necessary action)

Purpose

The purpose of this circular memorandum is to inform schools of the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) and the arrangements for Secondary 3 Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics for the 2015/16 school year.

Background

2. The Education Bureau (EDB) announced in late October 2015 that the Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy (the Committee) was tasked to conduct a comprehensive review on TSA. Two working groups have been set up under the Committee to conduct an in-depth study of the reporting and administration and the papers and question design of TSA respectively, with a view to recommending short, medium and long-term improvement measures.

3. The Committee submitted the preliminary recommendations in early February 2016 to the EDB reaffirming the intent and value of the establishment of TSA and recognising the functional use of TSA data to provide feedback to learning and teaching and to facilitate the formulation of measures to support learning. On Primary 3 TSA, it is recognised that the assessment papers and question design could

be adjusted and different formats of school report could be adopted. Related arrangements should be tested out in the form of a tryout in 2016. The outcome of the 2016 Tryout Study should be appropriately adopted and enhanced in the 2017 assessment arrangement. The EDB has accepted the report of the Committee. The report has been uploaded onto the website (<http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/curriculum-development/tsa/report.pdf>).

2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)

4. The major objectives of the 2016 Tryout (Primary 3) are:
 - (i) to validate whether the revamped TSA papers and item design proposed by the relevant working group would uphold the reliability and validity of assessment while aligning with the requirements of basic competencies of Primary 3 students to tie in with the curriculum and student learning;
 - (ii) to try out different reporting formats to meet the needs of individual school;
 - (iii) to strengthen the provision of professional support measures for schools on homework policy, assessment literacy, enhancement of learning and teaching (e.g. via the promotion of reading) as well as TSA in the course of the Tryout. Public education would also need to be strengthened so as to enhance stakeholders' awareness of the TSA as part of the concept of "assessment for learning" with a view to enhancing quality education;
 - (iv) at the territory-wide level, to keep track on the attainment of basic competencies of all students and to provide continuous data for other related studies; and
 - (v) to demonstrate in good faith the low-stake nature of TSA that it would not exert pressure on school sponsoring bodies, schools and parents; and to foster mutual trust through participation, sharing and collaboration in promoting quality education with a view to facilitating effective and pleasurable student learning.

5. It is recommended that the number of primary schools participating in the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) would be around 50 and they are of different types (i.e. about 10% of the primary schools in the territory with each participating as a unit). Schools will be invited on the basis of various factors including districts, types of schools (government, aided, Direct Subsidy Scheme) and school size to ensure representativeness, reliability and validity of the Tryout Study.

6. The schools invited to participate in the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) can

consider if they would participate with reference to their school-based situations. Other schools are also encouraged to take part on a voluntary basis.

7. For details of the Tryout Study, please refer to the letter on ‘2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)’ to all primary schools issued by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) today. A series of support measures would be arranged for schools participating in the Tryout Study according to their needs. Further details will be announced.

8. Invited schools or other schools planning not to participate in the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) can refer to EDB Circular Memorandum No. 7/2005 and 77/2015 on arrangement concerning the number of school days in a school year and make necessary adjustments to the school calendar as appropriate.

9. The community recognises that over-drilling does not facilitate student learning. In accordance with the objectives of the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) and the voluntary nature of school participation, the EDB hopes to work with stakeholders (including students, parents, teachers, principals, schools and school sponsoring bodies) in concerted effort to implement the Tryout Study with a view to ceasing excessive drilling and unnecessary pressure, providing feedback to future TSAs. This is to enable the development of TSA to revert to the right track and to further enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching.

Arrangements for Secondary 3 Territory-wide System Assessment

10. The 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) will not affect the implementation of TSA at Secondary 3 level for the 2015/16 school year. Secondary 3 TSA will be conducted in accordance with the assessment schedule in EDB Circular Memorandum No. 77/2015.

11. The EDB appreciates schools for their ongoing effort to promote quality education. We would continue to work hand in hand to equip students with a positive and proactive attitude to embrace future challenge and to achieve the goal of whole-person development and lifelong learning.

Enquiries

12. For enquiries, please contact the following persons:

Enquiry on administration of the TSA:

Dr Tenny LAM of the HKEAA (Telephone no: 3628 8100)

Enquiry on arrangements of the 2016 Tryout Study:

Ms Fanstina TSE of the HKEAA (Telephone no: 3628 8181)

Enquiry on general policy of the TSA:

Ms Eunice CHAN of the Education Bureau (Telephone no: 2921 8943)

Ms Jenny CHAN
For Secretary for Education

cc: Heads of Sections – for information