

Education Bureau Circular Memorandum No. 16/2021

From: Permanent Secretary for Education
To: Supervisors / Heads of Aided Primary Schools (excluding Special Schools)

Ref: EDB/STS/SBS/320/1
c.c. Supervisors / Heads of Government and Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) Primary Schools and Heads of Section - for information

Date: 24 February 2021

Enhanced Speech Therapy Grant

Summary

This circular memorandum sets out the details of the **Enhanced Speech Therapy Grant (ESTG)** for aided primary schools in the 2021/22 school year.

Background

2. Early identification of speech and language impairment (SLI) and timely intervention help students acquire speech and language skills necessary for effective classroom learning. Starting from the 2009/10 school year, the ESTG has been provided as a recurrent grant to government and aided primary schools operating six classes or more with students with SLI enrolled. The purpose of the provision is to enhance the School-based Speech Therapy Service (SBSTS) for students with SLI to better support them in learning, communication, and literacy development. Schools operating five classes or less with students with SLI enrolled will continue to receive support from the Education Bureau (EDB).

3. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, the EDB will create school-based speech therapist (SBST) posts in the public sector primary and secondary schools to implement the Enhanced School-based Speech Therapy Service (Enhanced SBSTS) by phases. Primary schools that have started implementing the Enhanced SBSTS and that have received written confirmation from the EDB regarding the implementation of Enhanced SBSTS in 2021/22 are not required to apply for the ESTG. The other primary schools should continue to use ESTG to support their

students in need. For details of the Enhanced SBSTS, please refer to the EDB Circular No. 13/2019.

Details

4. All aided primary schools operating six classes or more in the 2020/21 school year and not implementing the Enhanced SBSTS in 2021/22 school year will be provided with the ESTG of the 2021/22 school year for supporting students with SLI. Eligible schools are required to submit information of students with SLI of their schools to the EDB for approval of allocation of grant.

5. Eligible schools will be provided with a *basic grant* according to the number of approved classes each school year. For schools operating 6-10 approved classes and with students with SLI enrolled, a minimum provision of the *basic grant* at an amount equivalent to 10 approved classes will be provided. In addition, schools with students diagnosed with moderate or severe SLI will be provided with a *top-up grant*.

6. The ESTG is one of the constituent items in the Special Domain of Operating Expenses Block Grant (OEBG) / a School Specific Grant under Expanded OEBG (EOEBG) or Expanded Subject and Curriculum Block Grant (ESCBG). Rates of the ESTG are subject to adjustment in accordance with the annual movement of the Composite Consumer Price Index (CCPI). For the 2020/21 school year, the basic grant rate is \$4,174 per approved class and the minimum basic grant provision for schools operating 6-10 classes is \$41,740, whereas the top-up grant rate is \$4,174 per student with moderate or severe SLI, capped at \$83,480 per school. Schools should refer to the relevant circular to be issued by the EDB in August 2021 for the revised rates for the 2021/22 school year.

Utilization of ESTG to Support Students with SLI

7. Schools should have comprehensive school-based support planning, financial planning and budgeting in utilizing the ESTG in order to cater for the needs of students with SLI. Specifically, schools are required to use the ESTG to employ SBSTs or hire SBSTS, and **should not deploy the ESTG for other purposes**. Schools should also adopt the Whole School Approach to support their students through the SBSTS model. In this connection, please refer to the Scope of SBSTS at Appendix and the Guide on School-based Speech Therapy Service uploaded onto the website of the EDB Special Education Resource Centre (Website:

<http://www.edb.gov.hk/serc>). The content of the Guide will be updated timely when necessary. Schools please obtain the latest information browsing the above webpage.

8. Schools should ensure that timely, appropriate and curriculum-based speech therapy service is provided for each student with SLI, and let parents be informed of the service provided and the progress of their children. The SBSTs are required to keep a comprehensive student register, detailed descriptive assessment reports and clinical notes properly for the students with SLI at school. Schools should submit to the EDB each year a year plan in December and a year-end report in August the next year.

Information to be Submitted by School

9. Schools that are eligible for the provision of the ESTG of the 2021/22 school year should submit information of the students with SLI enrolled through the **Special Education Management Information System (SEMIS) on or before 23 April 2021 (Friday)**. Schools have to send in copies of the detailed speech and language reports of students written by SBSTs (information of students with moderate or severe SLI, and information of those students recovered after therapy, including school leavers, transfer students and graduates) to the Speech Therapy Service Section, EDB Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre, Room 242, East Block, 2/F., 19 Suffolk Road, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon. Schools will be informed of the approved amount of ESTG for the 2021/22 school year by end of June 2021. The amount of grant will be adjusted in accordance with the changes in the number of approved classes of the school in the 2021/22 school year and the annual movement of CCPI. Schools could check the adjusted amount of the grant available on SEMIS in early September 2021. Funding for DSS primary schools will be calculated and managed as unit subsidy in the usual manner. Schools do not need to apply separately.

Grant Release and Financial / Accounting Arrangements

10. For aided primary schools which have established Incorporated Management Committee (IMC), the approved ESTG will be released on a quarterly basis in September, November, February and May of a school year. For aided primary schools without IMC, the grant will be released in one lump sum in August each year. Schools should follow the financial regulations set out for the OEBG/EOEBG.

11. To meet the accounting and audit requirements, schools should keep a separate account for the ESTG to record all the income and expenditure items of the grant. Schools should not deploy the ESTG for other purposes. However, schools may utilize other resources, e.g. the surplus in the General Domain of the OEBG, to supplement the ESTG. In accordance with the general regulation, all payment records should be kept for seven years.

12. For schools intending to participate in the Enhanced SBSTS in 2022/23 school year, please refer to the notification from the EDB in the 2021/22 school year.

Enquiry

13. For enquiry, please contact the respective Inspector of the Speech Therapy Service Section supporting your school or Ms LEE Lai-ping (3698 3937).

Mr Godwin LAI
for Permanent Secretary for Education

Scope of School-based Speech Therapy Service

Student Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to provide professional assessment for students suspected of having SLI; • to provide individual, group as well as in-class speech therapy service; • to cultivate a language-rich environment so as to enhance the development of language of the students; and • to develop and implement curriculum-based therapeutic programmes in order to suit the learning needs of individual students.
Teacher Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to train teachers on the identification of students with SLI; • to explain to teachers about the characteristics of speech and language impairments of the students and the impacts on learnings; • to collaborate with teachers in developing and implementing therapeutic strategies; • to collaborate with teachers and to integrate therapeutic goals into daily teaching; • to collaborate with teachers to develop therapeutic packages and programmes; and • to advise teachers on the design of Individual Education Plan and to give advice on curriculum tailoring.
Parent Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to explain to parents about the characteristics of speech and language impairments of the students and the impacts on daily life; • to teach parents to cultivate a language-rich environment; and • to train parents to enhance the speech and language skills of their children.
School Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to assist schools to develop inclusive policy and adopt the Whole School Approach to support their students; and • to assist schools to develop and implement school-based strategies to support students with SLI.