

Education Bureau Circular Memorandum No. 131/2008

From: Permanent Secretary for Education To: Supervisors / Heads of all aided,
Ref.: EDB(CD/NSS)/ADM/150/1/14(1) government and caput secondary
Date: 4 September 2008 schools, secondary schools under the
Direct Subsidy Scheme and Special
Schools with secondary classes

Preparation for the Implementation of the New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary and Higher Education (334) (2008/09 school year)

Summary

This circular memorandum (CM) summarises the latest development / major recommendations / information on 334 as at 31 August 2008 and serves as a baseline document containing all the important milestones reached. It also provides a schedule of other recommendations that would be finalised before September 2012. The CM aims at assisting schools to plan for the New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum in the upcoming school years in a holistic manner given the development so far and planned milestones ahead.

Background

2. *The New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education – Action Plan for Investing in the Future of Hong Kong* (334 Report) published in May 2005 has made a range of recommendations on changing the academic structure of Hong Kong in senior secondary and higher education. Based on the master time-table, starting from 2009, ALL students will be given the opportunity to study three years of senior secondary education on top of the nine year basic education. The NSS curriculum will be introduced in the same year leading to the new Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) to be administered in 2012 for the first time. The curriculum and assessment reforms aim to promote students' whole-person development and life-long learning. The Secondary 3 (S3) students in the current school year will be the first cohort of students studying the new senior secondary curriculum.

Details

3. Since May 2005, the Education Bureau (EDB) has deliberated a range of matters arising from the 334 Report by using appropriate platforms such as liaison meetings, seminars and engaging various stakeholders including schools, parents, tertiary institutions, government departments/bureaux and employers.

4. **The milestones targeted up to August 2008 have all been reached and some recommendations need to be further articulated in the developmental decision-making processes.** In brief, the milestones are categorised into five areas, namely

- Curriculum, learning and assessment
- Interface at S3 / S4 and at S6 / post-secondary education
- Supporting measures for schools
- NSS curriculum for special schools
- Managing change: communication and information

Please see **Appendix 1** for details.

5. Based on the feedback collected in the deliberation process with stakeholders, some major critical milestones which will be met between September 2008 and 2012 are provided at **Appendix 2**.

6. To engage the whole school in embarking on NSS, school heads are requested to circulate the CM to all members of Incorporated Management Committee / School Management Committee and the teaching staff, and to communicate with parents on all relevant information.

7. The EDB will issue similar CM annually to keep schools posted on the progress related to the preparation, implementation and progress of 334. Please also visit the website of “334” Web Bulletin (www.edb.gov.hk/334) regularly for the latest development.

Enquiries

8. For enquiries, please contact Ms K S Lau (2892 5805) or Ms Eunice M M Cheng (2892 5825).

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c.c. Heads of Section

Latest Development, Recommendations and Information on Various “334” Matters

Note: For each “334” matter, the upcoming events are shaded for easy reference.

1. Curriculum, learning and assessment

“334” Matters		Latest development / recommendations / information
1.1 Curriculum for learning to learn and whole-person development		
1.1.1	NSS curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NSS curriculum aims to promote students’ learning to learn capability and whole person development. • A typical NSS student programme agreed after three stages of consultation in 2005-06 is “4 Core subjects + 2/3 elective subjects (including NSS subjects, Applied Learning (ApL) and other languages) + Other Learning Experiences (OLE)”. This is a balanced programme with breadth and depth, and provides diversified choices to suit the interests, aptitudes and abilities of students. • The Curriculum & Assessment (C&A) Guides of the 24 NSS subjects were published in 2007 and are available on the “334” Web Bulletin (www.edb.gov.hk/334). • Draft curriculum frameworks for the 6 areas of studies under ApL (i.e. Creative Studies; Media and Communication; Business, Management and Law; Services; Applied Science; and Engineering and Production) have been completed. • ApL curriculum frameworks will be uploaded to the EDB website in late 2008. • Synopses of all ApL courses proposed for the first cohort of NSS students to take in S5 (2010/11) and S6 (2011/12) will be available on the EDB website in late 2008.

“334” Matters		Latest development / recommendations / information
1.1.2	Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide (SSCG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SSCG will provide a complete manual for delivering the NSS curriculum, building on the strengths of the curriculum reform at the basic education level. The contents included topics such as OLE, Student Learning Profiles (SLP), catering for learner diversity and curriculum planning & time-tabling etc. • A web version would be provided on the “334” Web Bulletin by the end of 2008. • Hard copies will be distributed to schools by May 2009.
1.1.3	Number of elective subjects to be studied by students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The planning of the NSS student programme is based on 2,700 hours of lesson time over three years. The programme should fully occupy the learning time of the great majority of students. It is therefore difficult for schools to arrange the lesson time for the 4th elective subject without compromising students’ learning time for the NSS student programme. • Under very special cases, a small number of students with greater capacity and diverse interests may enter examination beyond the 4 core and 3 elective subjects. A 4th elective subject (i.e. Visual Arts, Music, Physical Education, Ethics and Religious Studies, ApL courses and other languages) could be undertaken when the studies match the broad purposes set out for OLE and are delivered partially through absorbing the lesson time set aside.
1.1.4	Planning for Liberal Studies including Independent Enquiry Study (IES)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-third of the total lesson time in Liberal Studies (90 hours) is already recommended for the IES in the Liberal Studies C&A Guide. Liberal Studies panels / coordinators should plan how to allocate and make the best use of this time to prepare and guide students in conducting the IES, instead of assuming the default arrangement of doing such work mainly outside lesson time which will unduly overload teachers and students. • Teachers from Key Learning Areas that are related to the suggested themes of the IES may have a role in helping students understand issues under these themes. However, if schools plan to appoint all its teachers

“334” Matters		Latest development / recommendations / information
		<p>in the direct supervision of students in the IES, they must carefully consider that it is very difficult to get the whole school’s teachers to effectively utilise IES lesson time, and to achieve consensus in interpreting the marking guidelines set by Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA).</p>
1.1.5	Planning for ApL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development (PD) Programmes on managing ApL and student guidance have been introduced since 2006/07. • ApL taster programmes for S4 students will be piloted in 2009/10. • A computerised administration system on ApL is being piloted on the platform of WebSAMS and will be available for full implementation in 2010/11. • Exemplars of ApL in the context of whole school planning, cluster schools, time-tabling etc. will be available in early 2009. • An information kit on the planning of ApL implementation in schools will be available in mid 2009.
1.1.6	Arrangement of OLE and SLP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OLE booklet on setting out guiding principles for running a school-based OLE programme was published in 2007. Further guidelines would be provided in the SSCG (please see section 1.1.2 above). • Essential information (including school cases) on OLE and SLP is available on the website: www.edb.gov.hk/cd/ole. • SLP Module of WebSAMS has been launched in early 2008. • A separate circular memorandum (CM) on the arrangements for OLE and SLP will be issued in mid-September.
1.1.7	Flexible grouping and time-tabling as a means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every school should offer a sufficient number of elective subjects covering different Key Learning Areas and ApL to cater for the diverse aptitudes, interests and abilities of students. Students would be more

“334” Matters		Latest development / recommendations / information
	to providing a broad and balanced curriculum for students and widening students’ choices of elective subjects	<p>motivated to overcome barriers encountered in learning if they have interest in the subject.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible time-tabling is recommended for providing diverse choices for students. • Examples on block time-tabling could be found on the “334” Web Bulletin. • A software package entitled “Student Option Programme” (SOP) will be available in October 2008 to help schools analyse students’ preference in choosing the elective subjects and construct block time-table to meet students’ needs. • Schools’ WebSAMS server will be upgraded starting in late 2008. Please refer to EDBCM No. 54/2008. • Schools should effectively use all teaching space including classrooms, special rooms and science laboratories to facilitate block time-tabling (See Section 3.5.1 for further details).
1.1.8	Learning of the Chinese language for Non-Chinese Speaking students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible arrangement in admission to UGC-funded institutions. Details can be found in LegCo Paper CB(2)1180/07-08(5) or on the following website: http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ed/papers/ed0229cb2-1180-5-e.pdf • A provisional final draft of the Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for Non-Chinese Speaking Students will be uploaded by the end of 2008. • The final version of the Supplementary Guide is expected to be disseminated together with packaged materials towards the end of 2008.
1.2 Assessment – aligning learning and curricula		
1.2.1	Assessment frameworks for HKDSE Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessment frameworks for the 24 HKDSE subjects were finalised in 2007, and are available on the HKEAA website (www.hkeaa.edu.hk) as well as the “334” Web Bulletin.

“334” Matters		Latest development / recommendations / information
1.2.2	Sample papers, level descriptors and exemplars for HKDSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information packages on standards-referenced reporting for HKDSE subjects, containing sample papers, level descriptors and exemplars, will be finalised and published in early 2009. • Practice papers for HKDSE will be available in early 2012.
1.2.3	Regulations of HKDSE Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complete set of examination regulations for 2012 HKDSE, including the arrangements for other language subjects and ApL courses, will be promulgated in 2009. • The following information would be provided for schools to facilitate curriculum planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Subjects of the examination; (b) Forbidden combination of subjects; (c) Maximum number of subjects to be taken by candidates; (d) Registration of schools; (e) Participation by private candidates; and (f) Reporting of results.
1.2.4	Briefing sessions for teachers on public assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing sessions for each subject will be held in the last quarter of 2008 to update teachers on the proposed arrangement for the 2012 HKDSE examination, including sample papers, level descriptors, exemplars and SBA arrangements. • See also section 3.2.1 on professional development.
1.2.5	School-based Assessment (SBA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBA would be implemented incrementally. The schedule of SBA for each subject (except Mathematics) was announced in April 2008 and can be found on the HKEAA website (www.hkeaa.edu.hk) as well as the “334” Web Bulletin. • The SBA handbook providing details of assessment requirements, assessment criteria, guidelines and

“334” Matters		Latest development / recommendations / information
		<p>procedures for the conduct of SBA will be distributed to schools in early 2009.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A SBA Advisory Group comprising school principals and teachers has been set up to advise the HKEAA on various issues related to SBA in order to ensure its smooth implementation in the HKDSE Examination. • HKEAA is considering relieving the SBA workload of both teachers and students by coordinating the marks submission time across subjects at the end of S5 and S6. Schools will be informed of the details in early 2009.
1.2.6	Assessment of ApL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality assurance of ApL (including the assessment process) will be jointly conducted by EDB, Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), HKEAA and course providers (CPs) of ApL. • There is no public examination for ApL. Assessment of student performance in ApL courses is conducted by CPs. The key role of EDB is to set standards for ApL courses and monitor CPs on course design, including assessment; while HKCAAVQ will ensure ApL courses are delivered as designed and HKEAA will moderate the assessment standards of CPs. EDB, HKCAAVQ and HKEAA will work closely to ensure the quality of ApL courses including assessment of students’ performance. • HKEAA is currently conducting a research on the moderation of assessment of ApL courses, with CPs participating in it. The research is to be concluded by the end of 2009.
1.2.7	Contents of HKDSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three categories of subjects will be reported in the HKDSE, namely Category A (the 24 NSS subjects), Category B (ApL subjects) and Category C (other language subjects). • For category A subjects, results will be reported in five levels (1-5), with Level 1 being the lowest and Level 5 the highest. At the top end, to provide discrimination for selection purposes and to recognise outstanding performance, top Level 5 candidates will be awarded Level 5** and the next top Level 5 candidates will be

“334” Matters		Latest development / recommendations / information
		<p>awarded Level 5*.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Category B subjects, results will be reported in two levels: ‘Attained’ and ‘Attained with distinction’. The latter will be comparable with Level 3 and above in the Category A subjects. • For Category C subjects, marking and grading will be conducted by the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) (as the question papers of CIE will be used for the examinations). Results will be reported in five grades (A-E), with grade E being the lowest and grade A the highest.
1.2.8	International recognition of HKDSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HKEAA has been working closely with two accreditation bodies in UK, viz the National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) and the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), to secure international recognition of HKDSE since 2007/08. • The NARIC is the UK National Agency for providing information and expert opinion on qualifications attained from outside UK. The outcomes of the benchmarking exercise will focus on the recognition of the HKDSE for the purpose of general education and employment. • The UCAS is the official agency handling admission applications to higher education programs in UK. The outcome of the benchmarking exercise with UCAS is the establishment of a point system in the UCAS Tariff for the HKDSE. • It is expected that the first phase of the two benchmarking exercises will be completed by September 2009. • See also section 2.3 on university admission.

2. Interface at S3 / S4 and at S6 / post-secondary education

“334” Matters		Latest development / recommendations / information
2.1 S4 Placement		
2.1.1	S4 Placement Mechanism under the NSS Academic Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDB consulted secondary schools councils on the S4 Placement Mechanism under the NSS Academic Structure in early 2008. • S3 students studying in schools with sufficient S4 places will all be promoted to S4 in their own school. • If there are asymmetrical schools which temporarily cannot provide sufficient S4 places for all their S3 students, the schools concerned should admit their S3 students to S4 according to the S4 places available and students’ internal academic performance in S3. • A S3 student who cannot obtain a S4 place in his/her own school will be centrally placed to S4 in other schools by EDB. • The current practice of using students’ internal assessment in S3 scaled by the Secondary School Places Allocation Standard Scores and parental choices will continue to be adopted as the basis of central placement. • S3 students who wish to apply for post-S3 craft course places should apply directly to the Vocational Training Council (VTC) or Construction Industry Council Training Academy. • A CM on the implementation details of the S4 Placement Mechanism, including arrangements for S3 students who wish to apply for Senior Secondary School places, will be issued by the end of 2008.
2.2 Matters concerning repeating studies		
2.2.1	Repeating HKCEE in 2011 and repeating HKALE in 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKEAA will organise one more HKCEE and HKALE in 2011 and 2013 respectively for some subjects for S5 & S7 repeaters as private candidates. The subjects to be offered in the 2011 HKCEE for private candidates were announced on 6 May 2008 (please refer to the letter by HKEAA to schools). Information for the 2013 HKAL subjects will be available in mid 2010.

“334” Matters		Latest development / recommendations / information
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may re-sit HKCEE for the subjects offered by HKEAA in 2011 as private candidates. • There will be no more S6 admission exercise in 2011 and no more HKALE for students (the one in 2013 is only for S7 repeaters of 2012). Therefore, students are strongly encouraged to study S5 and S6 under NSS and to sit for the HKDSE in 2012 either as school repeaters or private candidates. There would be little problem for students who are sufficiently motivated to pick up the NSS course as there is sufficient curriculum continuity between HKCEE and NSS subjects. • In addressing the demand of repeaters who are formerly under the HKCEE system, schools may make use of the approved 5% repeater quota computed on a whole school basis. In other words, S4 students of the 2008/09 school year may be allowed to repeat in S4 under NSS in the 2009/10 school year provided that there are vacancies in the S4 classes and the school has not exceeded its overall 5% repeater quota. The same principle of operation will apply to the S5 students of the 2009/10 school year repeating in S5 under NSS in the 2010/11 school year.
2.3 University Admission		
2.3.1	University admission requirement under “334”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Heads of Universities Committee (HUCOM) announced in July 2006 the general admission requirements and programme specific requirements. • Details of university entrance requirements could be found on the “334” Web Bulletin.
2.3.2	Joint message of the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions and HUCOM on SLP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HUCOM will issue a joint message by October 2008 on OLE and SLP to confirm that all UGC-funded institutions will, during the admissions process, accept SLP as reference.

“334” Matters	Latest development / recommendations / information	
2.4 First-year-first-degree places in UGC-funded institutions		
2.4.1	First-year-first-degree places for HKALE and HKDSE students in 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of first-year-first-degree places in UGC-funded institutions will be doubled in 2012/13 to cater for both student cohorts of the HKALE and the HKDSE. The HKALE students and the HKDSE students will apply for the 3-year and the 4-year undergraduate programmes respectively. There will be no competition for quota between these two cohorts of students. • The Government will consider the number of senior year places (Years 3 and 4) in UGC-funded institutions under “334”.
2.4.2	Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JUPAS will announce new application procedures in 2011. • University Prospectus for 2012/13 first year study would be available by 2011. • Student will apply for university places via JUPAS in 2011.
2.5 Articulation to post-secondary Studies, VTC and employment in the Civil Service		
2.5.1	Recruitment requirements for civil service grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) is studying the implications of the HKDSE qualifications for civil service appointments. Heads of Grade(s) are invited to review the subject requirements for appointment for respective grades taking the NSS curriculum into consideration. • The first decision will be announced in 2010.
2.5.2	Associate degrees, Higher Diplomas, VTC, & Project Yi Jin (PYJ), articulation arrangements &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The post-secondary education institutions are in the process of revamping their curriculum design to cater for the NSS academic structure. • EDB is discussing the general admission requirements under the NSS academic structure with post-secondary education institutions . • VTC would continue to provide an alternative free avenue for S3 graduates to further their studies other than in

“334” Matters		Latest development / recommendations / information
	curriculum design	<p>mainstream education under the NSS academic structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PYJ in its existing format will be extended until the end of 2011/12. EDB is reviewing the long-term development and positioning of the PYJ under the new academic structure together with the Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions.
2.5.3	Information on recognition of ApL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recognition of ApL in the context of “334” is being discussed with universities, sub-degree providers and employers together with other NSS subjects. • Details will be announced in early 2010.

3. Supporting measures for schools

“334” Matters		Latest development / recommendations / information
3.1 Teacher-to-class ratios and related matters		
3.1.1	Teacher provision in terms of teacher-to-class ratios	<p>Decisions on the following were made in the 334 Report published in 2005:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>2009/10 to 2011/12 school years</u>: 1.7 teachers per junior secondary class, 1.9 teachers per senior secondary class in the new system & S5 of current system, 2.3 teachers per Advanced-level class. • <u>After 2011/12 school year</u>: 1.7 teachers per junior secondary class, 2.0 teachers per senior secondary class • Teacher Librarian (TL) will be counted as a regular post in the normal establishment and plays a significant role to support learning and teaching in NSS. It is worth reiterating that teacher-librarians, as ‘information specialists’ should work closely with subject teachers to coordinate curriculum-related resources and to help developing information literacy among students. Schools should make appropriate arrangements for TL to

“334” Matters		Latest development / recommendations / information
		<p>continue <i>focusing</i> on these tasks of library services to promote quality student learning in accordance with the Code of Aids as well as the actual situation and needs of the schools. Message on the roles of TL in NSS was elaborated in the “Realising the Vision of 334” article on 9 December 2007 (see “334” Web Bulletin) and was delivered through seminars held for principals and teacher librarians.</p>
3.1.2	Arrangement of Laboratory Technicians (LT) & Workshop Teachers (WT)	<p>After repeated deliberations, it is agreed with the school sector that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LT provision of secondary schools in 2008/09 will be frozen up to 2011/12 if there is no change of class structure due to student decline, otherwise the territory-wide average will be taken in calculating the provision. This will also apply to special schools. • The WT provision in 2008/09 will be frozen for 5 years up to 2012/13 provided that the schools concerned continue to offer the related subjects. The same policy will apply to special schools. • A separate CM on the arrangement of LT & WT will be issued in mid September 2008.
3.2 Professional development (PD) programmes for teachers and principals		
3.2.1	NSS PD programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the targets pledged for 2005-08 were met. About 100,000 training places were provided. • An annual booklet “<i>Professional Development Programmes for Secondary School Principals and Teachers (2008/09)</i>” has been prepared and distributed to schools. Details are available on the website: http://www.edb.gov.hk/cd/pdp/sec • A new series of Meetings on Preparation for “334” with School Leaders will be organised from October 2008 to March 2009 to provide a platform for school leaders to share relevant good practices in managing innovations and ways of overcoming constraints in the migration to NSS in 2009. Please refer to EDBCM 112/2008. • Workshops for Planning “334” for Newly Appointed Principals will be organised in October 2008.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of workshops on the use of the SOP software package will be organised from October to December 2008 to help schools analyse students’ preferences in selecting NSS elective subjects and construct block time-tables (please see section 1.1.7 above). • Different modes of PD programmes arranged at different times for specific subject teachers will be provided continuously in the coming year to meet their needs. There are four main components of the programmes: (a) Understanding and Interpreting the Curriculum; (b) Assessing Student Learning (including public examination and SBA components) ; (c) Learning and Teaching Strategies; and (d) Enriching Knowledge. Teachers are strongly advised to attend the first two which are the core areas. The remaining two are optional and teachers may attend on need basis. Apart from (a) – (d), additional components for Liberal Studies would be organised as appropriate. Please refer to the “<i>Professional Development Programmes for Secondary School Principals and Teachers (2008/09)</i>”. • PD programmes would be continuously provided from September 2008 to enable SLP co-ordinators to acquire practical / operational knowledge in operating SLP through WebSAMS. • On-going school-based support will be provided by the School-based Support Service Office, Regional Education Offices & School Partnership projects.
3.3 Textbooks, learning and teaching resources		
3.3.1	Timeline for releasing the recommended textbook lists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 1st batch of NSS recommended textbook list was released on 7 July 2008. • The 2nd batch of NSS recommended textbook list was released in late August 2008. • The 3rd batch of NSS recommended textbook list for re-submission will be released in early 2009.

“334” Matters		Latest development / recommendations / information
3.3.2	Web-based resources e.g. Liberal Studies web resource platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A web-based Resource Bank for Liberal Studies is available at www.ls.hkedcity.net. • Resources for subjects without textbooks would be progressively available before September 2009. • All learning and teaching resources will be supported by PD programmes.
3.3.3	Career guidance support materials / strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following resources are being developed to help teachers and parents give advice on further studies and career development in the NSS context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A pamphlet entitled “<i>New Academic Structure: Useful Tips for Parents, Vol.5</i>” will be published by November 2008 to help parents advise their children at S3 level to make informed choices in selecting NSS elective subjects. ➤ “<i>Finding Your Colours of Life for S1-3 Students: NSS Subject choices and the Development of Career Aspirations</i>” aims to facilitate students in the NSS cohorts at the junior secondary level to make informed and responsible choices on NSS elective subjects through exploring individual studies and possible career paths (to be completed in late 2008). ➤ A suggested framework on “<i>Preparing students for NSS from a career development perspective</i>” aims to enhance teachers’ professional knowledge and capability on career education / guidance in the context of “334” (to be completed in mid 2009). • Career talk series to familiarise schools with the latest professions and employment market will start in late 2008.
3.4 Funding		
3.4.1	Diversity Learning Grant (DLG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DLG is intended to help schools diversify the NSS school curriculum regarding the provision of ApL courses, other languages, gifted programmes and network programmes of subjects. • A CM will be issued at the end of September 2008.

“334” Matters		Latest development / recommendations / information
3.4.2	Enhanced Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant (SSCSG)	<p>EDBCM No.75/ 2008 announces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The disbursement of the SSCSG will be advanced by one year (i.e. from 2008/09) and the rate of the grant will be increased from a cash provision equivalent to 0.1 Graduate Master (GM) to 0.15 GM per NSS class calculated on the basis of the mid-point salary of GM teachers as at September of the relevant school year during the 4-year transitional period (i.e. 2008/09 to 2011/12). • In 2008/09 and 2009/10, the amount of SSCSG is at least equivalent to the mid-point salary of one GM for each secondary school offering the NSS curriculum. • Special schools offering the senior secondary curriculum will be provided with a cash grant equivalent to the mid-point salary of at least one GM per year during the 4-year transitional period.
3.4.3	Teacher Professional Preparation Grant (TPPG) and NSS Curriculum Migration Grant (NSSCMG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDBCM No.113/2008 announces that the 2008/09 school year will be the year for the last disbursement of the two grants. However, schools are allowed to carry forward the balance of TPPG and NSSCMG until the end of 2011/12.
3.5 Alteration work		
3.5.1	Teaching space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools should effectively avail all teaching space within the school campus including classrooms and special rooms (like science laboratories) in order to provide a balanced and diversified curriculum with reasonable choices for students. • A “<i>Supplementary Notes on Using Special Rooms in Flexible Timetabling</i>” is available under the item “Examples/Tools for Planning NSS Curriculum” of the 334 Web Bulletin (www.edb.gov.hk/334).

“334” Matters		Latest development / recommendations / information
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding should be sought from NSSCMG as far as possible for minor alteration works. In addition to the Grant, schools may use the surplus of the general domain of the Operating Expenses Block Grant (OEBG) or the Enhanced OEBG for the works. For schools with genuine financial difficulties, they may approach their respective senior school development officers applying for a top up to the NSSCMG. Schools concerned must provide strong justifications on their curriculum-driven teaching space need that cannot be addressed through their NSSCMG and other deployable surplus of government funds. • EDB has negotiated with the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department for providing technical advisory service to schools in their execution of alteration works. Details will be announced by the end of September 2008.

4. NSS curriculum for special schools

“334” Matters		Latest development/recommendation/information
4.1 Curriculum framework		
4.1.1	NSS curriculum for students without intellectual disability (non-ID students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students with special educational needs but not intellectual disability (ID) should aim at achieving the same curricular objectives for NSS, and they will be assessed by the same criteria with special accommodation. • Schools should refer to the C&A guides for the NSS subjects and planning for ApL (please see sections 1.1.1 and 1.1.5 above).
4.1.2	NSS curriculum for ID students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students with ID could follow an adapted NSS curriculum (NSS(ID) curriculum). The curriculum frameworks of the core subjects for ID students (Chinese Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies/Independent Living)

“334” Matters		Latest development/recommendation/information
		<p>are being developed in a Research and Development Project (Seed Project) initiated in 2006/07. It will be finalised by May 2009.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplementary notes on the C&A guides of relevant subjects will be ready by May 2009. • Two elective subjects (i.e. Physical Education and Visual Arts) are being tried out in the seed schools and will be ready in mid 2009. • More elective subjects such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Technology and Living (T&L) will be adapted in the forthcoming years. • The pilot projects of ApL courses for non-ID and ID students have started since 2005/06 and 2006/07 respectively. These pilot projects will be completed in 2009/10, and will inform the ApL courses for ID students under NSS. Schools will be informed of the details by the end of 2009.
4.2 Resource provision		
4.2.1	Resource arrangement for special schools (ID & non-ID)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the resource arrangements for special schools for both ID and non-ID students is being made. The sector will be consulted on the proposal (including the teacher-to-class ratio and the SSCSG) by the end of October 2008. • A separate CM on the resources arrangement for special schools will be issued at the end of 2008.

5. Managing change: communication and information

“334” Issues		Latest development/information
5.1 Communication with different stakeholders		
5.1.1	Face to face communication with stakeholders, e.g. seminars / sharing sessions / meetings / forums	<p>EDB is communicating with different stakeholders regularly through the following channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional / district-based seminars for parents with students in P5-S2 – invited by Regional Education Offices. • Regular liaison meetings with universities and schools councils (started since 2004). • Regular inter-sector sharing sessions among EDB, HKEAA, UGC-funded institutions, post-secondary institutions and school councils (started since July 2008). • Meetings with the employer sector (including CSB) have already started to promote mutual understanding and discuss the use of new qualifications.
5.2 Information		
5.2.1	Multiple channels and modes to provide information needed by different stakeholders	<p>The following channels have been used (and will continue to be used) to enhance communication with different stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “334” Web Bulletin set up since 2005 includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The NSS Information Network providing information of schools which was launched in 2007 to give parents access to such information under a single platform ➤ The NSS Information Kit (web version in March 2008) provides schools with the tools to communicate with parents and students. The printed version was sent to schools in July 2008 ➤ Regular update of the booklet of ‘Frequently Asked Questions on the NSS Academic Structure and Curriculum’ ➤ Special corners to provide information for different stakeholder groups like universities / post-secondary institutions, parents and employers will be available by the end of 2008. • Periodic parents pamphlets “Useful Tips on 334” since 2005.

	“334” Issues	Latest development/information
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of Announcement of Public Interest (API) on teachers’, parents’ and students’ role etc. under 334 in the run-up to 2012. • Loan services of “334” exhibit panels for schools • DVDs on NSS Curriculum Overview and Assessment • Articles on “334” Web Bulletin and newspaper • Roving exhibitions on “334” in various districts

Critical Milestones between September 2008 and 2012 (Update as at 31 August 2008)

	Sep – Dec 2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
NSS Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e-version of SSCG available (end 2008) • CM on the arrangement for OLE and SLP (September) • Provision of Supplementary Guide on the Chinese Language Curriculum for Non-Chinese Speaking Students (end 2008) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSCG published (May) 			
Applied Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ApL curriculum frameworks available • Synopses of ApL courses proposed for the first cohort of NSS students available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An information kit on the planning of ApL implementation in schools available (mid 2009) 			

	Sep – Dec 2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Assessment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBA handbooks for HKDSE subjects available (early 2009) • Information package on standards-referenced reporting for HKDSE subjects available (early 2009) 			
HKDSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefings for teachers on sample papers and level descriptors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination regulations handbook available (end 2009) • Schools to apply for first participation in HKDSE • First phase of benchmarking exercises on the HKDSE qualifications completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information of the subjects to be offered in the 2013 HKALE available (mid 2010) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students to apply for entry of HKDSE examination • Timetable for other languages examinations application and administration • Advance promotion of reporting in HKDSE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice paper for HKDSE available • Administration of 1st HKDSE
Interface between S3 / S4 and S6 /	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint message of UGC-funded institutions and HUCOM on OLE 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment requirements for different civil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospectus for 2012 undergraduate programme in tertiary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First cohort of 4-year undergraduate

	Sep – Dec 2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
post-secondary education	and SLP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S4 Placement Mechanism under NSS academic structure announced (end 2008) 		service grades by CSB	institutions available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JUPAS to announce application procedures for 2012 HKDSE graduates • Students to apply for 2012 university places through JUPAS 	programme
Supporting measures for schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of “Student Option Programme” software package • Workshops on the use of “Student Option Programme” (up to December 2008) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended booklist for re-submitted textbooks released 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New series of Meetings on Preparation for “334” with School Leaders (up to March 2009) • PD programmes to meet targets pledged 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of enhanced Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant (up to August 2012) 				

	Sep – Dec 2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of Diversity Learning Grant 			
NSS curriculum for special schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult special schools on the proposed resource arrangement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of supplementary notes on the C&A guides of relevant subjects for ID students • Information on ApL courses for ID students under NSS 			
Managing change: communication and information	<p>Ongoing communication with different stakeholder groups/parties which include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools councils • Tertiary institutions & University Grants Committee • Education Commission & Legislative Council • Vocational Training Council & post-secondary institutions, Civil Services Bureau • Parents and employers <p>Continuous production of various publicity materials like</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DVDs, parent pamphlets, FAQ booklets • Announcement of Public Interest (API) • Regular update of “334” Web Bulletin 				