

**REPORT ON THE  
2009  
SECONDARY FOUR PLACEMENT**

**SCHOOL PLACES ALLOCATION SECTION  
EDUCATION BUREAU**

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# **REPORT ON THE 2009 SECONDARY FOUR PLACEMENT**

## **SECTION 1 BACKGROUND**

1.1 The Junior Secondary Education Assessment (JSEA) System was established by the former Education Department in 1980/81 as a centralized selection and allocation system for Secondary 3 (S3) leavers who wished to continue their education in schools in the public sector or in technical institutes/industry training centres. Allocation of post-Secondary 3 subsidized places was based on the internal assessments of schools.

1.2 The report entitled *The New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education – Action Plan for Investing in the Future of Hong Kong* published in May 2005 has made a range of recommendations on the way forward for the new senior secondary (NSS) academic structure, including the review of the JSEA System. With the implementation of the NSS academic structure in the 2009/10 school year, all students are given the opportunity to receive three years of senior secondary education on top of the nine-year basic education. The JSEA System has also been abolished since the 2008/09 school year.

1.3 Under the NSS academic structure, students should normally be able to complete six years of secondary education in the same school to ensure continuity of learning. A few schools are unable to provide sufficient S4 places to accommodate all their own S3 students. Therefore, the Education Bureau (EDB) has to set up a mechanism to centrally place the S3 students concerned to S4 in other schools. In early 2008, the Secondary Four Placement (SFP) Mechanism was proposed to and unanimously accepted by the JSEA Committee 2007/08.

1.4 The 2008/09 SFP cycle was completed in August 2009.

## **SECTION 2 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SECONDARY FOUR PLACEMENT MECHANISM**

### Arrangements for Admission to Government, Aided and Caput Schools

2.1 To achieve the goal of enabling students to complete their six years of secondary education in the same school as far as possible, save for exceptional cases, all government, aided and caput schools should make available sufficient S4 places to accommodate all their own S3 students. S3 students studying in these schools will not participate in Central Placement.

2.2 The exceptional cases refer to individual schools without sufficient S4 places for all their own S3 students. These schools should admit their own S3 students to fill the S4 places available according to the students' order of merit in the internal assessments in S3. S3 students who cannot obtain S4 places in their own school will be centrally placed to S4 in other schools by the EDB. For schools without subvented S4 places, their S3 students will also be centrally placed to S4 in other schools by the EDB.

#### Arrangements for Admission to Senior Secondary Schools under Direct Subsidy Scheme

2.3 Senior Secondary Schools (SSS) under the Direct Subsidy Scheme recruit S4 students on their own. S3 students wishing to pursue S4 in these SSS may apply to the schools direct. Some SSS also provide S4 places at the Central Placement stage on a "no-choice-no-allocation" basis for S3 students to choose. Students admitted to S4 in SSS will not be arranged S4 places in government, aided and caput schools.

#### Arrangements for Admission to Post-S3 Craft Courses

2.4 Under the NSS academic structure, Post-S3 (PS3) craft courses will continue to be an alternative avenue for S3 leavers to further their studies outside mainstream education.

2.5 The Vocational Training Council (VTC) and the Construction Industry Council Training Academy (CICTA) recruit students on their own. S3 students who wish to enrol in PS3 craft courses may apply to the training bodies direct according to their interests and preferences. Students admitted to PS3 craft courses will not be arranged S4 places in government, aided and caput schools.

#### Central Placement

2.6 To ensure fairness and full utilization of S4 places, Central Placement is carried out on a territory-wide basis.

2.7 Every year in June, the EDB distributes to each S3 student participating in Central Placement a "Parents' Guidebook for Choice of Schools" and a "Choice of Schools Form". Parents can refer to the Guidebook and make their choices of schools and school districts in order of preference on the Choice Form.

2.8 S3 students participating in Central Placement are arranged S4 places through a computerized procedure, which is based on their order of merit in the internal assessments in S3 scaled by the Secondary School Places Allocation Standard Scores as well as parental choices.

2.9 At the Central Placement stage, apart from vacant S4 places in government, aided and caput schools, S3 students may choose SSS providing places at this stage on a “no-choice-no-allocation” basis. S3 students will not be placed to SSS unless they have indicated such choices. PS3 craft course places will not be included in the Central Placement stage.

### **SECTION 3 THE SECONDARY FOUR PLACEMENT COMMITTEE**

3.1 In line with the implementation of the SFP Mechanism, the JSEA Committee has been renamed as the Secondary Four Placement Committee with effect from the 2008/09 school year with the functions remain unchanged as follows: (1) to give advice to the Secretary for Education (SED) on the detailed operation of the SFP Mechanism; (2) to consider and advise the SED on the annual report of the SFP; and (3) to review the SFP Mechanism as and when required and to recommend measures of improvements to the SED.

3.2 The SFP Committee is composed mainly of seven members representing major school councils/associations and two members representing the VTC and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority respectively. The Chairperson of the SFP Committee is elected annually from among the seven representatives of major school councils/associations. The Vice-Chairperson and the Secretary are appointed by the SED from the Education Commission and Planning Division of the EDB.

3.3 The membership of the SFP Committee 2008/09 is at [Appendix 1](#).

### **SECTION 4 THE OPERATION OF THE SECONDARY FOUR PLACEMENT 2008/09**

#### Publicity and Liaison

4.1 The School Places Allocation Section of the EDB maintained close and regular liaison with schools, parents and the general public on matters relating to the SFP Mechanism. Information leaflets on the operation of the SFP Mechanism were distributed to students and parents for reference through the schools concerned. Related information could also be obtained from the homepage and the 24-hour Automatic Telephone Enquiry System of the EDB.

4.2 Seminars were conducted on 30 October 2008 (Thursday) and 29 April 2009 (Wednesday) to familiarize schools with the operation and general administration of the SFP Mechanism.

4.3 The School Places Allocation Section also liaised closely with the VTC, the CICTA and SSS on matters relating to their admission arrangements for S3 students. Useful information was provided to students who wished to apply for PS3 craft courses or pursue S4 in SSS.

#### Arrangements for Schools to Surrender Vacant Secondary Four Places

4.4 With the implementation of the NSS academic structure in the 2009/10 school year, most government, aided and caput schools were able to absorb all their own S3 students to continue S4 education in the same school in the 2009/10 school year. Only a very small number of students had to be placed to S4 in other schools through Central Placement.

4.5 In principle, all government, aided and caput schools should, after absorbing all their own S3 students to S4, surrender the remaining S4 places to the EDB for placement of eligible S3 students without S4 places. Taking into account the projected supply and demand of S4 places in the 2009/10 school year, the available school choices at the Central Placement stage and the impact on secondary schools, the EDB decided that for the 2008/09 cycle, schools with S4 vacancies were allowed to retain up to a maximum of two extra S4 places on top of the two repeater places per S4 class. This arrangement would be subject to annual review with due consideration to the projected supply and demand of S4 places each year.

4.6 For the 2008/09 school year, SSS without junior secondary forms were required to provide a minimum of 10% of their S4 places for Central Placement. As for SSS with junior secondary forms, they were allowed to opt out of the SFP Mechanism if they so wished. S3 students could choose SSS providing places at the Central Placement stage on a “no-choice-no-allocation” basis.

#### Participation of S3 Students in Central Placement

4.7 As at May 2009, there were a total of 71 279 S3 students attending government, aided and caput schools in the 2008/09 school year. The majority of the S3 students were able to progress to S4 in the same school, with only 98 requiring Central Placement for S4 places in other schools. The statistics on S3 students admitted to S4 and PS3 craft courses are at Appendix 2.

4.8 In June 2009, the EDB distributed to each S3 student participating in Central Placement a “Parents’ Guidebook for Choice of Schools” and a “Choice of Schools Form”. The Guidebook provided detailed school information, including the quota for Central Placement, the planned subjects to be offered in S4 in the 2009/10 school year, and their medium of instruction, for parents’ reference in making school choices.

### The Secondary Four Placement Process

4.9 The placement process was computerized. S3 students participating in Central Placement were arranged S4 places based on their order of merit in the internal assessments in S3 scaled by the Secondary School Places Allocation Standard Scores as well as parental choices.

4.10 The timetable for major events of the 2008/09 SFP cycle is at Appendix 3.

### Release of Placement Results

4.11 In the 2008/09 SFP cycle, only 98 S3 students required Central Placement for S4 places in other schools, and all of them (i.e. 100%) were arranged S4 places of their first five choices. Detailed analysis of placement by parental choices is at Appendix 4.

4.12 The placement results were released on 10 August 2009 (Monday). S3 students participating in the Central Placement/their parents were required to collect the Registration Forms from their schools, and register with the schools to which they were placed on 11 August 2009 (Tuesday).

## **SECTION 5 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

5.1 We would like to express our sincere gratitude for the valuable advice given by the SFP Committee and the co-operation of school heads and teachers in contributing to the successful operation of the SFP Mechanism in 2008/09.

School Places Allocation Section  
Education Bureau  
March 2010

## Membership of the Secondary Four Placement Committee 2008/09

- Chairperson : Ms CHAN Yuen-sheung  
(The Association of Hong Kong Chinese Middle Schools)  
(Principal, Kowloon True Light Middle School)
- Vice-Chairperson : Mrs FOK LEE Yu-hing  
(Principal Education Officer  
(Education Commission and Planning), EDB)
- Members from Major School Councils/  
Associations : Association of Principals of Government Secondary Schools  
Mr CHOI Sung-ki  
(Principal, Kowloon Technical School)
- Caput Schools Council  
Mr NG To-pong  
(Principal, Mu Kuang English School)
- Grant Schools Council  
Mr LEUNG Cheung-hing  
(Principal, St Joseph's College)
- Hong Kong Prevocational Schools Council  
Mr LEUNG Pak-chung  
(Principal, TIACC Woo Hon Fai Secondary School)
- Hong Kong Private Schools Association  
Mr CHAN Hung  
(Principal, QualiEd College)
- Hong Kong Subsidized Secondary Schools Council  
Mr LO Sai-kwong  
(Principal, The Methodist Church HK Wesley College)
- Member Representing the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority : Mr FU Tak-wah  
(Assistant General Manager – Assessment Development)
- Member Representing the Vocational Training Council : Ms SIU Pui-lin, Elvina  
(Assistant Deputy Head 1, Headquarters Division One)
- Secretary : Mrs YUK KWONG Wai-kuen, Regina  
(Senior Education Officer (School Places Allocation)2, EDB)

**Secondary Four Placement 2008/09 Cycle**  
**Statistics on Students by School Types**

Finance Type	Number of S3 Students <sup>Note 1</sup>	Number of Students <sup>Note 3</sup>				
		Promoted to Own Schools <sup>Note 2</sup>	Requiring Central Placement	Admitted to PS3 Craft Courses	Admitted to S4 of Senior Secondary Schools (SSS)	Admitted to S4 of DSS (non-SSS)
	(a)	(b) [%=(b)/(a)]	(c) [%=(c)/(a)]	(d) [%=(d)/(a)]	(e) [%=(e)/(a)]	(f) [%=(f)/(a)]
Government	5 401	5 367 (99.37%)	17 (0.31%)	7 (0.13%)	4 (0.07%)	0 (0.00%)
Aided	65 253	64 705 (99.16%)	81 (0.12%)	274 (0.42%)	74 (0.11%)	2 (0.003%)
Caput	625	613 (98.08%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (0.32%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>71 279</b> <b>(100%)</b>	<b>70 685</b> <b>(99.17%)</b>	<b>98</b> <b>(0.14%)</b>	<b>283</b> <b>(0.40%)</b>	<b>78</b> <sup>Note 4</sup> <b>(0.11%)</b>	<b>2</b> <b>(0.003%)</b>

Notes:

1. Figures refer to the position as at 15 May 2009.
2. The numbers of students promoted to own schools were estimated by schools as at 15.5.2009.
3. Students repeating S3, left schools, not requiring S4 places, etc., have not been taken into account.
4. Out of the total of 78 students admitted to S4 of SSS, 68 students were admitted through their direct application to the SSS and 10 students were placed to SSS through Central Placement.

### Major Events of the Secondary Four Placement Mechanism 2008/09 Cycle

Date	Event
26.9.2008	EDB distributed the “SFP Mechanism Information Leaflet” to parents through schools
30.10.2008	EDB conducted the “Seminar on SFP Mechanism” for schools
10.11.2008	Schools confirmed school data for calculation of Secondary 4 places
20.4.2009	Schools submitted Secondary 3 students Entry List to EDB
29.4.2009	EDB conducted the “Briefing Session on SFP Mechanism” for schools
18.5.2009	Schools submitted the “Student Entry Checking List” and “Confirmation of Quota for Central Placement” Data Form to EDB
1.6.2009 & 15.6.2009	Senior secondary schools and vocational training organizations submitted the lists of successful applicants to EDB
19.6.2009 & 29.6.2009	EDB notified schools of the lists of students admitted to senior secondary schools and Post-Secondary 3 craft courses
22.6.2009	EDB distributed through schools the “Parents’ Guidebook for Choice of Schools” and “Choice of Schools Form” to students requiring Central Placement
10.7.2009	Schools submitted the “Yearly Assessment Report” and “Choice of Schools Form” of students requiring Central Placement to EDB
20.7.2009	Centralized checking of yearly assessment and school choices data by schools concerned
10.8.2009	Release of Central Placement results
11.8.2009	Students placed to Secondary 4 in other schools reported to respective schools for registration

**Secondary Four Placement 2008/09 Cycle**  
**Statistics by Choice of Parents in Central Placement**

Type of Choice	Students Placed with S4 Places in Central Placement		
	Number	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
(A) Through School Choice			
(i) Through 1st School Choice	85	86.7 %	<b>86.7 %</b>
(ii) Through 2nd School Choice	6	6.1 %	<b>92.8 %</b>
(iii) Through 3rd School Choice	3	3.1 %	<b>95.9 %</b>
(iv) Through 4th School Choice	0	0.0 %	<b>95.9 %</b>
(v) Through 5th School Choice	4	4.1 %	<b>100.0 %</b>
(vi) Through 6th to 16th School Choices	0	0.0 %	<b>100.0 %</b>
(B) Through School Area Choice	0	0.0 %	<b>100.0 %</b>
(C) Through Residual Placement	0	0.0 %	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>