

Comprehensive Review for Direct Subsidy Scheme Schools

1. Background

- All schools joining the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) from the 2000/01 school year onwards are required to enter into a Service Agreement (SA) with the Government, under which a Comprehensive Review (CR) will be conducted to review the performance of schools within the period of the first SA. One of the criteria for the renewal of SA will be the satisfactory performance of the school in CR.
- DSS schools that are going to have a CR in the forthcoming school year will receive a written notification from the Education Bureau (EDB) School Administration Division sometime around April or May of the current school year about the CR basic arrangements and options. They could either opt to engage external agencies (EA) as approved by EDB to conduct a CR or request EDB to conduct the CR instead. These DSS schools will then submit their CR proposals to the Bureau for approval by September in the school year that CR is to be conducted.¹

2. Objectives of CR

- To facilitate EDB's consideration of continuing / renewing Service Agreements for DSS Schools
- To enable DSS schools to conduct evaluation of their focus development areas in ascertaining strengths and areas for sustainable development.
- To allow good practices in DSS schools to be capitalised upon and disseminated.
- To create opportunities for DSS schools to maximise flexibility in benchmarking with good practices within and outside the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).
- To provide information on the current situation regarding the quality of education in DSS schools.

3. Guiding Principles of CR

- A CR should be conducted with professionalism, integrity and courtesy by either external agencies as approved by EDB OR by EDB.

¹ For details about the DSS, please browse the following EDB website:

<http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/primary-secondary/applicable-to-primary-secondary/direct-subsidy-scheme/index.html>

<http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/primary-secondary/applicable-to-primary-secondary/direct-subsidy-scheme/index/ss-e-notes-table.pdf>

- Each CR will be conducted on a whole-school basis, with a balanced coverage of the HKSAR curriculum framework and the school's focus development areas.
- School performance will be assessed objectively in accordance with the *Performance Indicators for Hong Kong Schools*. Assessment is based on evidence and available data, including qualitative and quantitative ones as generated by, but not limited to, tools like the Key Performance Measures and the Stakeholder Survey.
- Communication should be clear and frank.
- Students' best interests should be well attended to.
- Confidentiality of personal information collected during CR should be strictly observed.
- Consistency should be ensured for making judgement on school performance.
- A CR report on school performance should be honest and fair.

4. Framework of CR

- A CR should be conducted on a whole-school basis. There are 2 distinct components to a CR: a **programme review** which focuses on assessment of learning and teaching and a **management review** which focuses on validation of the school's capacity for sustainable development. An illustration of the review procedure is at Appendix 1.
- DSS schools have the option to engage EA to conduct the CR with the cost borne by individual schools. The review team members need to be approved by EDB. An EDB officer will be on attachment to the EA CR Team as an observer during the CR process and as a resource person for the EA CR Team, including providing comments on the CR Report.
- For DSS schools that do not wish to engage EA, EDB will conduct the CR for them in line with the prevailing Quality Assurance Inspection framework².
- A report **with a clear judgement on whether the school is delivering the quality of educational experience and student achievement commensurate with its initial proposal to secure DSS status** should be compiled at the end of the CR. Schools which engage EA to conduct the CR should submit their final CR reports to EDB within 3 months after conducting the CR. The final report (without appendices) will be uploaded to the EDB webpage and school webpage will be hyperlinked accordingly to facilitate understanding of school's latest development by the public.

² For details about the procedural arrangements for the CR, please browse the following EDB website: <http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/sch-quality-assurance/esr-other-insp/cr/index.html>

5. Tools

Use of

- Performance Indicators for Hong Kong Schools
- Results of Stakeholder Survey and Key Performance Measures
- Results of Assessment Program for Affective and Social Outcomes, if available
- School-based evaluation tools and data, if any

6. Follow up action on CR

- Should the report find that the school is failing to deliver a level of provision commensurate with its DSS status, then it will be required to address the areas for improvement. A follow-up inspection will be conducted by the EDB after an interval of six months to one year. To sustain improvement, DSS schools are advised to incorporate the CR observations in their development planning through their internal self-improvement mechanism.

7. Relationship between CR and External School Review (ESR)

- For DSS schools having entered into a SA with the Government, a CR on their performance is required. Schools with their SA renewed are required to undergo ESR. The timing for conducting ESR has been set out in the renewed SA.
- EDB will arrange ESR for DSS schools not bound by SA with the Government.
- The procedures and requirements of ESR for DSS schools will be the same as those for public sector schools.

An Illustration of the Procedure of Comprehensive Review
(Conducted by an External Agency)

Introduction

A CR should be conducted on a whole-school basis. There should be two distinct components in a CR: a **programme review** which focuses on assessment of learning and teaching and a **management review** which focuses on validation of the school's capacity for sustainable development. DSS schools are encouraged, however, to formulate their own review procedures taking into account the need for the two components of CR to achieve the objectives of CR.

The following example illustrates the related procedural arrangements whereby the above two components can be accomplished in a CR conducted by an external agency.

Example:

Part I: Programme Review: review of the school curriculum and specific focus of the school within 3-4 days. All Key Learning Areas (KLA), individual subjects like General Studies (for primary schools) / Liberal Studies (for secondary schools) should be covered and inspected by subject specialists to satisfy the requirements of a CR.

Pre Programme Review:

- EA arranges a *programme* review with the school with specific focus identified for review.

Conducting Programme Review:

- Scrutiny of school documents including vision and mission, school development plan, annual school plan and school report.
- Observation of lessons and school activities (including student activities).
- Oral feedback to individual teacher after each lesson observation.
- Scrutiny of student work, test / examination papers with marking schemes and representative samples of marked student answer scripts (if available).
- Meetings / Interviews with the school head, teachers, school staff and students.
- Discussion and oral reporting to the school head and panel / department heads and teachers concerned.

Post *Programme* Review:

- Draft a report on *Programme* Review in a week's time and compile with the report on *Management* Review later on to form a full report.
- This draft report should include clear judgements on both the standard of programmes provided and as to whether or not this is commensurate with the school's initial proposal to secure DSS status.

Part II: *Management* Review: review of all domains of school work within 2-3 days in the week following the programme review

Pre *Management* Review

- Issue of questionnaires for school staff, students and parents.
- School provides documents and information.
- Analysis of school documents and information.
- Formulation of the review program – including validation of Part I *Programme* Review.
- Preparatory visit and sharing on the strengths and the priority for school development.
- School head's presentation.
- Meeting with parents.

Conducting *Management* Review

- Scrutiny of further school documents.
- Discussion with members of the school community.
- Oral feedback to the school management on preliminary findings.

Post *Management* Review

- EA issues the draft report to the school and EDB. This draft report should include a clear judgement as to whether the school is delivering the quality of educational experience and student achievement commensurate with its initial proposal to secure DSS status.
- School gives the written response concerning the main findings and key issues identified in the draft report.
- EA issues the final report to the school for dissemination amongst key stakeholders and to EDB.
- EDB uploads the final report (without appendices) onto the EDB website.
- Should the report find that the school is failing to deliver a level of provision commensurate with its DSS status, then it will be required to address the areas for

improvement. A follow-up inspection will be conducted by the EDB after an interval of six months to one year.