



本署檔號 Our ref.: EMB/LPA/PRO/19

來函編號 Your ref.:

電話 Tel. No.: 2186 8749

圖文傳真 Fax No.: 2123 1229

Language Proficiency Assessment Section  
Professional Development & Training Division  
Room 1701, 17/F., Murray Building  
Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong

3 June 2003

To Supervisors and Heads of Secondary and Primary schools

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Language Proficiency Requirement  
for English/Putonghua (PTH) Teachers**

The results of Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers (LPAT) 2003 have been released today. Your English/PTH teachers who attempted the LPAT in March 2003 should receive their results within this week.

Please monitor closely the Language Proficiency Requirement (LPR) status of your English/PTH teachers holding a permanent post. As you are aware, English/PTH teachers who joined or re-joined the teaching profession in the 2001/02 school year must meet the LPR by 31 August 2003. This requirement should have been reflected in their employment contract, pursuant to ED Circular AD21/2001. Those who cannot meet the LPR by the due date (“ineligible teachers”) must not teach the relevant language subject(s) **as from 1 September 2003.**

For any school with “ineligible teacher(s)”, please use the form in Appendix 1 to report on the school’s plan in dealing with the situation and return it directly by fax to your respective School Development Officer with a copy to the Language Proficiency Assessment (LPA) Section, on or before **17 June 2003.** Nil return is required if your school does not have any new English/PTH teacher who was appointed in the 2001/02 school year.

There are several options for coping with the situation.

First, if an “ineligible teacher” wishes to teach English/PTH in the future, s/he should be encouraged to study and improve their language proficiency. S/he may take a degree course and a teacher training course in the relevant subject and be exempted from the LPR in due course, or take other training courses and re-sit the LPAT. In the interim, however, s/he cannot continue to teach English/PTH in any primary or secondary school.

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Second, if the “ineligible teacher” does not major in English/PTH and has no intention of teaching the language subject in future, the school may consider re-deploying the “ineligible teacher” to teach other subjects, if and only if, (a) the “ineligible teacher” is suitably qualified to teach other subjects; and (b) the teacher who takes over the English/PTH classes from the “ineligible teacher” is better qualified to teach English/PTH.

You may wish to note that about 450 student teachers, with training in the teaching of English, will graduate this summer. Among them, some 280 are eligible for LPR exemption. I hope these graduates, who are qualified to teach English, will not be denied employment because of the relatively tight employment situation this year.

Over the next two weeks, School Development Officers will approach schools with “ineligible teachers” to work out the staffing plan with the principals. You may also approach your respective School Development Officer or the LPA Section (Tel: 2186 8749; Fax: 2123 1229; e-mail: [lpa@emb.gov.hk](mailto:lpa@emb.gov.hk)) if you need advice on compliance with the LPR.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you that new English/PTH teachers who joined or re-joined the profession in the current (2002/03) school year will have to meet the LPR by **31 August 2004**. These teachers can meet the LPR through either exemption or assessment. If they cannot meet the LPR before the due date, they will become ineligible to teach the relevant subjects as from **1 September 2004**. I earnestly request that you draw the attention of this category of teachers to the LPR requirement and ensure that they take timely steps to attain the LPR **before 31 August 2004**. In this connection, I should be grateful if you would provide the relevant information on these teachers, using the form at Appendix 2 and returning it to the LPA Section by **17 June 2003**. Nil return is also required, please.

I sincerely thank you for your support and efforts in implementing the LPR which is an important measure to improve language teaching and learning.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms Susanna S M Cheung)  
for Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower

c.c. School sponsoring bodies