

# EDUCATION BUREAU CIRCULAR MEMORANDUM NO. 501/2000

(Formerly referred as ED Circular Memorandum No.501 / 2000)

From : Director of Education

To: Heads of Secondary and Primary Schools

Ref. : LBT 5 V

- for necessary action

Tel.: 2126 5276

Date: 16 October 2000

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## Language Proficiency Requirement for English and Putonghua Teachers

(Note: This circular should be read by all school heads and teachers.)

### Summary

This circular memorandum informs schools of the implementation arrangements regarding the language proficiency requirement for teachers recently announced by the Government.

### Details

2. The language proficiency requirement is applicable to all English and Putonghua teachers in local primary and secondary schools, except for those employed under the Native-speaking English Teachers Scheme and those in international schools. All heads of schools should inform their English/Putonghua teachers of the ways and procedures of meeting the requirement.

#### Serving English/Putonghua Teachers

3. All serving English/Putonghua teachers in local primary and secondary schools are expected to meet the language proficiency requirement before the end of the 2005/06 school year. 'Serving English/Putonghua teachers' in this context refers to teachers who are holding a permanent post to teach English/Putonghua in the 2000/01 school year (including those who are on probation).

4. With the exception of those who are exempted from the language proficiency requirement, serving English/Putonghua teachers should demonstrate that they have met the basic proficiency requirement by (a) attending authorized training courses and passing the internal assessments by the respective institutes, or (b) sitting for the Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers jointly administered by the Hong Kong Examinations Authority (HKEA) and the Education Department (ED), or (c) a combination of (a) and (b).

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### Serving Non-language Teachers

5. Serving non-language teachers (who are holding a permanent post but not teaching English/Putonghua in the 2000/01 school year) may be re-deployed to teach English/Putonghua between the 2001/02 and 2003/04 school years. In case they are not exempted by way of qualification, they are required to demonstrate that they have met the basic proficiency requirement through training or assessment or a combination of both before the end of the 2005/06 school year. From the 2004/05 school year, any serving teacher who begins to teach English or Putonghua will have to demonstrate, before taking up the responsibility, that he/she has already attained the basic language proficiency in all the core language skills except classroom language. He/She will need to meet the classroom language proficiency requirement within one year of his/her taking up the responsibility.

### New Teachers of English and Putonghua

6. For teachers who join or rejoin the profession to teach English/Putonghua between the 2001/02 and 2003/04 school years and who are not exempted by way of qualification, they will have to demonstrate that they have met the language proficiency requirement through open assessment within two years.

7. From the 2004/05 school year, teachers of English or Putonghua will, before taking up the responsibility, have to demonstrate that they have met the basic proficiency requirement in all the core language skills except classroom language. They will need to demonstrate that they have met the basic proficiency requirement in classroom language within one year of their taking up the teaching duty.

8. In employing new English and Putonghua teachers before the 2004/05 school year, schools are encouraged to give preference to those who can demonstrate that they have attained at least basic proficiency in some, if not all, of the core language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening, speaking and classroom language for English teachers; listening and recognition, pinyin, speaking and classroom language for Putonghua teachers).

9. For your easy reference, a flowchart giving an overview of the arrangements regarding the language proficiency requirement is appended at the Annex.

### Exemption

10. Putonghua teachers with appropriate qualifications will be partially exempted and English teachers with relevant degrees and relevant professional training will be exempted from the language proficiency requirement.

11. In the case of Putonghua, teachers with a pass in the Test of Advanced Proficiency in Putonghua conducted by the Hong Kong Examinations Authority will be exempted from the proficiency requirements in Listening and Recognition, Pinyin, and Speaking; and teachers who have obtained Grade B, Level 2 or above in the Test of Proficiency in Putonghua conducted by the State Commission on Language Work will be exempted from the proficiency requirement in Speaking. Please note that no Putonghua teachers will be exempted from the proficiency requirement in Classroom Language.

12. In the case of English, a teacher who holds a relevant degree and has received relevant teacher training will be deemed to have attained Level 3 proficiency and satisfied the basic requirement. For more details about exemption, please refer to Circular Memorandum No. 502/2000 issued on 16 October 2000.

### Training

13. All serving English/Putonghua teachers and serving non-language teachers re-deployed to teach English/Putonghua between the 2001/02 and 2003/04 school years in public-sector schools (including Government, aided, bought-place scheme, caput and direct subsidy scheme schools) will be eligible for the reimbursement of the actual cost of one attempt of each paper in the Assessment conducted by the HKEA and the ED, and one-time attendance of authorized training courses and/or "enhancement courses" related to the language that they teach. Teachers will be free to choose the authorized course that best suits their needs, using a one-off training grant of \$13,000 for English teachers, and \$10,000 for Putonghua teachers. The grant may or may not cover the full tuition fees, depending on the type and level of studies selected. The training grant for all teachers will cease by the end of August 2006.

14. A variety of courses, in modular form and covering different areas of concentration, will be provided for teachers at different levels of proficiency with the aim of helping them to attain and exceed the basic proficiency level. Course providers are encouraged to adopt diverse modes of delivery including distance learning, web-site learning and school-based training in addition to face-to-face classes.

15. Vetting of proposals from potential course providers is under way. A list of 'authorized training courses' will be compiled later this year and it is anticipated that the first batch of training courses will begin early next year. Details of the training courses will be announced shortly.

### Language Proficiency Assessment

16. From 2001 onwards, the HKEA and the ED will hold the Language Proficiency Assessment annually in March. Details relating to the arrangement of the Assessment will be announced in due course.

## Staff Development Plan

17. Schools should include helping teachers to meet the language proficiency requirement as a key component of the staff development plan in which teachers' preference and the school's staff deployment needs should both be taken into account. Serving English/Putonghua teachers should be encouraged to attend the authorized training courses or sit for the Language Proficiency Assessment before the end of the 2005/06 school year in an orderly manner. It must be brought to teachers' attention that they are entirely free to opt for training or assessment. Schools should by no means restrict teachers' choices.

18. It is important that the school management should work out with teachers of the relevant language subjects a five-year holistic staff development plan, setting out on a yearly basis the number of teachers who opt for the different modes to meet the language proficiency requirement from this year up to 2005/06. For planning of training provision, schools are requested to submit this plan to the Language Proficiency Assessment Section (formerly known as the Language Benchmark Section) of the Education Department by the end of December 2000.

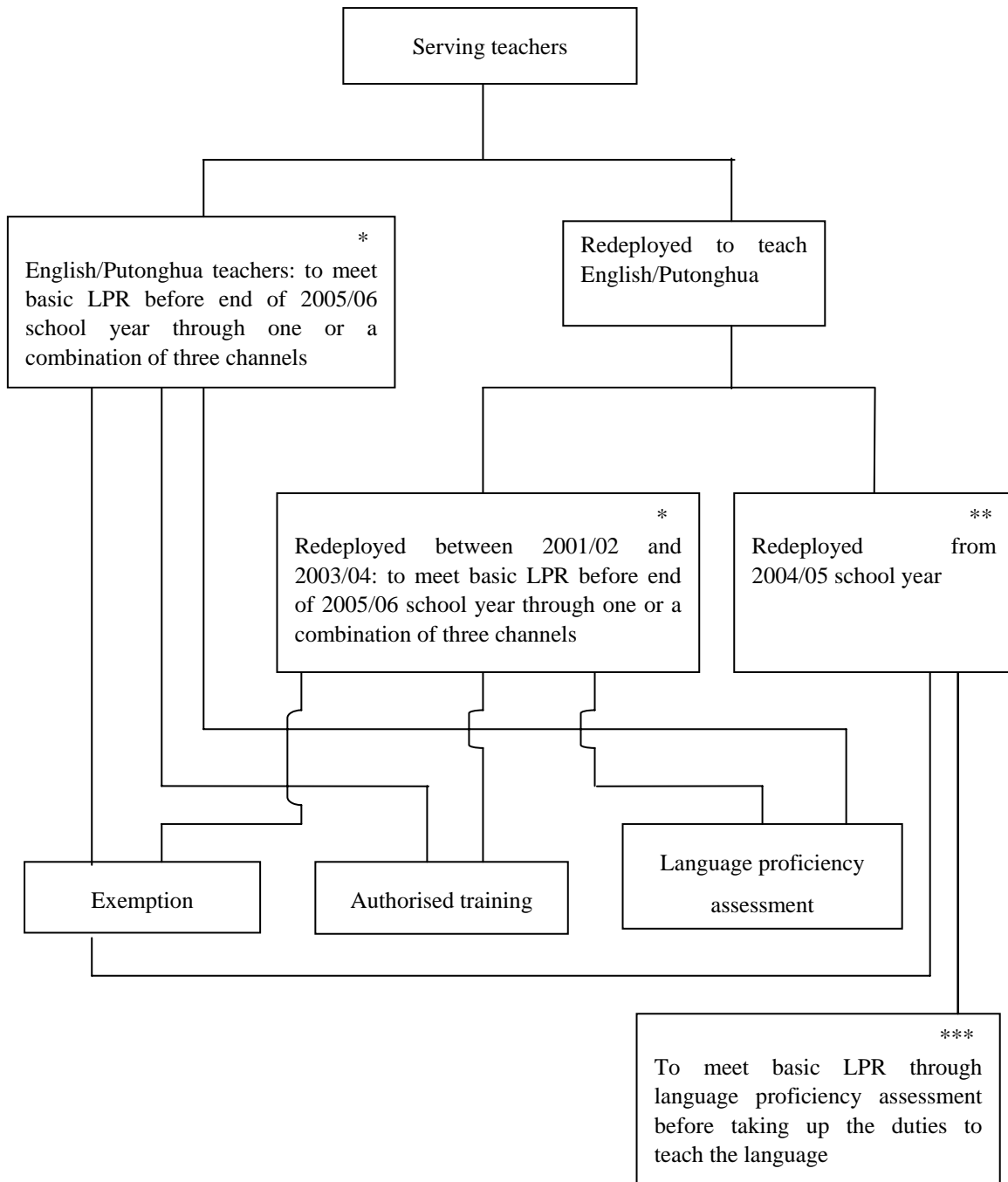
19. Application for reimbursement of assessment and/or training course fees will be processed through schools. Details of the application procedure will be provided in the circulars on training and on assessment to be issued in due course. Results obtained from authorized training courses and the Language Proficiency Assessment will be sent direct to the teachers and copied to the ED for record purposes. Schools will be provided with a list of their teachers who have met or exceeded the basic language proficiency requirement (without specific levels obtained) by the end of each school year.

20. Should there be any queries, please contact the Language Proficiency Assessment Section of the Education Department at 2126 5285.

(Steve Y.F. Lee)  
for Director of Education

c.c. Heads of Sections – for information

Arrangements for Serving Teachers regarding Language Proficiency Requirement (LPR)

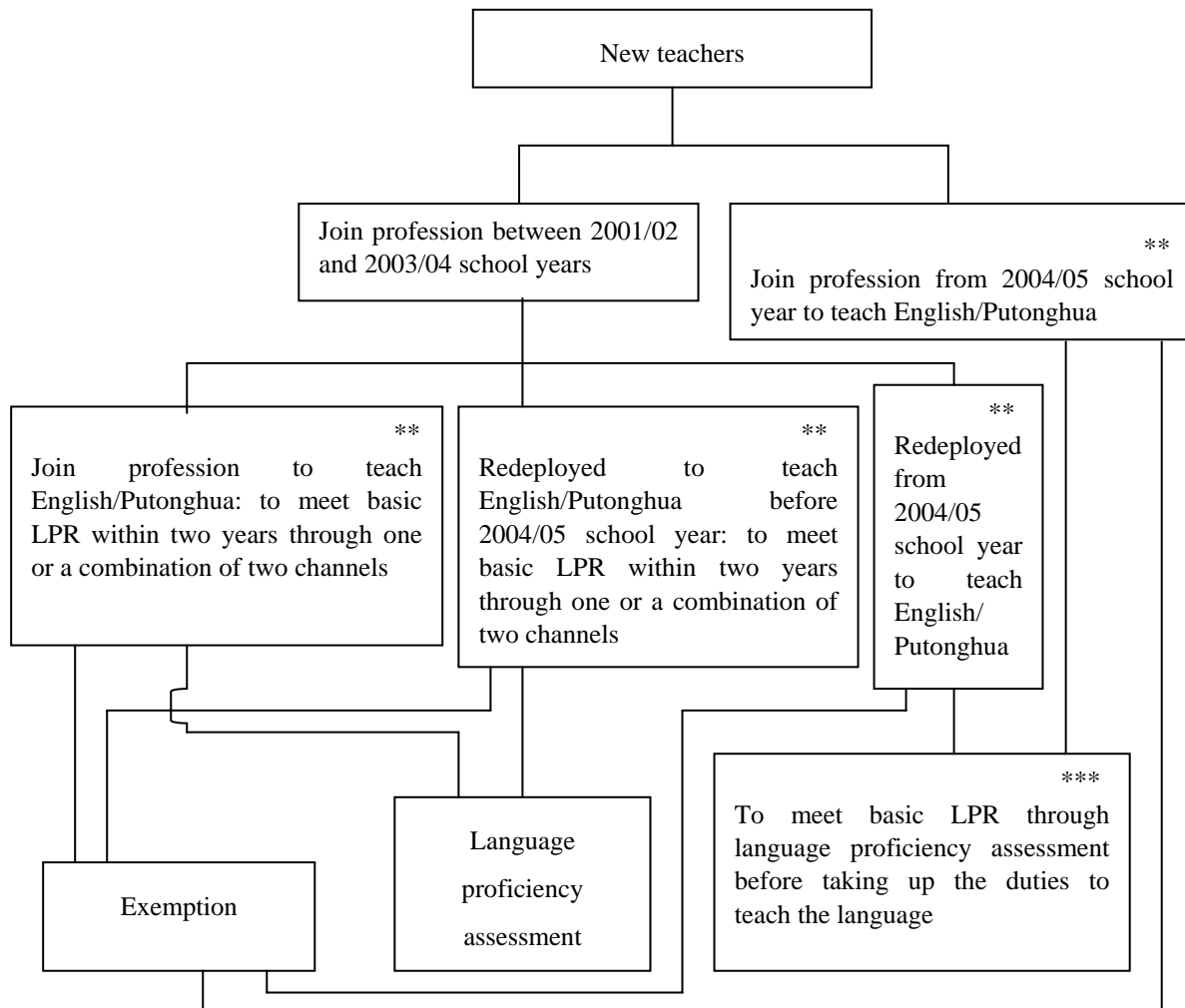


\* Eligible for training grant (\$13,000 for English; \$10,000 for Putonghua) and one free attempt of open language proficiency assessment.

\*\* Teachers to pay the relevant expenses.

\*\*\* To meet basic LPR in classroom language within one year after taking up the duties.

Arrangements for New Teachers regarding Language Proficiency Requirement (LPR)



\*\* Teachers to pay the relevant expenses.

\*\*\* To meet basic LPR in classroom language within one year after taking up the duties.

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