9. CONCLUSION

The Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) has been implemented for 10 years since its introduction in 2004 at P.3 level. Over these ten years, despite the HKEAA being experienced in implementing large-scale assessment, we have been listening and making reference to comments and recommendations collected from different stakeholders, with a willingness to ensure further improvement. We hope that the implementation of the TSA can be further enhanced and more effective.

Accomplishments in 2014

With high validity and reliability of the assessment data generated each year, TSA has served as a highly reliable assessment tool for schools to gauge students' attainment of basic competencies at the end of the three key learning stages. With reference to the assessment data, schools can formulate their teaching programmes to enhance students' learning effectiveness.

This year, the P.6 Assessment was conducted on a voluntary basis. A total of 47 schools, with about 4,000 students, participated in the P.6 Assessment. A further 340 schools requested P.6 Assessment question papers for teaching purposes. For the P.3 and S.3 TSA, a total of about 42,000 students were sampled to take part in the oral assessments. The S.3 level oral assessments were conducted in mid-April and the P.3 level in early May. In June, a total of about 106,000 P.3 and S.3 students took part in the written assessments. The post-assessment tasks, e.g. marking and data processing, were conducted smoothly and professionally.

The results of P.3 and S.3 students continuously reflect students' steady progress of achievement. The overall Basic Competency (BC) attainment rates of P.3 students in Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics are 86.3%, 80.3% and 87.4% respectively. When compared with the previous year's performances, the attainment rates in the three subjects have dropped: 0.3% in Chinese Language while 0.1% in both English Language and Mathematics. Regarding S.3, the attainment rates are: Chinese Language 77.0%, English Language 69.3% and Mathematics 79.9%. When compared with last year's performances, the attainment rate in Mathematics has increased 0.2% while the attainment rates in Chinese Language and English Language have respectively decreased 0.1% and 0.2%. The attainment rates in some subject levels have slightly decreased; however, their results in 2014 are not statistically significantly different from those in 2013. In general, students' performances are stable across years.

This year, the TSA results were released in November. As a usual practice, schools use their two-layer passcodes to login to the secure BCA site to download the TSA reports both in PDF and EXCEL formats. However, in response to the views collected from primary schools, the Education Bureau announced that no Basic Competency (BC) attainment rates in the three subjects will be provided to primary schools. Primary schools will only receive the school level report with the data of sub-papers and item analyses while the content of the school level report for secondary schools will remain unchanged.

The TSA seminars will be organized for teachers from mid-November to early December. Concrete exemplars will be used to illustrate students' overall performances. The purpose of the seminars is to help teachers interpret students' performances from TSA results. Trends in students' performances over time on various BCs will also be presented in the seminars to enhance teachers' understanding of students' strengths and weaknesses.

The Way Forward

As previously mentioned, the TSA is a reliable system-level assessment with information which serves as a very useful reference for schools. The HKEAA will continue to collaborate with the EDB to further enhance the TSA and its reporting system. It is hoped that the schools' curriculum leaders, panel chairpersons and subject teachers can make good use of this year's newly developed interactive item analysis reports: use the TSA data provided in an appropriate and strategic manner, together with other assessment data in the school – both internal and external – in order to adjust and formulate teaching programmes. These help facilitate teachers' analysis of students' strengths and weaknesses so that teachers can better understand students' learning progress. More importantly, students' performances at the three key learning stages can be strengthened and the effectiveness of learning and teaching can also be further enhanced, thereby promoting the culture of 'Assessment for Learning'.