

**REPORT OF THE
COMMITTEE ON COMPULSORY EDUCATION
IN SINGAPORE**

JULY 2000

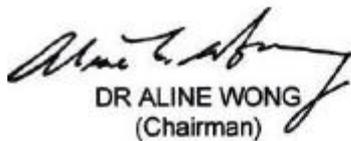
21 July 2000

RAdm Teo Chee Hean
Minister for Education

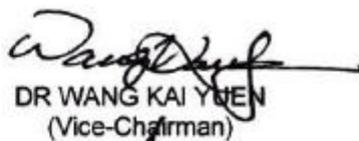
The Committee on Compulsory Education (CE) was set up in December 1999 to study whether CE should be introduced in Singapore, and if so, what form and duration it should take.

In this study, the Committee has considered how CE can contribute to the two key objectives of giving our children a common core of knowledge and skills for further education and the knowledge-based economy and a common educational experience to help build national identity and cohesion. In formulating its recommendations, the Committee has also taken into account the wishes and aspirations of the different groups and communities who will be affected if CE is introduced.

The Committee has now completed its work, and is pleased to present the enclosed report for your consideration.



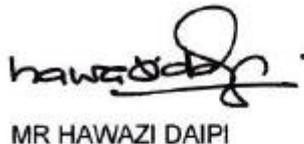
DR ALINE WONG
(Chairman)



DR WANG KAI YUEN
(Vice-Chairman)



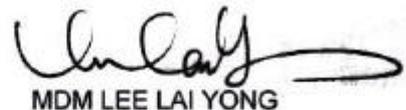
MR GAN CHIN HUAT



MR HAWAZI DAIPI



DR JENNIFER LEE



MDM LEE LAI YONG



MR LIEW MUN LEONG



MR R RAVINDRAN



MR SENG HAN THONG



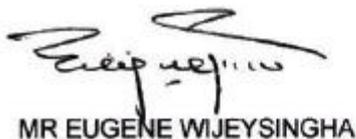
MR SUMARDI ALI



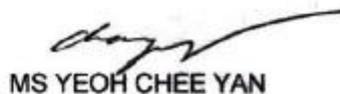
MRS TAN CHING YEE



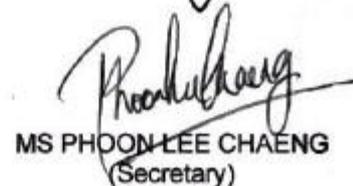
MR WEE HENG TIN



MR EUGENE WIJEYSINGHA



MS YEOH CHEE YAN



MS PHOON LEE CHAENG
(Secretary)



**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION
SINGAPORE**

3 AUG 2000

Dr Aline Wong
Senior Minister of State (Education) and
Chairperson, Committee on Compulsory Education

Dear Dr Wong,

I am pleased to inform you that Government has accepted the recommendations of the Committee on Compulsory Education.

I would like to place on record my appreciation to you and members of your Committee for undertaking such a thorough and balanced study of the issues on Compulsory Education.

The recommendations in the report, which accommodate the aspirations and views of the different communities in Singapore, re-affirm the important role that our education system plays in preparing our young to meet future challenges and to grow up to be useful and responsible citizens.

The success of Compulsory Education will require strong support from the different communities and the general public. On its part, the Ministry of Education will continue to improve the quality of education in our schools, so that all children will have the opportunity to be given the best possible start in life.



TEO CHEE HEAN

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	INTRODUCTION	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• FORMATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON COMPULSORY EDUCATION• REVIEW AND CONSULTATION PROCESS• BACKGROUND	
CHAPTER 2	THE SINGAPORE NATIONAL SCHOOL SYSTEM	7
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RATIONALE FOR SETTING UP NATIONAL SCHOOLS• PREPARING OUR YOUNG FOR THE KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY• ABILITY-DRIVEN EDUCATION• DESIRED OUTCOMES OF EDUCATION• THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM• CONCLUSION	
CHAPTER 3	KEY ISSUES IN COMPULSORY EDUCATION	12
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• INTRODUCTION OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION• RESPONSIBILITY OF ENSURING THAT CHILDREN ATTEND SCHOOL• DURATION AND FORM OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION• ENFORCEMENT OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION• EXCLUSION	
CHAPTER 4	RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION	23
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RECOMMENDATIONS• CONCLUSION	
ANNEXES 1-13	26 - 51

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

FORMATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON COMPULSORY EDUCATION

1. The mission of the Education Service is to mould the future of the nation. The Ministry of Education (MOE) does so by providing our children with a balanced and holistic education which strives to develop their potential to the fullest, and develop them into good citizens with a sound awareness of their responsibility to family, society and nation.

2. Through years of effort, Singapore has achieved almost universal education at the primary and the secondary levels, even though education has not been made compulsory. At present, about 3% of the age cohort is not enrolled in national primary schools. The dropout rate for each Primary 1 cohort is also very low, at 0.4% from primary school, and 3.5% from secondary school. Although we have done well, the Government is committed to improving education, and has been increasing its spending on education. While children who are not enrolled in national schools form only a small percentage of the cohort, the Government is nevertheless concerned that they are not being equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to be productive citizens in the knowledge-based economy (KBE). Hence, the Committee on Compulsory Education (CE) was formed in December 1999 to review whether CE should be introduced in Singapore and study the issues involved. (See **Annex 1** for the composition of the Committee.)

3. The terms of reference of the Committee are:

"To recommend whether CE should be introduced in Singapore, and if introduced, what form and duration it should take. In doing so, the Committee will examine:

- a. How implementing CE could contribute to achieving the two key objectives of education in national schools:
 - i. First, to give our children a common core of knowledge which will provide a strong foundation for further education and training that will prepare them for a KBE; and
 - ii. Second, to give our children a common educational experience which will help to build national identity and cohesion;
- b. The appropriate balance of responsibility between parents and the State for ensuring that children attend school;
- c. The views of the different communities on CE;
- d. The required framework for enforcing CE; and

- e. The experience of other countries which have introduced CE.

In conducting the study, the Committee will seek the views of the different communities."

REVIEW AND CONSULTATION PROCESS

4. In carrying out its study, the Committee examined the past trends and future educational needs of Singapore, given its unique social, economic and geopolitical environment. The experience of other countries with CE was also looked into for relevant and useful adaptation to the Singapore context.

5. The Committee adopted a multi-channel approach in eliciting feedback from the public. The Committee worked with the Feedback Unit of the Ministry of Community Development and Sports (MCDS) to gather the views of community leaders, interest groups and members of the public through a series of close-door discussion sessions. Focus group discussions with the self-help groups, as well as other organisations which had submitted written proposals to the Committee, were held. Through MOE's and MCDS's regular feedback channels, the Committee also received a total of 132 letters and electronic mails between 21 December 1999 and 1 July 2000. **Annex 2** gives a comprehensive list of organisations and individuals which the Committee consulted.

6. The Committee met seven times and held nine dialogue/feedback sessions with various groups and individuals over more than six months of deliberation and consultation. The Committee has now completed its study. Its findings and recommendations are presented in the subsequent chapters.

BACKGROUND

Education – Supporting Economic Growth and Promoting Social Integration

7. Since self-government, education in Singapore has always played a dual role of supporting economic growth and promoting social integration. In a process of continual development and improvement, education policies and practices have been reviewed and refined through the years.

8. The Government recognised from the start that education was the most effective long-term solution to achieve growth and stability for the nation, in addition to preparing young Singaporeans to participate in a modern economy. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, many private schools were offered government grant-in-aid in order to improve their conditions and standards, and to bring these schools under the regulation of MOE using the model of the government-aided school. More information on government-aided schools is given in **Annex 3**.

9. In the 1960s and 1970s, a series of educational reforms were undertaken to ensure comparable standards and parity across all the English stream schools and the three vernacular streams - Malay, Chinese and Tamil.

This was part of the Government's effort to try to bring the different communities together while allowing them to practise and promote their culture and customs - not by coercion or by making all the same, but by enlarging the common elements. A common syllabus and common examinations were instituted at primary, secondary and pre-university levels. Integrated schools were created, where two or more language streams were accommodated in the same premises headed by the same principal, to increase interaction and promote understanding among students of different language streams. Activities that instilled national identity and enhanced social cohesion, for example, flag-raising and pledge-taking ceremonies, were introduced in all schools.

Success of the National School System

10. Over the years, because of the increased popularity of English-medium schools, Malay, Tamil and most Chinese vernacular schools had to close because of falling enrolment. The last Malay medium and Tamil medium secondary schools ceased to operate in 1979 and 1982 respectively. Most of the remaining Chinese medium schools were converted to national stream schools and adopted English as the medium of instruction. Only nine were offered the status of Special Assistance Plan (SAP) schools¹. SAP schools provide a curriculum which is identical to all other national schools and offer Higher Chinese to most, if not all, of their students. By 1988, all government and government-aided schools offered the same curriculum, adopting English as the medium of instruction.

11. Today, the participation rate and achievement levels of our students are very high. In 1980, only 20% of the age cohort had five or more 'O' level passes. In 1999, this figure was about 59%. Opportunities for post-secondary and tertiary education have also expanded significantly in Singapore. The Singapore education system is turning out cohorts with higher level of educational qualifications. Today, about 60% of each Primary 1 cohort enter either the polytechnics or the universities. This is very high by international standards.

12. The success of our National School System is also evident from a number of recent international studies and comparisons. As announced in November 1996, Singapore's 12- and 13-year old students came up top in Mathematics and Science in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). This test was taken by more than half a million students from 41 countries and is considered the most stringent and comprehensive study conducted so far. The Committee also notes that the Singapore education system is highly regarded internationally and that the Times Education Supplement had stated in one of its September 1997 issues that "Singapore is currently seen as the most academically successful nation in the world". In the recent Second Information Technology in Education Study (SITES), an

¹ Nan Hua Secondary School was given SAP status in 2000, bringing the present number of SAP schools to ten. Besides two additional teachers given to SAP schools for Chinese Language instruction, they receive the same funding as other government or government-aided schools.

international study involving 26 other participating countries and economies, including Japan and Hong Kong, Singapore was ranked top in having a clearly articulated policy on the use of information technology (IT), the provision of some of the world's best computers and peripherals to schools, and IT training for its teachers. In short, foreign education planners and practitioners hold Singapore up as a model to emulate.

Cases of Non-Registration and Alternatives to National School System

13. Even though the Singapore education system is a successful one, the 3% of each age cohort (or about 1,500 children) who are not enrolled in national schools remains a cause for concern. Among this 3%, most of them have migrated overseas, are not contactable or are enrolled in private schools, like madrasahs and San Yu Adventist School. A very small number (less than ten) receive education at home. The number of children who are not enrolled in school because of family problems and financial difficulties is small. MOE and MCDS render assistance to such known cases, and these children do eventually enrol in national schools. (See [Annex 4](#) for details of non-registration in and dropout from national schools.)

Madrasahs

14. Each year, about 400 Malay/Muslim children per age cohort are enrolled in the six madrasahs which provide full-time education. Madrasahs are Islamic religious schools. Their current total enrolment (from primary to pre-university levels) is around 4,000. They have a long history and a number of them were founded during the colonial period. Most of the Islamic religious scholars and religious teachers in Singapore received their education from these madrasahs. Besides offering Islamic religious education, madrasahs also provide instruction in English, Mathematics and Science. Madrasahs are registered with MOE as private schools and are subject to the provisions of the Education Act. Administratively, madrasahs have been under the jurisdiction of the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) since 1990. (See [Annex 5](#) for more information on madrasahs.)

San Yu Adventist School

15. Besides the madrasahs, San Yu Adventist School (San Yu) is the only other private school that provides primary level education to Singaporean children. San Yu is a full school that commenced functioning in January 1997, from the merger of San Yu High School and the Seventh-Day Adventist School. These were private schools that registered with MOE in 1957 and 1961 respectively. San Yu is owned, funded and operated by the Seventh-Day Adventist Mission of Singapore. There is no government funding. It adopts MOE's syllabuses from Primary 1 to Secondary 4. Bible Knowledge is compulsory for all pupils and replaces Civics and Moral Education. The school also incorporates National Education into Social Studies at the primary level and History at the secondary level, and conducts morning flag-raising and assembly programmes for all pupils. (See [Annex 6](#) for more information on San Yu.) In 1999, San Yu had an enrolment of 73 at the primary level and 222

at the secondary level. At the primary level, 48% (35 pupils) are Singapore citizens or permanent residents.

Home-Schooling

16. A very small number of children (less than ten per year) who are not registered in national schools receive their education through home-schooling. Their parents have strong views on the upbringing and education for their children. They usually adopt curriculum packages designed for home-schoolers from other countries. Although the number of home-schoolers has been small so far, a few of their parents have indicated the possibility of civil disobedience if they are not allowed to home-school their children under CE.

MOE's Position on CE in the Past

17. The issue of CE has surfaced from time to time in public debate, especially when cases of non-attendance were highlighted in the media. While schools often go out of their way to help each of such non-attendance cases, MOE's position on CE had always been that CE would not be a panacea and would not address the problem of non attendance in school nor improve the quality of education immediately or directly.

18. MOE's position up to now has been that:

- a. We must strike a balance between the State's responsibility and the family's responsibility. MOE will make school places available, but parents and the family must want to send their children to school. This is the family's responsibility. Making education compulsory will undermine the principle of self-reliance and sense of parental responsibility which undergird the family as the basic unit of society; and
- b. Even if we legislate CE for all children of school-going age, that does not in itself ensure attendance, much less motivation. Enforcement becomes a major issue. Jailing or fining parents, who fail to register their children, or do not send their children to school after registration, is unlikely to solve the problem, and may even make matters worse for the child and the family. CE does not solve the problems at the root of non-attendance in school, which may merely re-surface in another form, such as absenteeism or truancy.

Emerging Trends and the Need to Review Current Policies

19. Speaking at the Debate on the President's Address on 13 October 1999, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong highlighted two demographic trends, which may undermine our efforts to build a world-class economy and a world-class home:

- a. The first trend concerns the growth of the population. The statistics show clearly that we are not achieving replacement rate for our population; and
- b. The second trend is the increased number of Singaporeans living overseas.

20. The Prime Minister stressed that all children must attend school so that every Singaporean child would be given the same head start in life to develop his or her potential to the fullest. He said that the significance of the statement “Every Singaporean Matters” could be better appreciated in the light of these demographic trends. It was in this context that he asked MOE to consider the introduction of CE, at least up to the Primary 4 level.

CHAPTER 2

THE SINGAPORE NATIONAL SCHOOL SYSTEM

RATIONALE FOR SETTING UP NATIONAL SCHOOLS

1. In the 1960s, the Government inherited a diverse education system with schools using different languages as their medium of instruction to teach vastly different curricular contents. To unify standards and as part of nation building, it brought schools under a national system, with a common curriculum, while allowing them to retain different languages as their medium of instruction. The objectives were:

- a. To ensure that our children learn a common, basic core of knowledge and skills that would prepare them for employment and further training; and
- b. To give our children a common educational experience which would help build national identity and social cohesion, with multi-racialism and meritocracy as the cornerstones of our nation.

PREPARING OUR YOUNG FOR THE KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY

2. These two objectives are still relevant today. Indeed, a common, basic core of knowledge and skills is of even greater importance in today's context, given that we need to provide our children with a strong foundation for further education and training in a KBE. With globalisation, it is also critical to educate our young to be global players without losing their sense of belonging to Singapore.

3. National schools have done well in achieving the twin objectives of imparting a common core of knowledge and skills, and providing a common educational experience for social cohesion and nation building. They have the necessary resources, and provide a total school environment that enriches teaching and learning. In Singapore, the Government provides enough places in national schools for all children of school-going age, and education, though not entirely free, is heavily subsidised by the State. MOE has always worked to bring, where possible, all children who can attend national schools into the national school system.

ABILITY-DRIVEN EDUCATION

4. The strategic response of Singapore's education system to the challenges of globalisation and the KBE is embodied in the vision, "Thinking Schools, Learning Nation". Under this vision, MOE has put in place an ability-driven education which aims to maximally develop and maximally harness the abilities and potential of every child.

DESIRED OUTCOMES OF EDUCATION

5. In January 1998, MOE published the Desired Outcomes of Education, which set out the end-objectives of education. These outcomes encapsulate the skills and values which are important for our young to acquire through the formal education system.

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

6. The national curriculum, which covers education from the primary to pre-university levels, is a critical platform for the achievement of the Desired Outcomes of Education. It is the medium through which structured teaching and learning take place in national schools.

7. MOE has developed an overall curriculum framework which spells out how the skills and values in the Desired Outcomes of Education can be taught through the academic subjects and non-academic programmes delivered in schools. From an early stage of their education, students learn self-management skills, social and co-operative skills, literacy and numeracy skills, communication skills, and information skills, all of which are fundamental skills that will remain important throughout their lives. Students study English, the language of commerce, science and technology, to gain access to the knowledge of the world. Students also learn their Mother Tongue to appreciate their cultural heritage. In addition, students learn Mathematics and Science to prepare them for the challenge of rapid technological advancement, balanced with the Humanities and Aesthetics for a well-rounded education. The curriculum structure and instruction time allocated to the different subjects at the various levels are shown in **Annex 7**.

8. Teaching and assessment methods have also been modified to nurture thinking skills and creativity, and to encourage knowledge generation and application. At the same time, citizenship education, character building, and inculcation of moral values are re-emphasised. The changes are reflected in the emphasis given to the following areas:

- a. National Education;
- b. Thinking Skills;
- c. IT Masterplan;
- d. Co-curricular activities; and
- e. Moral Education.

National Education

9. As our young become increasingly connected to the world, there is a danger that they may lose their sense of identity as Singaporeans. MOE has introduced National Education (NE) in schools to help our students develop an

awareness and appreciation of their national heritage and common destiny. NE also imbues in students a sense of community responsibility.

10. Within the academic areas of the curriculum, NE is incorporated into subjects such as Social Studies, History and Geography. This is reinforced by the many non-academic programmes and activities which students take part in. Our students commemorate events like Total Defence Day, International Friendship Day, Racial Harmony Day, and National Day. They also participate in activities, such as Learning Journeys, where they visit key national institutions. (See **Annex 8** for the list of participating institutions involved in the Learning Journeys programme). Our students take part in the Community Involvement Programme, where they undertake projects to serve the community. (See **Annex 9** for examples of Community Involvement Programmes organised by schools.)

11. Through these activities, students learn about respect and co-existence with Singaporeans of different races and religions, and acquire a deeper understanding and appreciation of the challenges, constraints and vulnerabilities facing Singapore.

Thinking Skills

12. In schools, the curriculum has been streamlined to allow for the infusion of more activities which promote creative and critical thinking and skills for life-long learning, so as to produce innovative and adaptable workers for the KBE.

13. Besides Thinking Skills, MOE is also introducing inter-disciplinary Project Work to all schools. Through such project work, students get to appreciate the inter-connectedness of disciplines, acquire useful problem-solving and communication skills, and learn to work in teams, all of which are skills that will stand them in good stead in the KBE.

IT Masterplan

14. Our young need to be IT-savvy to do well in the KBE. MOE has introduced the Masterplan for IT in Education with the aim of equipping students with useful IT skills, that will allow them to process and, more importantly, create new knowledge.

15. Phase I and II of the IT Masterplan have been completed. When Phase III is completed in a few years' time, all the schools will be fully-networked and have access to MOE's intranet, the internet and Singapore ONE. Schools will have a student to computer ratio of 2:1, and this will enable up to 30% of curriculum time to be IT-enriched.

16. Our students are already reaping the benefits of the IT Masterplan not only through IT-enriched lessons, but also participation in IT-based projects with students from other schools, both local and overseas. These projects have helped to broaden the outlook of our students, and provide opportunities for them to learn what living in a "global village" means.

Co-Curricular Activities

17. To achieve total development of the child, schools offer a wide range of co-curricular activities (CCAs). CCAs are an integral part of our education system and complement the academic areas of the curriculum in developing and nurturing the whole person. Through CCAs, students not only acquire skills and interests for healthy recreation, but also cultivate desirable values and social attributes such as teamwork, resourcefulness and self-discipline. CCAs also provide avenues for students from different social and racial backgrounds to engage in the same activities. In the process, they get to know one another better, and learn to support one another in their common endeavour. This enriches students' social experiences and enables them to have a better understanding of the spectrum of society. Students may choose from sports or games, uniformed groups, cultural activities or clubs/societies. The list of CCAs offered by schools is given in **Annex 10**.

Moral Education

18. Fundamentally, education is about nurturing the whole person. A holistic education encompasses the moral, cognitive, physical, social, and aesthetic aspects of personal development, with the moral aspect being the foundation of a person from which springs his goals in life, his outlook, and his relationship with other people. In partnership with the home, our schools strive to impart good moral values and desirable behaviour in our students. This is actively promoted in schools through the Civics and Moral Education programme, as well as related CCAs.

19. As a subject at the primary and secondary levels, Civics and Moral Education has the twin aims of developing students' strength of character and integrity, and enabling them to become responsible members of the family, the society and the nation. At the pre-university level, Civics is taught to harness and develop the leadership potential of our students.

20. Singapore is a secular state. As our society is made up of different ethnic and religious communities, MOE cannot prescribe a single set of morals which is in accordance with any one particular community or religion. However, students who wish to study Religious Knowledge can take it as an elective subject at the upper secondary level, and students may offer the subject at the GCE 'N' and 'O' level examinations. Religious Knowledge is taught outside the curriculum time in schools.

CONCLUSION

21. The Committee notes that students in Singapore who attend national schools receive a good education. Their academic achievements have been widely acclaimed by educators around the world. Moreover, our students are being prepared for the KBE through a comprehensive formal and informal curriculum and school activities. The students learn how to be life-long learners, be independent thinkers and innovators. They are equipped with the foundation skills, including IT skills, which will help them meet successfully the

changing demands of rapid technological and knowledge advancements in the 21st century. At the same time, students of different races and religions who go to national schools go through a common curriculum, share a common experience of growing up together, studying together, playing together, singing the national anthem together, and reciting the pledge together. These are invaluable life experiences which help in building emotional ties, identification, and a sense of commitment to one another as fellow citizens.

22. The Committee is of the view that the curriculum and total environment in national schools have served our students and our multi-racial society well.

CHAPTER 3

KEY ISSUES IN COMPULSORY EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION

1. The Committee recommends that CE be introduced, and that it be defined as education in national schools for Singapore citizens residing in Singapore, subject to the exemption of certain categories, as a means of further reinforcing the two key objectives of:

- a. Giving our children a common core of knowledge which will provide a strong foundation for further education and training to prepare them for a KBE; and
- b. Giving our children a common educational experience which will help to build national identity and cohesion.

2. In the Committee's view, our national schools, with their wealth of resources, are well-equipped to provide the curricula and environment needed to meet the two objectives. Hence, as a general principle, all children residing in Singapore who are Singapore citizens and able to attend national schools should be required to do so for the duration of CE. The Committee notes that most participants who provided feedback at the focus group discussions and feedback sessions, and feedback in writing to the Committee, agreed with the two objectives and supported CE.

3. In deciding to recommend CE, the Committee has considered various issues, which can be grouped under three key areas, viz., responsibility of ensuring that children attend school, the duration and form of CE, and the enforcement issues.

RESPONSIBILITY OF ENSURING THAT CHILDREN ATTEND SCHOOL

4. Currently, the State provides school places for all children who want an education in national schools. However, parents are responsible for enrolling their children in school and for ensuring that they attend school.

5. The Committee is concerned that, with the introduction of CE, the family's role may be eroded if the State assumes complete responsibility for ensuring that all children attend school. We must strike a balance between the State's responsibility and the family's responsibility, in order to uphold the principle of self-reliance and the sense of parental responsibility which undergird our society. The Committee feels strongly that, even with CE, the responsibility of sending children to school should still lie in the hands of parents. But if they do not send their children to school, the State can be empowered to compel them to do so, and penalise them if they do not.

6. Most participants in the focus group discussions and feedback sessions agreed with the above view, that is, even with the introduction of CE, the

responsibility of sending children to school should still lie in the hands of parents. They also agreed that the family and the community should first play an active role in convincing and helping parents send their children to school, before the State steps in to compel them to do so. This partnership of family-community-State is consistent with our national core value of the family as a basic unit of society, and the value of community support for the individual.

DURATION AND FORM OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION

7. When considering the duration and form of CE, the Committee recognises the need to balance the two key objectives of CE and the views and aspirations of the different communities in Singapore. The appropriate period of CE is also closely linked to the form of CE, and both must be considered together.

Duration of Compulsory Education

8. Most countries with CE require children to receive full-time education for nine to eleven years. (See **Annex 11** on duration of CE in some other countries.) The Prime Minister has asked MOE to consider the introduction of CE at least up to the Primary 4 level. Some advocates of CE have voiced the opinion that four years of CE is too short. Durations of six, eight and ten years have been suggested.

9. From an educational perspective, ten years of general education would be ideal to equip a student with the necessary knowledge and skills for a KBE, and to nurture responsible individuals and good citizens. This is why the Singapore Government has committed to providing ten years of general education for all Singaporean children to give them the foundational skills to prepare them for the future. Some members of the Committee thus feel strongly that CE should be for ten years of education in school.

10. The Committee has considered whether making secondary education compulsory will solve the problem of school dropouts. When some children reach secondary level, they drop out of school because of various reasons (often by choice), such as loss of interest. These problems are complex and will not be solved simply with CE. The Committee notes that the dropout rate from secondary schools is about 3.5%. If CE is extended to secondary education, efforts to enforce CE will require a great amount of resources and more severe penalties to be put in place. Even with the increased resources and penalties, there is no guarantee that the students so compelled to attend school will be motivated to study and complete secondary education.

11. A more desirable outcome for students who have lost interest in their studies or drop out of secondary school is for them to receive some vocational skills training, to prepare them for employment. The Committee notes that such courses, including apprenticeship schemes, are available at the Vocational Training Centres run by the Institute of Technical Education (ITE). They can subsequently proceed to undergo National Training Certificate Grade 2 or higher level training at ITE, which adopted a new curriculum model (from July

2000), designed to meet the challenges posed by the new economy. It is based on a modular, credit-based and competency-based training system. ITE is committed to the life-long training and retraining of workers. Vocational skills training and retraining will better meet the needs of the small percentage of students who drop out of secondary school because of loss of interest. For those who drop out because of other reasons such as family financial difficulties, family problems, etc., the school and the community should do their best to render assistance, so that the students can remain in school and complete secondary education.

12. The Committee concludes that, while it would be ideal from an educational perspective for all children to go through ten years of general education, the practicality of introducing and enforcing CE up to the end of secondary education also needs to be considered. The duration of CE should therefore be seen as the minimum period of education for all Singaporean children, and not as the ideal duration. Such a definition of CE also highlights the intention of the Government to give every Singaporean child the same headstart in life and be taught the foundational knowledge and skills that will enable him to further his education and training later on.

13. In the light of the two objectives of CE, and the balance of responsibility between the State and the family, the Committee proposes that CE be implemented up to Primary 6. The six years of interaction with children from different backgrounds in national schools, during the formative years of a child's life, will also help to inculcate in our young an understanding of the diversity of Singaporean culture and a sense of being Singaporean.

14. Although CE up to Primary 6 is recommended, MOE will continue to provide ten years of general education for all who want an education in national schools, and encourage as many children as possible to make full use of this provision. In fact, of every age cohort, more than 80% already go beyond the ten years to receive post-secondary education.

Form of Compulsory Education

15. The Committee notes that our objectives of CE in Singapore are very different from those in other countries. In other countries, CE is often introduced as a form of public or political commitment by the government to invest in education and provide equal opportunity for all. In the Singapore context, this is already being done, with the Government investing heavily in education (at 3.7% of the Gross Domestic Product), and providing sufficient places in national schools for all children of school-going age who are able to attend.

16. Currently, about one-third (about 500 children) of those who do not register for national schools at Primary 1 each year choose alternative forms of schooling. The vast majority (close to 90%) of these non-enrollees attend madrasahs, while the remainder either enrol in San Yu Adventist School or are home-schooled. Several members of the Committee feel strongly that it would be beneficial for these children to attend national schools. However, after

extended discussion, the Committee agrees that the power of the State to impose CE must also take into account the existence of certain institutions, like madrasahs, that fulfil a role in our society. The Muslim community is concerned over the madrasahs' preservation. An acceptable form of CE needs to give due consideration to how these institutions can be accommodated in the implementation of CE.

Madrasahs

17. Madrasahs play an important role in producing religious scholars and religious teachers for the Muslim community. The madrasahs feel that the training for these scholars and teachers need to begin from a young age, and that the madrasahs will not be able to attract sufficient students at the secondary level if all children had to attend national schools at the primary level under CE. On the other hand, there is a concern that madrasah graduates who do not become religious scholars and religious teachers will not be well equipped for jobs in the KBE as the focus of their education is on religious subjects.

18. To accommodate these concerns, various models were suggested by different Malay/Muslim organisations. These fall along a continuum between the maximalist and the minimalist approaches. In the maximalist approach, all children would attend national schools for at least the primary level, and madrasahs could complement national schools with religious classes for Muslim children outside school hours during the primary school years. In this way, Muslim children would be able to build a good foundation in English, Mathematics and Science and mix with other children from diverse backgrounds for six years before deciding on a full-time secondary madrasah education. The minimalist approach would merely require each madrasah to attain a certain minimum benchmark at the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE), so that its pupils can be exempted from CE and receive full-time primary education in the madrasah. The Committee notes that, while the maximalist approach is ideal from the perspective of achieving the two key objectives of CE for all Singaporean children, the minimalist approach is more acceptable to the Malay/Muslim community.

19. After much deliberation, the Committee recommends that the minimalist approach be adopted. Children may be given individual exemption from CE to receive their primary education at "designated institutions", including full-time madrasahs. In these cases, the parents are making a personal choice to opt out of the educational resources provided in national schools by the Government for the education of their children. The Committee further proposes that these children be required to sit for the PSLE at Primary 6. Madrasahs admitting children exempted from CE will need to meet a certain minimum standard at the PSLE in order that they continue to be on the list of "designated institutions". This is to ensure that children who receive their primary education in the full-time madrasahs achieve a minimum level of academic attainment. Parents who wish for their child to be exempted from CE will have to apply for exemption for their child, which will only be granted if there is proof that the child is attending a "designated institution".

20. In deciding on the PSLE benchmark for the madrasahs, the CE Committee has consulted the Malay/Muslim community, led by MUIS. MUIS has proposed that the PSLE benchmark for the madrasahs be pegged not lower than the average PSLE aggregate score of EM1 and EM2 Malay pupils in the six lowest-performing national schools, based on the ranking of the performance of their EM1 and EM2 Malay pupils in the PSLE of the same year. The Committee agrees that MUIS's proposal to peg the benchmark at the average performance of EM1 and EM2 Malay pupils is desirable, as the madrasahs would be aiming to provide a good foundation in the core secular subjects for future religious leaders of the Muslim Community. The Committee also finds MUIS's proposal to peg the minimum PSLE benchmark at the average of EM1 and EM2 Malay pupils in the six lowest-performing national schools acceptable, as the madrasahs have not had prior experience in benchmarking their pupils' performance against PSLE.

21. The Committee therefore recommends that the benchmark for madrasahs be pegged at the average PSLE aggregate score (round up to the nearest whole number) of EM1 and EM2 Malay pupils in the six lowest-performing national schools, based on the ranking of the performance of their EM1 and EM2 Malay pupils in the PSLE of the same year. Each madrasah must attain an average aggregate score which meets the benchmark. The PSLE aggregate score associated with the benchmark can vary from year to year depending on the performance of the EM1 and EM2 Malay cohort in the national schools. For the 1999 PSLE, the aggregate score associated with the proposed benchmark, had it been in place, was 175. (See **Annex 12.**)

22. Madrasahs should not be required to meet the benchmark overnight. The minimum standard should apply only to new Primary 1 madrasah pupils when CE is introduced. Their performance will be assessed only after they have gone through six years of the madrasah system or even one or two years thereafter.

23. Although the Committee is proposing exemption from CE for pupils enrolled in the full-time madrasahs, the Committee acknowledges that the primary objective of these institutions is to meet the needs of the community for religious scholars and religious teachers. National schools are better equipped to deliver secular education. Based on projections by external consultants that MUIS has commissioned, MUIS has estimated that the community will require 110 religious scholars and religious teachers each year over the next ten years. The Committee notes that the total annual Primary 1 intake into the six full-time madrasahs has averaged about 400 over the past five years. This is more than adequate to meet the projected requirement, as a 60% to 70% buffer for each intake is already allowed for, to take into account those who do not eventually become religious scholars and religious teachers.

24. The Committee thus recommends that the total annual Primary 1 intake of Singapore citizens into the six full-time madrasahs be maintained at 400. This will enable the madrasahs to focus on making the necessary adjustments in their curriculum and allocation of teaching resources to meet the PSLE benchmark, and establish a track record in the coming years of being able to

meet the PSLE benchmark. The Committee further proposes that the proportion of madrasah pupils who do not proceed on to the PSLE be monitored closely, to ensure that pupils who are exempted from CE to attend madrasahs do not subsequently drop out of both the national schools and the madrasahs. Otherwise, this group will not benefit from the introduction of CE.

San Yu Adventist School

25. San Yu Adventist School is a private regular school with a history of offering primary education mainly to Singaporean children from the Seventh-Day Adventist community. The School also takes in pupils who are aged one to two years above the age norm² at the respective levels and have left the national schools. Funded and operated by the Seventh-Day Adventist Mission of Singapore, the school offers a curriculum that is largely similar to national schools. Recognising the education service it has been providing for the community over the years, the Committee proposes that children who attend San Yu be given individual exemption from CE, similar to the pupils who attend madrasahs. Since San Yu has been offering a curriculum that largely follows that in national schools, the Committee also recommends that the PSLE benchmark for San Yu be pegged at the 33rd percentile aggregate score (rounded up to the nearest whole number) of all EM1 and EM2 pupils. The benchmark strikes a reasonable balance given San Yu's focus and the profile of its pupils. For the 1999 PSLE, the proposed benchmark corresponds to an aggregate score of 191. Besides meeting the PSLE benchmark, San Yu must also continue to deliver National Education through its curriculum. Based on the school's Primary 1 intake of less than ten Singapore citizens in recent years, a cap of ten Singapore citizens per Primary 1 intake to be granted exemption from CE is recommended.

Home-Schooling

26. A small number of parents have strong views on the upbringing and education for their children and choose to educate their children at home. While home-schooling has gained popularity in recent years in some countries such as the United States, home-schooling in Singapore is advocated mostly by a small number among the Christian community. They usually adopt curriculum packages designed for home-schoolers from other countries. A few of them have indicated the possibility of civil disobedience if they are not allowed to home-school their children under CE.

27. The Committee is concerned that while home-schooling children may be able to acquire the necessary core of knowledge and skills in the secular subjects at home, they may not have sufficient interaction with their peers, and knowledge of the Singapore society gained through such interactions. Also, if too many parents opt for home-schooling for their children, the situation may become undesirable, as a community that withdraws into itself is contrary to the basic tenets of our multi-racial and multi-religious society. Unlike educational

² The age norm for Primary 1 is six years by 1 January of the year of admission. The correct ages for subsequent years follow from this age.

institutions such as the madrasahs and San Yu Adventist School, which can be benchmarked and inspected, it is more difficult for MOE to monitor the effectiveness of home-schooling. Some members of the Committee are therefore of the view that home-schoolers should not be exempted from CE. However, other members feel that it would be unreasonable for the Government to penalise these parents, most of whom take a keen interest in ensuring that their home-schooled children do well in their studies.

28. On balance, the Committee is prepared to recommend that home-schoolers be allowed exemption from CE, but only if the parents are able to satisfy MOE that the two key objectives of CE can be achieved for their children. It is thus proposed that the parents of every child who is to be home-schooled must apply to MOE for exemption from CE. They should be required to furnish information on the curriculum and the educational outcomes of the home-schooling programme, and indicate how the child will receive instruction in National Education and participate in community involvement programmes, as well as any other information stipulated by MOE. Besides meeting the same PSLE benchmark as pupils who attend the San Yu Adventist School, home-schoolers must also pass the National Education quiz which all pupils in national schools are required to do before PSLE.

29. The Committee further proposes that the progress of home-schoolers be closely monitored, and that MOE reserves the right to withdraw its approval for exemption from CE at any stage. MOE may also require home-schoolers to sit for tests at certain points of their primary education. The more stringent requirements for home-schoolers to be exempted from CE (as stated in para 28 above) will help MOE to ensure that home-schooling is not used by irresponsible parents as a loop-hole to circumvent the introduction of CE and hence negate the purpose for which CE is introduced. MOE should regularly review its criteria for exemption to ensure that they are adequate in ensuring that home-schoolers meet the minimum requirements to fulfil the two key objectives of CE. As with the madrasahs and San Yu Adventist School, the requirement to apply for exemption from CE will only apply to children of Primary 1 age after CE is introduced.

Special Education

30. Currently, there are several options for the education of children with special needs that address their varying needs and levels of disability. For children with mild disabilities and who are able to cope with mainstream schools, MOE has incorporated facilities and resources in our national schools to facilitate the children's integration into national schools. Children with sensory disabilities who are able to integrate into mainstream secondary schools have been integrated. In addition, MOE is fitting more schools with full facilities for the physically handicapped, with a target of one such school per cluster by the year 2003.

31. MOE, together with the National Council of Social Service (NCSS), helps voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs) to set up special education schools to cater to children with moderate to profound disabilities. There are also home-

based programmes for children with severe and profound disabilities. Currently, there are 17 special education schools, run by eight VWOs, providing education to around 3,900 disabled children. MOE provides funding up to 2.5 times the recurrent cost of educating a primary school pupil in national schools. NCSS provides funding of another 1.5 times, bringing the total recurrent funding for special education schools to up to 4 times the recurrent cost of educating a primary school pupil in national schools. MOE also funds 90% of the development cost of a new purpose-built school. The target is to have 15 purpose-built schools to cater to children with learning disabilities. In addition, MOE facilitates teacher training and seconds teachers to special education schools upon request.

32. Notwithstanding the two key objectives for introducing CE, the Committee recognises that children with learning disabilities are much more able to develop their full potential if they attend special education schools where they are taught by specially trained teachers, supported by para-medical personnel, and can learn at their own pace. Further, the Committee recognises that, if CE were to include education in the special education schools for children with disabilities, the enforcement of CE may be unduly harsh on the parents of such children. This is so particularly since the VWOs are not yet able to complete the building programme for special education schools, nor able to provide all the necessary teaching resources for educating such children. The Committee therefore proposes that special needs children who are not able to attend national schools because of physical/intellectual disabilities be automatically exempted from CE in national schools. One way to do this is through class exemption³, where there will not be a need to impose enforcement if the parents of children with disabilities do not send their children to national schools.

33. The Committee is assured that MOE will continue its funding and support for special education on a cost-sharing basis with NCSS and the VWOs. Such partnerships among MOE, NCSS and the VWOs are in line with the "many helping hands" approach in looking after the needs of the less fortunate in society. Issues like additional funding and additional places for special education are already being addressed through the normal process which MOE has established with the NCSS, and will continue to be pursued regardless of whether CE is introduced. The Committee recommends that MOE regularly reviews the funding for special education schools, and provides additional assistance to the VWOs which run the special education schools. Examples of such additional assistance are more assistance with teacher training and upgrading of the curriculum. The Committee also endorses the current efforts by NCSS to implement more structured interaction programmes between special education schools and national schools, and calls on MOE to collaborate closely in such programmes as they will help strengthen social integration and identification among the two groups of children.

³ Class exemption operates by defining the common attributes/traits of the persons to be exempted. The exemption is usually automatic.

ENFORCEMENT OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION

34. While there is widespread support for CE, based on the feedback received by the Committee, most advocates of CE are not in favour of introducing tough measures to enforce CE. Most of them strongly recommend counselling, instead of fines and jail terms, for parents who repeatedly fail to ensure that their children attend school. The belief is that putting parents in jail will not help to solve the problem but will instead adversely affect the children and their family.

35. The Committee recognises that if CE is implemented, penal sanctions will need to be enacted to give effect to CE, and the Government must be prepared to enforce such sanctions. These include fines and jail as a last resort if parents persistently refuse to send their children to national schools despite various efforts to counsel and help them. Otherwise, it will bring the law into disrepute and adversely affect the integrity of our legal system. Penal sanctions for non-compliance with CE should, however, be taken as a last resort, after extensive efforts in counselling and community mediation have been exhausted.

36. One alternative is for MOE to set up a Board for CE legislatively, comprising representatives from the community, for example, Community Development Councils, grassroots leaders, self-help groups, Community and Parents in Support of Schools and VWOs, to look into persistent cases of non-compliance with CE. When necessary, the Board can refer cases to the Director-General of Education, who can then raise a complaint with the Subordinate Courts for legal action. This will reinforce the message that the primary responsibility of educating children rests with their parents, and help should come first from the family and the community, before the State is involved. The Board should have investigative powers which give it authority to request parents to produce information and to turn up for counselling for specific cases. Secretariat support for the Board for CE can come from a new CE Unit to be established within MOE.

Counselling and Mediation Process

37. Several levels of counselling and mediation procedures should be put in place to ensure that legal enforcement of CE will only be taken as a last resort. MOE already has existing structures and processes to investigate and intervene in cases of non-registration and dropout. (See processes highlighted in yellow in **Annex 13**.) It is proposed that these structures be incorporated into the counselling and mediation procedures for CE. (See **Annex 13**, with new processes highlighted in blue.)

38. In the proposed model, MOE will identify the children who have not registered with national schools and are not exempted from CE at the end of the Primary 1 Registration Exercise each year. MOE will trace these children and investigate the reasons behind their non-registration. If the parents⁴ have

⁴They can be parents or guardians of the children concerned.

not registered their children due to ignorance, MOE will advise them accordingly and refer them for registration or exemption. If the parents have not registered their children because of indifference or financial/domestic problems, the cases will be directed to the relevant organisations for counselling and assistance. (Currently, these steps are carried out by MOE.)

39. Currently, MCDS and VWOs are already involved in encouraging, persuading and helping parents who do not send their children to school to enrol the children. Procedures include repeated efforts by counsellors from the MCDS and VWOs to convince the parents of the importance of schooling to the children and the rendering of financial and other kinds of assistance to the family.

40. When all efforts to convince these parents to register their children for schooling fail, and legal action may have to be resorted to, the cases will be referred to Counselling Officers appointed by the Board for CE. The role of the Counselling Officers is to bring to the parents' attention the legal consequences of non-compliance with CE. The "stick" for CE is given higher profile in these rounds of counselling for the parents. If the parents still refuse to send their children to school, they will be called before the Board for CE. The Board may then decide whether to refer the cases to the Director-General of Education who, under the legislation for CE, can raise a complaint to the Subordinate Courts for legal action as a last resort.

41. For children with irregular school attendance at the primary level, schools, VWOs and MOE will investigate the causes and provide the necessary counselling and/or assistance to the families concerned. This is the current practice for potential school dropouts. If these rounds of counselling are unsuccessful in ensuring regular school attendance, and legal action may have to be used to compel attendance, the cases will be referred to the Board for CE. The subsequent interventions will be similar to those for cases of non-registration.

Penalties

42. When cases are referred to the Subordinate Courts by the Director-General of Education, the State will prosecute the parents for their failure to ensure that their children attend school. In some countries, the law also provides for penalty on the child. However, in Singapore, we are proposing CE up to Primary 6. Therefore, only the parents should be held responsible for children's non-registration and non-attendance at school under CE.

43. Most of the countries surveyed impose only a fine for the conviction of non-compliance with CE. The amount ranges from a nominal sum not exceeding S\$10 to an amount not exceeding S\$800⁵.

⁵ A state in USA has a progressive fine for the first and second convictions. An Australian state has a two-tier fine for cases of non-enrolment and non-attendance. In a province in Canada, the court may, in place of a fine, require the convicted parent to submit a personal bond with

44. However, experience elsewhere suggests that efforts to make enforcement more effective will require increasingly more resources and lead to more severe punishments being proposed. For example, the British Government will provide 500 million pounds from 1999 until 2002 to tackle truancy and other related problems in their schools. They also plan to crack down on truancy by imposing heavier punishments and issuing warrants of arrest for parents who do not ensure that their children go to school. In Detroit, warrants to show up in court were issued to some parents whose children had been skipping classes, and the Detroit Board of Education is considering charging recalcitrant truants in the juvenile courts.

45. The Committee is of the view that for CE to be implemented effectively in Singapore, there must be a range of penalties provided in the law to deal with errant parents, which should include, in the extreme case, a jail term. However, such a severe penalty should be meted out judiciously so as to strike a balance between, on the one hand, sending a clear signal to parents that the Government is serious about enforcing CE, and on the other, meting out penalties that may have other detrimental effects on the long-term interest of the children and their families. By and large, penalties should take the form of fines, which will need to be sufficiently large to serve as a deterrent to irresponsible parents.

EXCLUSION

46. While every effort needs to be put in to make sure that children attend school, avenues must also be available to enforce the exclusion and expulsion of pupils from school if they are found unsuitable for school. These include serious cases of disruptive behaviour in class and breach of school rules. School systems in some countries also provide for permanent exclusion from a school or exclusion for fixed periods on disciplinary grounds. Such exclusions are subject to periodic review.

one or more sureties, on condition that the parent shall cause the child to attend school. Upon breach of the condition, the bond is forfeited to the Crown.

CHAPTER 4

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Committee's recommendations can be summarised as follows:
 - a. CE should be introduced, and that it should be defined as education in national schools for Singapore citizens residing in Singapore, subject to the exemption of certain categories, to reinforce the two key objectives of:
 - i. Giving our children a common core of knowledge which will provide a strong foundation for further education and training to prepare them for a KBE; and
 - ii. Giving them a common educational experience which will help to build national identity and cohesion;

However, even with the introduction of CE, the responsibility for sending children to school and ensuring that they attend school, should still lie with the parents, with the community playing an active role to help them, if necessary;

- b. CE should be up to Primary 6. The duration of CE defines the minimum period of education for all Singaporean children rather than the ideal duration from an educational perspective. This is in recognition of the wishes and aspirations of the different communities which make up Singapore society;
- c. The following categories of children should be exempted from CE:
 - i. those attending "designated institutions", viz., the six madrasahs currently offering full-time religious education for children of primary school-going age and San Yu Adventist School - These children will be required to sit for the PSLE at Primary 6. The madrasahs and San Yu Adventist School will also need to meet a certain minimum PSLE benchmark in order to be given the "designated institution" status, which allows them to continue admitting children exempted from CE at Primary 1. For the madrasahs, this benchmark should be pegged at the average PSLE aggregate score (rounded up to the nearest whole number) of EM1 and EM2 Malay pupils in the six lowest-performing national schools, ranked according to the performance of their EM1 and EM2 Malay pupils in the PSLE of the same year. For San Yu Adventist School, the benchmark should be pegged at the 33rd percentile aggregate score (rounded up to the nearest whole number) of all EM1 and EM2 pupils in the PSLE of the same year.

The above benchmarks will apply only when the new Primary 1 pupils admitted into these institutions, after CE is introduced, have gone through six years of primary education. The total annual Primary 1 intake of Singapore citizens into the full-time madrasahs and San Yu Adventist School should be capped at 400 and 10 respectively;

- ii. those receiving home-schooling – These children will only be granted exemption from CE to be home-schooled provided the parents are able to satisfy MOE that the two key objectives of CE can be achieved for their children. Parents should be required to furnish information on the curriculum and educational outcomes of the home-schooling programme. These children will be required to sit for the PSLE and meet the same PSLE benchmark as children attending San Yu Adventist School, as well as pass the National Education quiz before PSLE;
 - iii. those with special needs – special needs children, who are not able to go to national schools because of physical/intellectual disabilities, will be automatically exempted from CE in national schools;
 - iv. Parents of children who fall under recommendations (c)(i) and (c)(ii) above will have to apply for exemption from CE for their children. Parents of children with special needs will not be required to do so;
- d. A range of penalties should be provided in the law to deal with cases of non-compliance, including fines and, in the extreme case, a jail term. These penalties will be imposed only on the parents and not the child. However, several levels of counselling and mediation procedures, as described in **Annex 13**, should be put in place to ensure that legal enforcement is taken only as a last resort;
 - e. A Board for CE, comprising representatives from the community such as the Community Development Councils, grassroots leaders, self-help groups, Community and Parents in Support of Schools and VWOs, should be set up legislatively by MOE to, where necessary, refer cases to the Director-General of Education, who can then raise a complaint to the Subordinate Courts for legal action. The Board should have investigative powers for specific cases to require parents to produce information and turn up for counselling; and
 - f. Avenues must be available to enforce the exclusion and expulsion of pupils from school if they are found unsuitable for school. These include serious cases of disruptive behaviour in class and breach of school rules.

2. The Committee would also like to propose that CE be introduced only from the age cohort entering Primary 1 in 2003. This will allow two full years for the madrasahs and San Yu Adventist School to review their curriculum and train their teachers before CE is implemented.

CONCLUSION

3. Singapore's survival and prosperity in the 21st century will depend on how well-prepared Singaporeans are for the challenges of globalisation and technology. The proposed introduction of CE is to reaffirm the Government's commitment to provide an equal headstart to all children. It will ensure that those children who would otherwise miss out on the full benefits of an education in national schools will have an opportunity to do so. CE will also provide children with a common educational experience that helps to build national identity and integration. But for CE to be implemented successfully, there needs to be widespread support from the public. Just as every Singaporean matters, every Singaporean, including parents and the different communities, will have a part to play in ensuring the success of CE, so as to create a brighter future for our children.

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Chairman

Dr Aline Wong Senior Minister of State for Education

Vice-Chairman

Dr Wang Kai Yuen Member of Parliament and
Chairman, Government Parliamentary Committee
(GPC) for Education

Members

Mr Gan Chin Huat Principal, Dunman Secondary School
Mr Hawazi Daipi Member of Parliament and
Member, GPC for Education

Dr Jennifer Lee Nominated Member of Parliament
Mdm Lee Lai Yong Principal, Rulang Primary School
Mr Liew Mun Leong Chairman, Board of Governors, Temasek Polytechnic
Mr R Ravindran Member of Parliament
Mr Seng Han Thong Member of Parliament
Mr Sumardi Ali CEO, Yayasan Mendaki
Mrs Tan Ching Yee Deputy Secretary (Policy), Ministry of Education
Mr Wee Heng Tin Director-General of Education
Mr Eugene Wijesingha Educationist
Ms Yeoh Chee Yan Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Community
Development and Sports

Secretariat

Ms Phoon Lee Chaeng Director, Planning, Ministry of Education
Ms Ho Peng Deputy Director, Schools, Ministry of Education
Mr Loh Ngai Seng Deputy Director, Planning , Ministry of Education
Mr Chua Boon Wee Assistant Director, Management Information,
Ministry of Education

Mr Lee Seng Hai Planning Officer, Ministry of Education
Mr Sng Chern Wei Planning Officer, Ministry of Education
Ms Soh Lai Leng Planning Officer, Ministry of Education
Mr Teh Laik Woon Planning Officer, Ministry of Education

ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED BY THE COMMITTEE

PARTICIPANTS IN FEEDBACK SESSIONS ORGANISED BY FEEDBACK UNIT, MCDS

Feedback Groups

Mr Abdul Rahman Said	Managing Director
Mr Dy Francisco	Manager
Mrs Geetha Kathirasan	Lawyer
Mr Han Jok Kwang	General Manager
Mr Kua Harn Wei	Graduate Student
Mr Sivakolunthu Somasundaram	Teacher
Ms Wong Yee Fong	Journalist
Dr Yim-Teo Tien Hua	Divisional Director

Parents of Home Schoolers

Ms Guo Ling Ling
Mr Stephen Ho
Mdm Doreen Koh
Mr Kwek Theng Kee
Mr Bernard Lee
Mr Jonathan Lee
Mr & Mrs Richard Lim Chee Fah
Mr Daniel Ooi
Ms Tan Lay Leng
Mrs Linda Teo
Mdm Teo Suan Lee

Educationists/Academics

Mr Ahmad Khalis	Member, Community and Parents in Support of Schools (COMPASS)
Ms Chan Wai Lin	Principal, Shuqun Primary School
Mdm Chan Wan Mui	Vice-Principal, CHIJ St Nicholas Girls' School
Mr Chen Keng Juan	President, Singapore Chinese Teachers' Union
Mrs Chen Siew Har	Vice-Principal, Temasek Junior College
Mr Chia Tai Ching	Principal, Red Swastika School
Mr Choong Kok Weng	Teacher, Nanyang Junior College
Mdm Fong Yuet Kwai	Principal, Nan Hua Primary School
Mdm Gurdial Kaur	Principal, Qihua Primary School
Mr Ho Sim Chan	Head of Department, Holy Innocent Primary School
Mrs Hwang-Lee Poh See	Principal, CHIJ St Nicholas' Girls' School
Mr Jagindar Singh	Vice-President, Singapore Teachers' Union
Mr Johari Md Rais	Principal, Fuchun Primary School
Ms Kwok Chea Kwong	Head of Department, Poi Ching School
Ms Lim Poh Suan	Principal, Nanyang Primary School
Mr Loh Leong Beng	Principal, Nan Hua Secondary School
Dr Mohd Maliki Osman	Assistant Professor, National University of

Mrs Mok Choon Hoe	Singapore Director, Education Programmes, Ministry of Education
Mrs Ng Ai Lin	Principal, Tampines Primary School
Ms Ng Lay Siang	Vice-Principal, Xinmin Primary School
Mr Ngoh Choon Ho	Principal, Hong Wen School
Mdm Rasidah bte Marican	Principal, Huamin Primary School
Mdm Siao Yew Fong	Teacher, CHIJ (Toa Payoh)
Mr Tan Seow Hoh	Teacher, Qiaonan Primary School
Mrs Tung Sin Yin	Principal, Pei Tong Primary School

Malay/Muslim Organisations

Mr Abd Hamid Abdullah	Member, Board of Directors, Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP)
Mr Abdul Matin Majid	Executive Chairman, Masjid Alkaff Kampung Melayu and Masjid Darul Ghufuran
Mr Ebrahim Marican	Member, Federation of Indian Muslims
Dr Isa Hassan	Director (Education), Yayasan Mendaki
Mdm Isiah Majid	Administrator, Madrasah Al-Irsyad
Mr Khuttub Deen Abdullah	Higher Executive Officer (Education), Yayasan Mendaki
Hj Maarof Salleh	President, Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS)
Mr Ma'mun Suheimi	President, Singapore Malay Teachers Union
Mr Masagos Zulkifli	President, Perdaus
Masagos Muhammad	
Mr Mohamed Hannan Hassan	Manager (Madrasah Education), MUIS
Mr Mohd Yuni Awi	Vice-President II, Jamiyah
Mr Ridzuan Abdullah Wu	President, Muslim Converts Association
Hj Shafawi Ahmad	Council Member, MUIS
Mr Syed Ahmad Syed Mohd	Assistant Mufti, MUIS
Mr Ustadz Pasuni Maulan	Principal, Madrasah Aljunied
Mr Wan Hussin Zohri	President, Prophet Muhammad Scholarship Fund Board
Mr Zainul Abidin	Associate Trainer, AMP
Mr Zulkheflee Ismail	Manager, Pergas
Mr Zuraimi Jumaat	Member, Management Board, Masjid An Nur

Voluntary Welfare/Civic Organisations

Mr Bronze Cheung	Manager, Disability Services, National Council of Social Service (NCSS)
Mr Gerard Ee	Chairman, School Management Committee (SMC), Canossian School for the Hearing Impaired
Ms Monica Go	Centre Co-ordinator, Galilee Centre
Mr Koh Soo Cheng	Supervisor, Grace Child Development Centre
Mr Kua Soon Khe	Executive Secretary, Hokkien Huay Kuan

Mr Lee Peng Shu	Vice-Chairman, Education Committee, Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Mr Leng Chin Fai	Executive Director, Fei Yue Family Service Centre
Ms Lin Zhen	Counsellor
Mrs Peacock-Khoo Swee Choo	Head, Child Care Division, Merah Saga 10
Mr R Rajaram	Senior Divisional Director (Education), Singapore Indian Development Association
Ms Sudha Nair	Director, Ang Mo Kio Family Service Centre
Mr Jeffrey Tan	Chairman of SMC and Supervisor, Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore
Ms Jenny Tan	Staff, Infant Jesus Homes and Children's Centre
Mrs June Tham-Toh Syn Yuen	Executive Director, Rainbow Centre
Mr Edmund Wan	Executive Director, Spastic Children Association
Mr Wang Sun Fai	Chinese Development Assistance Council
Ms Susan Wen	Social Worker, Care Corner Family Service Centre (Queenstown)
Mr Wong Kwong Sing	Manager, Child, Youth and Family Services, NCSS

ORGANISATIONS WHICH ATTENDED THE COMMITTEE'S CLOSE-DOOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Association of Muslim Professionals

Mr Mohamad Alami Musa	Chairman
Mr Ismail Ibrahim	Executive Director

Chinese Development Assistance Council

Mr Sitoh Yih Pin	Member, Education Committee
Mr Goh Chim Khim	Deputy Executive Director

Eurasian Association

LTC (RET) Timothy De Souza	President
Mr Harold Mathieu	Consultant for Education

Majlis Pusat

Mr Zulkifli Mohd	President
Mr Ja'afar bin Sidin	Secretary-General
Mr Azman Ariffin	Assistant Secretary-General I
Mr Rahman Kamin	Assistant Secretary-General III

Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura

Hj Maarof Salleh	President
Mr Syed Haroon Aljunied	Secretary
Hj Shafawi Ahmad	Council Member

Assoc Prof Abdul Wahab Abdul Rahman	Council Member
Mr Saharudin Kassim	Special Assistant to President

National Council of Social Service

Dr Robert Loh	President
Mr Benedict Cheong	CEO
Ms Tina Hung	Director, Service Development

Perdaus

Mr Masagos Zulkifli Masagos Muhamad	President
Dr Mukhlis Abu Bakar	Vice President II
Mr Muhammad Haniff Hassan	Secretary
Mr Ariff Hong Chu Sen	Council Member
Mr Safarin Amerudin	Council Member

Singapore Indian Development Association

Mr S Vivakanandan	CEO
Mr R Rajaram	Senior Divisional Director (Education)

Yayasan Mendaki

Mr Khuttub Deen Abdullah	Higher Executive Officer (Education)
Mdm Sharifah Sakinah Alkaff	Higher Executive Officer (Education)

BACKGROUND ON GOVERNMENT-AIDED SCHOOLS

1. Aided schools are non-government schools receiving grant-in-aid towards the recurrent expenditure for the running of the schools. The policy of extending grant-in-aid to private schools can be traced to 1835, when the Colonial Government realised that their efforts alone were insufficient to cater to the educational needs of the local population. Public funds were extended to members of the public or religious groups to encourage them to set up education institutions to support the provision of education for the young. Schools receiving grant-in-aid must be open to inspections from government officials. The amount of grants received by aided schools did not follow a fixed formula. As a result, especially for Chinese and Tamil medium aided schools, substantial contributions from the school management committees and the public were required as government grants usually only covered a fraction of the schools' running cost.

2. The Grant-in-Aid Regulations enacted in 1957 ensure the equality of grants, and that the same conditions of service and salary are extended to all government and aided schools. In addition, schools that receive full grant-in-aid are subject to the same regulations and level of supervision as government schools. Before 1960s, most of the aided schools were rural Chinese medium schools. By late 1960s, as the Government provided universal education and started to rationalise its education system, the number of aided schools started to decrease. In 1963, the total number of aided schools was 285. In 1999, the total was 85. (See Tables 3.1 and 3.2.)

3. Today, aided schools are integral to the Singapore education system and there is no significant difference between government schools and aided schools. Aided schools must be subject to MOE's supervision and conform to and maintain standards that are comparable to government schools of the same type, in terms of school building, admission, performance, discipline and qualifications of employees. This is specifically stipulated in the Education (Grant-in-Aid) Regulations. Specifically on admission, an aided school "shall not refuse any person admission to study in the school on the grounds only of religion or race"⁶. The Education Act and the Education (Schools) Regulations also require the registration and approval of school management committee members, principals and teachers of non-government schools by MOE.

4. Since 1973, only five aided schools have been set up. The two latest aided schools are Anglo-Chinese School (Baker Road) and Ngee Ann Secondary School set up in 1994.

⁶ SAP schools admit pupils based on language taken, for example, an Indian student who qualifies for Higher Chinese Language, can be admitted to a SAP school. There are such cases, although few and far between.

**Table 3.1 Number of Government Schools and Aided Schools
in 1963 and in 1999**

	1963		1999	
	Government	Aided	Government	Aided
Primary	173	237	153	42
Secondary	30	23	114	34
Full School	0	25	0	4
Junior College	0	0	9	5
Total	203	285	276	85

**Table 3.2 Number of Aided Schools under Each Category in 1963
(Figures for 1999 are indicated in brackets)**

	Buddhist	Christian	Clans & Others*	Total
Primary	4 (3)	27 (28)	206 (12)	237 (42)
Secondary	0 (1)	17 (27)	6 (9)	23 (34)
Full School	0 (0)	15 (3)	10 (1)	25 (4)
Junior College	NA (0)	NA (3)	NA (2)	NA (5)
Total	4 (4)	59 (61)	222 (24)	285 (85)

*Others refer to Aided schools that are not sponsored by religious bodies or clan associations, for example Singapore Chinese Girls' School, The Chinese High School.

NON-ATTENDANCE IN NATIONAL SCHOOLS

SCOPE OF NON-ATTENDANCE IN NATIONAL SCHOOLS

1. Cases of non-attendance in national schools have attracted public attention from time to time. Members of the public have advocated that it is the responsibility of the Government to ensure that all school-going age children attend schools.

Non-Registration in National Schools

2. Currently, about 97% of the eligible age cohort enrol in national schools or special education schools at Primary 1. At the end of the Primary 1 registration exercise in 1997, 1,677 children had not registered in national schools, or registered with the special education schools. (See **Annex 4.1.**) MOE followed up on these cases. Of these, 232 eventually enrolled in national or special education schools, leaving 1,445 children who did not enrol in national or special education schools.

3. Of these 1,445 non-enrollees, 437 (30%) had migrated or were studying overseas, and 24 (2%) did not attend the national or special education schools due to medical problems. These two groups who did not enrol due to circumstance accounted for almost a third of non-enrollees.

4. Another 523 (36%) were children whose parents had chosen alternative schooling arrangements, including madrasahs (Islamic religious schools), private schools and home schooling.

5. Therefore, more than two-thirds (68%) of those who were not in national or special education schools did so by choice or because of circumstance (such as being overseas or having medical problems). The remaining 461 or 32% of the non-enrollees could not be traced from their birth records, despite efforts by MOE officers including visits to their last known addresses.

Dropouts from National Schools

6. The number of students who drop out of our national schools has been on a downward trend over the years. At the primary level, the number of such pupils decreased from 1,022 in 1988 to 183 in 1998. In terms of an age cohort, the dropout rate has decreased from 2.6% to 0.4%.

7. Table 4.1 shows the number of dropouts at the primary level in 1998. More than half of the pupils who left at the primary level were Primary 6 pupils.

Table 4.1 Number of Dropouts at the Primary Level, 1998

	1998
Primary 1	11
Primary 2	12
Primary 3	16
Primary 4	19
Primary 5	30
Primary 6	95
Total	183

EXISTING EFFORTS TAKEN BY MOE TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF NON-REGISTRATION CASES AND SCHOOL DROPOUTS

8. For children who do not register for Primary 1, MOE makes the extra effort to track down the families, offer them advice, and help to enrol the children in schools. First, letters followed by reminders are sent to the parents, inviting them to register their children for school, or requesting information about their children's education. Where necessary, MOE officers follow up with visits to these families at their last known addresses, and most of these visits are conducted in the evenings to maximise chances of meeting the parents.

9. There is thus a system in place in which MOE officers systematically follow up every case of non-registration. When cases of non-registration are due to the family's financial or other difficulties, MOE works closely with MCDS to render assistance to the families.

10. With regard to students who show signs of dropping out, principals and teachers strenuously try to dissuade them from doing so. Their efforts include counselling the students, monitoring their attendance rate and contacting their homes when they are absent, inviting the parents to school, and making home visits to discuss the matter with parents. In some cases, school inspectors, cluster superintendents and educational psychologists are also involved in the counselling process. Where the reason for dropping out is financial, schools will extend financial aid to the students.

BREAKDOWN OF THE CHILDREN (SINGAPORE CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS) NOT REGISTERED WITH NATIONAL SCHOOLS OR SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS AT THE END OF THE 1997 PRIMARY 1 REGISTRATION EXERCISE

Reason	Total Number of Children
(A) Number of children not registered with national schools or special education schools at the end of the 1997 Primary 1 Registration Exercise	1,677
1. Children who subsequently joined national schools	207
2. Parents having financial/family problems (Cases surfaced to MCDS for assistance. These children eventually enrolled in national schools.)	10
3. Children who subsequently joined special education schools	15*
Sub-Total (Items 1-3)	232
(B) Remaining number not enrolled ((A) – Items 1,2,3)	1,445
4. Family migrated/living overseas/studying overseas	437
5. Children having medical problems and are not ready for admission to school	21
6. Children have passed away	3
(C) Children not enrolled because of circumstance (Items 4,5,6)	461 (32% of (B))
7. Children who have joined Islamic religious schools	452
8. Children who have joined private schools	67
9. Children being coached at home	4
(D) Children not enrolled by choice (Items 7,8,9)	523 (36% of (B))
10. Parents could not be contacted from available records and visits to last known address	461 (32% of (B))

* This figure excludes children who registered directly with the special education schools during the Primary 1 Registration Exercise.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON MADRASAHs

Background

1. Madrasahs are Islamic religious schools under the administration of the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore, or MUIS. A key objective of the madrasahs is to train future religious scholars and religious teachers. Administrative jurisdiction over madrasahs was transferred from MOE to MUIS in 1990. However, madrasahs are still registered with MOE as private schools and hence subject to the provisions of the Education Act.

2. There are currently six madrasahs offering full-time primary and secondary education. Three offer courses up to the pre-university level. (See Table 5.1.) These madrasahs were built by Muslim philanthropists and they are privately funded. They are managed by school management committees which must be registered with MOE.

Enrolment

3. The total full-time enrolment in madrasahs in 1999 is about 4,000 pupils, more than double that in 1990. About 2,580 are enrolled at the primary level, 1,280 at the secondary level and 130 at the pre-university level. Girls constitute about 70% of the total at each level.

Curriculum

4. The full-time madrasahs provide a curriculum comprising a mix of religious and secular education, ranging between 50% to 70% of curriculum time on religious subjects. Primary madrasahs' curriculum time ranges from 34-51 periods per week. (See Table 5.2.) Some madrasahs operate in two sessions. Saturdays are usually reserved for co-curricular activities and other pursuits.

Assessment

5. The assessment system is madrasah-specific and progression through the various grades is governed by policies determined by each madrasah. Madrasah pupils do not take the Primary School Leaving Examination. Progression from primary to secondary level is based on the madrasahs' own assessment system. Since 1995, MUIS has instituted a common examination for the madrasahs at Secondary 4 level. Students may graduate or proceed to higher religious studies overseas. At the end of Secondary 4 and Pre-U levels, some students may also take the 'O' level and 'A' level examinations in some subjects, mainly Malay Language, English and Islamic Religious Knowledge.

TABLE 5.1 LEVELS OFFERED BY THE SIX FULL-TIME MADRASAHs

No	Name of Madrasah	Primary	Secondary	Pre-U
1	Alsagoff Arab School	✓	✓	
2	Madrasah Al-Arabiah Al-Islamiah	✓	✓	
3	Madrasah Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiah	✓	✓	
4	Madrasah Al-Ma'arif Al-Islamiah	✓	✓	✓
5	Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah	✓	✓	✓
6	Madrasah Wak Tanjong Al-Islamiah	✓	✓	✓

TABLE 5.2 CURRICULUM AND SUBJECTS OFFERED BY MADRASAHs AT PRIMARY LEVEL

Subjects	Average Period/Week	Remarks
Al-Qu'ran	5	Most madrasahs have about the same number of periods for these subjects.
Arabic	8	
Islamic Knowledge	7	
Akhlaq (Moral Education)	2	
English	6	The number of periods ranges between 3-9 per week among the madrasahs.
Maths	6	One madrasah offers only 3 periods per week.
Science	3	Offered from Primary 3 onwards.
Malay	5	
Total no. of periods/week	42	
Total curriculum time/week (hours)	24.5	

Each period is 35 minutes. Number of period ranges from 34-51 per week.

Source: MUIS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON SAN YU ADVENTIST SCHOOL

Background

1. San Yu Adventist School commenced functioning in January 1997. It was formed with the merger of San Yu High School and the Seventh-Day Adventist School, which were private schools that registered with MOE in 1957 and 1961 respectively. San Yu Adventist School is owned and operated by the Seventh-Day Adventist Mission of Singapore. The school has 23 teaching staff. About half of them have received some form of teacher training, while the other half hold teaching permits from MOE.
2. The mission of San Yu Adventist School is stated to be the provision of primary, secondary and post-secondary Christian education parallel with the Singapore education system to students of diverse cultures and nationalities, by Seventh-day Adventist teachers through methods that would integrate faith in God and the learning of skills and knowledge for the working world.

Enrolment and Student Profile

3. In 1999, San Yu had an enrolment of 73 at the primary level and 222 at the secondary level. At the primary level, 48% are Singapore Citizens (SC) or Permanent Residents (PR). 58% of all the primary pupils are at least one year above the age norm⁷ at the respective levels. Most of the SC/PR pupils at the primary level begin their primary education at San Yu, and many of these pupils are children of Seventh-Day Adventist missionaries. At the secondary level, 36% are SC/PR. 86% of all the secondary students are at least one year above the age norm at the respective levels.

Curriculum

4. San Yu adopts MOE's syllabuses for Primary 1 to Secondary 4. Bible Knowledge is compulsory for all students and replaces Civics and Moral Education. The school also incorporates National Education into Social Studies at the primary level and History at the secondary level, and conducts morning flag-raising and assembly programmes for all students.
5. In general, only government and government-aided primary schools can enter their pupils for the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) as PSLE is a placement examination. Primary 6 pupils of San Yu up to two years above the age norm have been given special permission to enter for the PSLE since the school follows the national curriculum. Primary 6 pupils who are overaged sit for a special PSLE set internally and are promoted to Secondary 1 in the school if they pass the examination. At the secondary level, only the Express

⁷ The age norm for Primary 1 is six years by 1 January of the year of admission. The correct ages for subsequent years follow from this age.

course is offered, and students enter for the 'O' level examination in Secondary 4.

6. Every student is expected to take part in at least one, but not more than two extra-curricular activities. Community service is organised every term. San Yu's teachers conduct computer enrichment classes for Primary 1 to Secondary 2 students. Lower secondary students have two lessons per week in computer literacy and typing.

CURRICULUM STRUCTURE AND INSTRUCTION TIME IN NATIONAL SCHOOLS

FOUNDATION STAGE (PRIMARY 1 TO 4)

Subjects	No. of periods per week (each period is 30 mins)			
	P1	P2	P3	P4
English	17	17	15	13
Chinese/Malay/Tamil and Civics and Moral Education	15	13	12	11
Mathematics	7	9	11	11
Science	0	0	3	4
Social Studies ⁸	1	0	0	2
Art and Crafts	2	2	2	2
Music	2	2	2	2
Physical Education	3	3	3	3
Assembly	1	1	1	1
Total Curriculum Time	48	47	49	49

ORIENTATION STAGE (PRIMARY 5 AND 6)

Subjects	No. of periods per week (each period is 30 mins)		
	EM1 stream	EM2 stream	EM3 stream
Examination Subjects			
English	12	13	16
Chinese/Malay/Tamil	10	8	4
Mathematics	9	10	13
Science ⁹	5	5	3
Non-Examination Subjects			
Civics and Moral Education	3	3	3
Social Studies	3	3	3
Art and Crafts	2	2	2
Music	1	1	1
Physical Education	2	2	2
Health Education	1	1	1
Assembly	1	1	1
Total Curriculum Time	49	49	49

⁸ The new Social Studies (Pri) syllabus extends the study of Social Studies to the Primary 1 to 3 levels. The syllabus is however implemented in stages beginning with Primary 1 and 4 in 2000, Primary 2 and 5 in 2001, and Primary 3 and 6 in 2002. Primary 1 pupils started studying Social Studies from January 2000. Primary 2 and 3 pupils will study Social Studies in 2001 and 2002, respectively.

⁹ Science is not an examination subject at PSLE in the EM3 stream.

LOWER SECONDARY (SECONDARY 1 AND 2)

Subjects	No. of periods per week (each period is 35 to 40 mins)		
	Special/Express	N(A)	N(T)
Examination Subjects			
English	6	6	8
Chinese/Malay/Tamil or Basic Chinese/Malay/Tamil	6	6	3
Mathematics	5	6	8
Science	6	5	4
Literature	2	2	
History	2	2	
Geography	2	2	
Art and Crafts	2	2	
Design and Technology and Home Economics	3	3	
Computer Applications			4
Technical Studies and Home Economics			4
Non-Examination Subjects			
Social Studies			2
Civics and Moral Education	2	2	2
Physical Education	2	2	2
Music	1	1	
Art and Crafts			2
Assembly	1	1	1
Total Curriculum Time	40	40	40

UPPER SECONDARY (SECONDARY 3 TO 5)

Subjects	No. of periods per week (each period is 35 to 40 mins)		
	Special/ Express	N(A)	N(T)
Core Examination Subjects			
English	24 to 26	8	9
Chinese/Malay/Tamil or Basic Chinese/Malay/Tamil		6	3
Mathematics		6	9
A Science subject			
A Humanities subject			
Computer Applications			
Elective Subjects	Choice of 2 to 4 subjects; 8 to 10 periods	Choice of 2 to 4 subjects; the number of periods per subject varies from 3 to 8 periods per week	Choice of 1 to 3 subjects; the number of periods per subject varies from 3 to 9 periods per week
Compulsory Non-Examination Subjects			
Civics and Moral Education	2	2	2
Physical Education	2	2	2
Music	1	1	1
Assembly	1	1	1
Total Curriculum Time	40	40	40

PRE-UNIVERSITY

Subjects	No. of Hours Per Week	
	JCs	CIs
General Paper	4	4
Chinese/Malay/Tamil	4	3
'A' level subject	5	
'A' level subject with practical	6	
'AO' level subject	4	
Subject A ('A' level)		5
Subject B ('A' level)		5
Subject C ('A' level)		5
Civics	1	3
Physical Education	2	
Assembly	1	
Total Curriculum Time	At the discretion of each JC	25

Source : Principal's Handbook.

INSTITUTIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE LEARNING JOURNEYS PROGRAMME

1. Agri-food and Veterinary Authority
2. Battle Box
3. Central Narcotics Bureau
4. Central Provident Fund
5. Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore
6. Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau
7. Economic Development Board
8. Housing and Development Board
9. Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore
10. Jurong Bird Park
11. Jurong Town Corporation
12. Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore/PSA Corporation¹⁰
13. Ministry of Community Development and Sports
14. Ministry of Defence
15. Ministry of Environment Installations
16. National Heritage Board
17. Parliament
18. People's Association
19. Public Utilities Board
20. Sentosa Development Corporation
21. Singapore Broadcasting Authority
22. Singapore Civil Defence Force
23. Singapore Discovery Centre
24. Singapore Immigration and Registration
25. Singapore Philatelic Museum
26. Singapore Police Force
27. Singapore Power
28. Singapore Press Holdings
29. Singapore Prison Service
30. Singapore Science Centre

¹⁰ Two institutions but one joint programme.

31. Singapore Technologies
32. Sports Museum and Singapore Sports Council
33. Subordinate Courts
34. Supreme Court
35. The Singapore Exchange Limited
36. Trade Development Board
37. Urban Redevelopment Authority

EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMMES ORGANISED BY SCHOOLS

School	Level	Programme/Activity
Alexandra Hill Primary School	Pri	<p>In 1999, pupils visited The Moral Welfare Home twice a year, gave contributions and cleaned the Home.</p> <p>Pupils participated in a Walk-a-jog exercise organised by Tanjong Pagar GRC yearly. 50% of the money collected were used to help the school's needy pupils.</p> <p>Pupils also donated \$13,000 to a pupil who needed money for his operation.</p>
Choa Chu Kang Primary School	Pri	<p>In 1999, the school adopted Tembusu Park.</p> <p>Pupils donated \$20,000 to a needy pupil whose father had passed away.</p>
Jiemin Primary School	Pri	<p>In 1999, Primary 5 pupils assisted Primary 1 pupils in the Buddy System.</p> <p>The school also adopted Sree Narayana Mission Home for the Aged which the pupils visited three times a year.</p> <p>Primary 5 pupils took care of Yishun Park.</p>
Montfort Junior School	Pri	<p>In 1999, every level visited Ju Eng Home for the Aged.</p> <p>The school adopted Punggol Park and Primary 5 pupils cleaned the park.</p> <p>Primary 5 pupils gave peer tutoring to help Primary 1 pupils.</p>
Pei Hwa Presbyterian Primary School	Pri	<p>In 1999, Primary 3 to Primary 6 pupils spent three hours each term to carry out weeding tasks at their designated turf at Jurong Bird Park.</p>
Red Swastika School	Pri	<p>In 1998, pupils adopted a park nearby and assisted in the maintenance of the park.</p>
Yu Neng Primary School	Pri	<p>In 1998, the school won a gold award for raising \$65,000 for the National Kidney Foundation and it was the champion fund raiser in 1997.</p>
Ang Mo Kio Secondary School	Sec	<p>In 1997, upper secondary students extended community service to the senior citizens in Ang Mo Kio Zone "D".</p> <p>The school also adopted Bishan Park.</p>
Bukit Panjang	Sec	<p>In 1999, lower secondary students rendered their services to Yew Tee Community Children's Library.</p>

School	Level	Programme/Activity
Government High School		
Dunman Secondary School	Sec	In 1998, students worked to beautify the jogging track that surrounded the school.
Ghim Moh Secondary School	Sec	Between July to December 1999, students spent two hours at National University Hospital's children's medical centre on Saturdays to fold origami hearts and to play with the sick children. Students raised funds for the National Kidney Foundation and spent time with patients at dialysis centres.
Ping Yi Secondary School	Sec	In 1999, the school adopted Jamiyah Home for the Aged and all Secondary 3 students visited the home. Two groups of elderly folks from the Home were invited to view performances during Assembly time and to interact with the students.
Raffles Girls' School	Sec	Starting in August 1999, students ran a mobile books-cum-toys library and performed puppet shows on their Magic Care-A-Van for some child-care centres and special schools. The schools' Rainbow Ed Venture Club members made educational toys and created books for the children.
Springfield Secondary School	Sec	In June 1999, 20 students helped a remote village in Chiangmai repair its village school and helped the children improve their English. They brought along three orphans from Ramakrishna Missions Boys' Home and three blind and partially sighted people from the Singapore Association for the Visually Blind.
The Chinese High School	Sec	In 1998, a group of students went through a three-day training course by the Friends of The Museum and played guides to children at the Singapore History Museum.
Thomson Secondary School	Sec	The school made weekly visits to New Horizon Home, and also organised projects to raise funds for the centre. Some 250 students combed Sembawang Beach in November 1999.
Yuying Sec School	Sec	In 2000, the school collaborated with Aljunied GRC grassroots leaders in the 'Love Hougang Project' which aimed to help schools establish better ties with the community.
Hwa Chong Junior College	Pre-U	In November 1998, 29 students went to Vietnam to complete the building of a classroom in a village.
Nanyang Junior College	Pre-U	In June 1998, 30 students and teachers took part in an 11-day Shanghai/Hang Zhou Community Service Programme in which they helped to paint schools and

School	Level	Programme/Activity
		mend furniture. In December 1998, another 30 students and teachers went to Nepal to teach English to Nepalese children.
St Andrew's Junior College	Pre-U	In December 1998, students went on an 11-day trip to a village in Philippines. They helped to build playgrounds and paint a wall which separated the squatters from the children's playground. They also visited orphanages and schools to hand over the used toys and clothes that had been donated.
Tampines Junior College	Pre-U	Between 6 June to 16 June 1999, 20 students went to a small town in Myanmar. They helped to lay the foundation for a village building and donated clothes and stationery.
Temasek Junior College	Pre-U	In 1999, Temasek Junior College's Leo Club members gave free tuition to 100 children under its Free Tuition Scheme.
Victoria Junior College	Pre-U	On 22 March 1998, some students helped to clear silt clogging up drains and debris in wells in Pulau Ubin together with a team of volunteers from the Marine Parade Community Development Council.

LIST OF CCAs OFFERED BY SCHOOLS

Core CCAs			Optional CCAs
Sports & Games/ Adventure	Uniformed Groups	Cultural Activities/Clubs & Societies	
Air Rifle Badminton Basketball Canoeing Cricket Gymnastics Hockey Judo Netball Rugby Sailing Sepaktakraw Soccer Softball Squash Swimming Table Tennis Tennis Tenpin Bowling Track and Field Volleyball Waterpolo Outdoor Pursuits Wushu	NCC (Boys) NCC (Girls) NCC (Air) NCC (Sea) NPCC (Boys) NPCC (Girls) Scouts Guides Red Cross St John Boys' Brigade Girls' Brigade Band	Choir Dance Drama Singapore Youth Orchestra Instrumental Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angklung • Guitar • Harmonica • Recorder • School Orchestra • Others Art & Crafts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese Painting • Chinese Calligraphy • Photography • Others e.g. pottery Language & Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LDDS Community Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact • Others e.g. Leo Club Youth Flying Club Chess <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Chess • Chinese Chess • Weiqi Audio Visual Library Computer Club	Aeromodelling Civics Gardening Geographical Historical Home Economics Mathematics Philatelic Science Technical Others

DURATION OF CE IN OTHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Country	Duration (years)
Australia	9
Canada	10
Hong Kong	9
Japan	9
Korea	9
New Zealand	10
Taiwan	9
United Kingdom	11

PSLE BENCHMARK FOR MADRASAHs

1999 PSLE	Based on Results of EM1 and EM 2 Malay Pupils Only in National Schools	
	Average of All National Schools	Average of the 6 Lowest- Performing National Schools
Mean PSLE Aggregate Score	188.8	174.5

Note

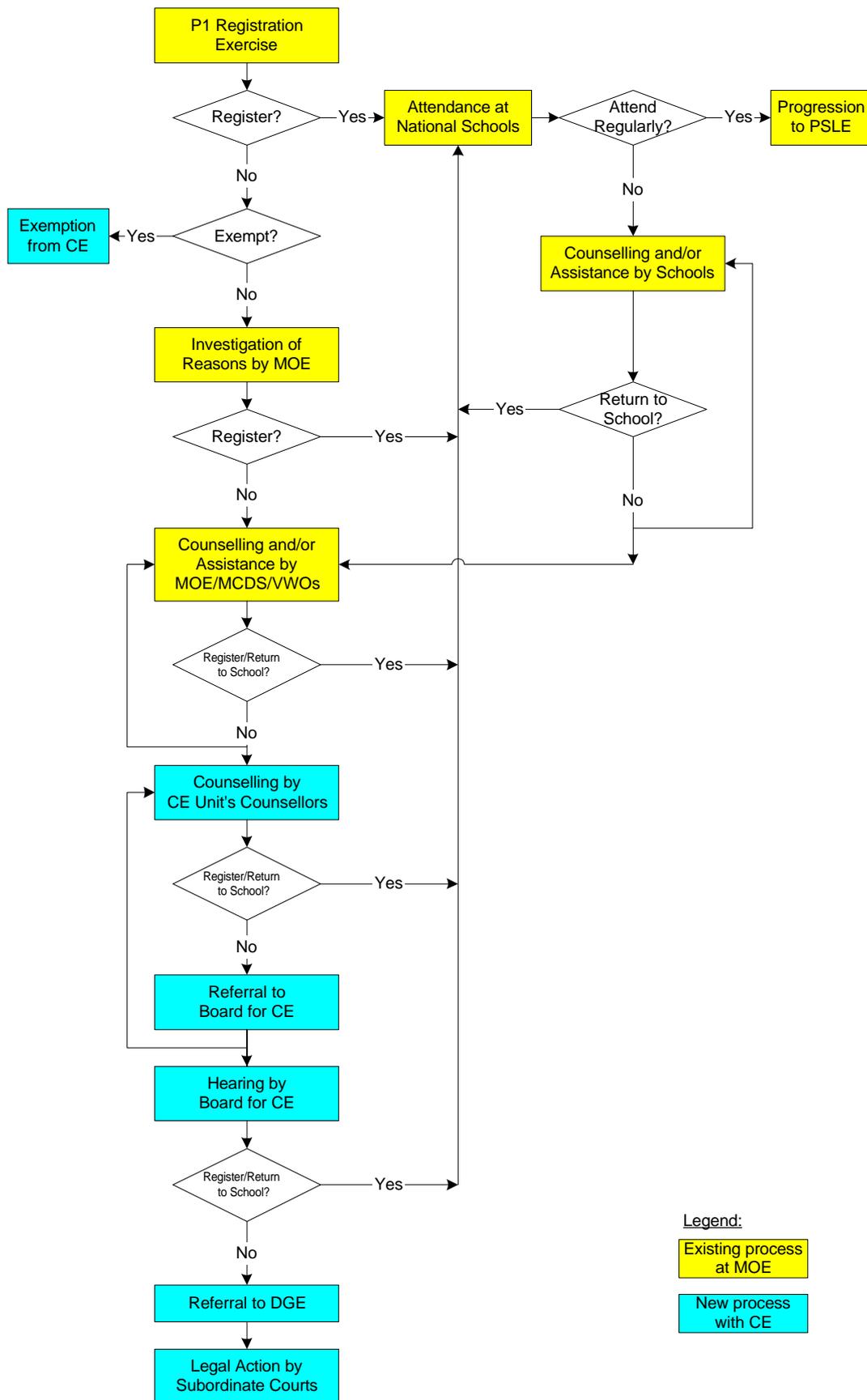
1. The proposed benchmark for the madrasahs is obtained by first computing the average PSLE aggregate score of EM1 and EM2 Malay pupils for each national school. All the schools are then ranked according to the average PSLE aggregate score of their EM1 and EM2 Malay pupils. The six schools¹¹ with the lowest average PSLE aggregate score for EM1 and EM2 Malay pupils, and at least 40 Malay pupils in its PSLE candidature¹², are identified.

2. The benchmark is then derived by averaging the PSLE aggregate scores of all the Malay EM1 and EM2 pupils in these six schools, and rounding up to the nearest whole number. For the 1999 PSLE, the benchmark corresponds to a PSLE aggregate score of 175 (rounded up from 174.5, as indicated in the table above).

¹¹ To minimise drastic fluctuation in PSLE performance, instead of pegging the benchmark at the performance of the lowest performing school, the average PSLE aggregate score of the six lowest-performing schools (because there are six madrasahs) is used.

¹² Schools with fewer than 40 Malay pupils are excluded to minimise fluctuation.

Mediation Processes for Cases of Non-Registration and Dropout



Legend:
 Existing process at MOE
 New process with CE