



Education, Then and Now

Did you know that schools did not always have computer labs? That teachers and students once used dusty chalk to write on the blackboard? And that the visualiser is a relatively new classroom tool? The list goes on.

Your schooling life is probably very different from what your parents and grandparents went through, but some things remain unchanged, like your right to a good education. This right is protected under an international agreement called the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Let's take a look at the education scene in Singapore over the years!

1990s: Moving away from rote learning

Since the 1990s, we have further emphasised the development of students' critical thinking and reasoning skills. This helped set a good foundation for lifelong learning, and ensure that everyone continues to pick up new skills after leaving school.

Technology is one way to help students become independent learners. By 2002, every school in Singapore was able to tap technology for teaching and learning. By the end of 2021, all secondary school students will be getting a personal laptop or tablet for learning.

What are some ways your teachers make use of technology to make lessons more interesting? Do you enjoy e-learning days where you get to play online games and watch videos to learn more about fractions or the life cycle of a plant?

2000s: Sports, arts and music

Teach Less, Learn More. That's the name of a new plan launched by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong in 2004. Its goal is to give you more choice in subjects, and space to explore your interests.

To give you more pathways to develop your strengths and interests, some new schools were opened:

- **Singapore Sports School (2004):** To provide sports-focused education for those with sporting talent
- **NorthLight School (2007):** To cater to those who prefer a more hands-on education

- **School of the Arts (2008):** To nurture those who have talent and interest in areas such as arts, dance, music and theatre

In 2008, streaming was removed from Singapore's primary school education and replaced with Subject-Based Banding. This was to allow you to learn each subject at a pace that suits you.

Being able to discover and grow your unique talents makes learning more meaningful and enjoyable.

2010s to today: Less focus on grades

The 2010s saw more changes to Singapore's education system. In a move to put less emphasis on grades, the tradition of naming the top scorers at the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) was scrapped in 2012. A year later, PSLE result slips stopped showing the highest and lowest scores.

Students also spent more time at adventure camps and on outdoor activities. Through these activities, you build confidence and resilience. You also cultivate strong friendships and good habits to lead an active and healthy lifestyle.

Today, our education system continues to evolve to be less exam-focused and more about lifelong learning. Every child has a right to a good education. Our education system will ensure that you get a good start in life and no one is left behind.

What do you like about school?

Is there a teacher or lesson that makes your school experience better? Is attending CCA your favourite part of the week? Are there activities in class that make learning easier?

★ Write down which part of school you like the most! ★

Geeky



The UNCRC has 54 different articles*, together guiding the protection and development of children. Singapore became part of the UNCRC agreement in 1995. Today, there are 196 countries that are a part of this treaty, making it the most widely agreed upon human rights treaty in the world!

*An article is a paragraph or a section of a piece of writing. When we say the UNCRC agreement has 54 articles, it means the agreement has 54 sections and each section talks about a different part on how to protect a child's rights.

