



Ministry of Education  
SINGAPORE

# PRESS RELEASE

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## NURTURING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AMONGST SINGAPOREANS

1. The Ministry of Education (MOE) will enhance the Malay (Special Programme) and the Chinese (Special Programme) to encourage more students to offer these official mother tongues as third languages in schools.
2. MOE will also introduce a Regional Studies Programme (RSP) to nurture a group of students comfortably conversant in Malay (ML), and with an understanding of the culture and contemporary developments in the region. Together with the MSP, this will help groom a segment of non-Malays in each generation who can effectively engage the region in future.
3. These measures, which were announced by the Prime Minister at the 2007 National Day Rally, build on MOE's on-going efforts to promote conversational Malay and Chinese among students. They will equip our people with the language skills to engage the world, and also help to further strengthen Singapore's multi-racial compact in the long run.

### **Enhancing the Malay (Special Programme) (MSP) and Chinese (Special Programme) (CSP)**

4. Introduced in 1986, the MSP is a four-year programme for non-Malay secondary students to learn Malay as a third language. Interested students take ML from Secondary 1 and offer the subject at 'O' level. The CSP was similarly introduced in 2004 for non-Chinese students to offer Chinese Language as a third language. To encourage more students to enrol in MSP and CSP, MOE will put in place the following incentives:

- a. Students who pass MSP or CSP at 'O' level will be awarded two bonus points for admission to Junior College (JC). This will affect students taking their MSP/CSP 'O' level exams from 2008 onwards (i.e. current batch of Secondary 3 MSP/CSP students). This bonus point scheme will also be implemented for students offering Bahasa Indonesia as a third language.

b. Students taking MSP or CSP will be able to count their MSP/CSP grade in-lieu-of a humanities subject within the aggregate score (L1R5<sup>1</sup>) for admission to JC. This is similar to how students can currently use their grades for Higher Art or Higher Music, to substitute for a humanities subject in the L1R5 score. This will affect students taking their MSP/CSP 'O' level exams from 2008 onwards (i.e. current batch of Secondary 3 MSP/CSP students). The same incentive will be extended to students taking Bahasa Indonesia.

5. The MSP/CSP will also be extended to pre-university level, so that students' exposure to ML and CL can be sustained after secondary school. MOE will provide an Elective Programme at 'A' level, similar to the Japanese, French and German Language Elective Programmes offered in JCs, where pupils learn the language at a higher level and benefit from enrichment programmes such as seminars and immersion opportunities.

### **Establishing a Regional Studies Programme**

6. A Regional Studies Programme (RSP) will be established in four schools from 2008. The schools are Anglo-Chinese School (Independent), Raffles Institution, Raffles Girls' School (Secondary) and Victoria School. The programme will have the following features:

a. Students in the RSP will offer MSP or Bahasa Indonesia as a third language, and learn about Southeast Asian culture and contemporary society. MOE will work with the four schools to develop structured enrichment modules spread out during the programme, so that students can gain a better understanding of the cultural and social aspects of the region.

b. Up to 100 scholarships will be awarded each year to students in the RSP. The scholarship will include subsidy of school fees, an annual allowance of \$1,000 and sponsorship for regional immersion programmes.

7. The RSP is expected to take in about 120 students for every cohort in total, across the four schools. MOE will support the schools offering RSP with the necessary resources to provide school-based instruction for students so that they can attend lessons within their own schools. Incentives offered for the MSP will also apply to students offering the RSP, where applicable.

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<sup>1</sup> L1R5 refers to the aggregate score of a first language (English or Higher Mother Tongue Language) and five relevant subjects. The five relevant subjects must include at least one humanities subject.

## **BACKGROUND**

### Malay (Special Programme) and Chinese (Special Programme)

8. MOE started the MSP, which is a programme for Malay as third language, in 1986. The list of schools and zonal centres offering MSP is at Annex A. The CSP was introduced from 2004. The list of schools and zonal centres offering CSP is at Annex B. Both MSP and CSP are currently offered to secondary students as an elective 'O' level subject, provided they did not take Malay or Chinese as their MTL at PSLE.

9. Previously, students were only allowed to offer MSP or CSP if they met the eligibility criteria: (i) top 10% of PSLE cohort, or (ii) within the 11-30% band in PSLE with an "A\*" in MTL or Distinction in Higher MTL and at least an "A" in English Language. To encourage more students to offer MSP and CSP, the above-mentioned criteria were removed from 2006. Currently, all students in the Express and Normal (Academic) courses who do not have Malay or Chinese as their MTL, are eligible to take MSP or CSP respectively.

### Conversational Malay and Chinese

10. At the Committee of Supply debate 2007, MOE announced that it would encourage as many schools as possible to offer Conversational CL and ML from 2008 for students who are not taking these languages as their MTLs. MOE will be providing schools with additional resources to implement these programmes. It is envisaged that within 5 years, all primary schools and two-thirds of our secondary schools will offer simple Conversational CL and ML as enrichment programmes.

11. MOE will provide students with opportunities for continued exposure to these conversational languages as they move up in years. They will be able to progress in Conversational CL and ML at their own pace. Students could start with beginner modules and, depending on their interest and aptitude, move on to higher modules. The modules will begin at the primary level and extend through secondary school as well as the post-secondary institutions.

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## **Schools and Zonal Centres Offering MSP**

MSP is currently offered at four zonal centres (outside curriculum time) and 14 schools:

### MSP zonal centres

1. Bukit Batok Secondary School (West Zonal Centre)
2. Tampines Secondary School (East Zonal Centre)
3. Zhonghua Secondary School (South Zonal Centre)
4. Ministry of Education Language Centre - Bishan (North Zonal Centre)

### School-based MSP

1. Bukit Panjang Government High School
2. Cedar Girls' School
3. Chung Cheng High School (Main)
4. Dunman High School
5. Hwa Chong Institution
6. Nan Chiau High School
7. Nan Hua High School
8. Nanyang Girls' High School
9. NUS High School
10. Raffles Girls' School (Secondary)
11. Raffles Institution
12. Riverside Secondary School
13. National Junior College\*
14. Victoria Junior College\*

\* MSP is offered to the Sec 3 and 4 IP students.

### **Schools and Zonal Centres Offering CSP**

CSP is currently offered at two zonal centres (outside curriculum time) and 11 schools:

#### CSP zonal centres

1. Changkat Changi Secondary School (East Zonal Centre)
2. Clementi Town Secondary School (West Zonal Centre)

#### School-based CSP

1. Anderson Secondary School
2. Cedar Girls' Secondary School
3. Crescent Girls' School
4. National Junior College\*
5. Raffles Girls' School (Secondary)
6. Raffles Institution
7. Riverside Secondary School
8. Tanjong Katong Girls' Secondary School
9. Temasek Junior College\*
10. Victoria Junior College\*
11. Victoria School

\* CSP is offered to the Sec 3 and Sec 4 IP students