

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## SINGAPORE SHARES INSIGHTS ON ITS MATH EDUCATION MODEL

**Singapore-based company Marshall Cavendish and Ministry of Education officially launch Math Monograph, “The Singapore Model Method for Learning Mathematics” in the United States.**

MR No.: 025/09

Singapore, Wednesday, 22 April 2009

1. *“In 8th grade math, we’ve fallen to 9th place. Singapore’s middle-schoolers outperform ours three to one. Just a third of our thirteen and fourteen-year olds can read as well as they should...”* – This was part of United States (US) President Barack Obama’s Remarks to the US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce on “A Complete and Competitive American Education” on 10 March 2009<sup>1</sup>. With the US set on reforms for its education system, Singapore’s education model, particularly Mathematics (Math), offers some useful insights. Singapore is ranked first in quality in education system by the Global Competitiveness Report 2007–2008, and among the top in the 2007 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement<sup>2</sup>.
2. To share more about Singapore’s educational system and our Math curriculum model, International Enterprise (IE) Singapore’s seminar “Creating a Thinking Nation: How does the Little Red Dot do it?”, supported by Marshall Cavendish International (S) Pte Ltd, was held at the Singapore Embassy in Washington, DC today. (Please refer to Annex 1 for speaker profiles and topics)

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Remarks-of-President-Barack-Obama-A-Complete-and-Competitive-American-Education-US-Hispanic-Chamber-of-Commerce/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-of-President-Barack-Obama-A-Complete-and-Competitive-American-Education-US-Hispanic-Chamber-of-Commerce/)

<sup>2</sup> TIMSS is a 49-country study of Grade 4 and Grade 8 students that is done every four years. Singapore has consistently been among the top rankings in 1995, 1999, 2003 and 2007.

3. Said Mr Satvinder Singh, IE Singapore's Regional Director for Americas based in New York, "The Obama-Biden plan for education has been outlined clearly, with one of the focuses on making Math and Science Education a national priority for the K-12 level. As the lead agency promoting the overseas growth of Singapore-based enterprises and international trade, IE Singapore hopes to raise awareness of Singapore's well established education system and publishing industry to the US industry practitioners, and share our experience in Math."

#### **Official launch of Singapore's Math Monograph**

4. Singapore's well established education system would not be possible without the strong support of sound teaching resources for teachers, which are core to creating quality education. At the seminar today at the Singapore Embassy, Singapore's Math monograph, "The Singapore Model Method for Learning Mathematics", was officially launched by Mdm Low Khah Gek, Director, Curriculum Planning and Development, Ministry of Education (MOE), Singapore, and Mr Shane Armstrong, Head of Publishing Group, Marshall Cavendish.
5. Written by the Ministry of Education, Singapore and published by leading Singapore-based educational publisher Marshall Cavendish through its imprint Panpac Education, the monograph explains how the Model Method is used to develop students' understanding of fundamental Mathematics concepts and proficiency in solving basic mathematical word problems, providing a strong foundation for the learning of Math for the K-12 level. In addition, the monograph features the Mathematics Framework of Singapore's Math curriculum.

6. Said Mr Shane Armstrong, Head of Publishing Group, Marshall Cavendish, "This publication will contribute to the international mathematics education community's understanding of why Singapore's approach to Mathematics education is so effective. Marshall Cavendish is proud to have partnered the Ministry of Education, Singapore, through our imprint Panpac Education, to bring this publication to an international audience. It will help educators in the US using Primary Mathematics or those considering Math in Focus<sup>3</sup> understand Singapore math pedagogy better and achieve even better results." (Please refer to [Annex 2](#) for background on Singapore Math in the US)

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<sup>3</sup> Math in Focus is a textbook series for teaching math in grades K-5 published by Marshall Cavendish.

Annex 1: Speaker profiles and topics

Annex 2: Background on Singapore Math in the US

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**Note to Editor**

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**About International Enterprise Singapore**

International Enterprise (IE) Singapore is an agency under the Ministry of Trade and Industry spearheading the development of Singapore's external economic wing.

Our mission is to promote the overseas growth of Singapore-based enterprises and international trade. With a global network in over 30 locations and our 3C framework of assistance – Connections, Competency, Capital, we offer services to help enterprises export, develop business capabilities, find overseas partners and enter new markets. At the same time, we work to position Singapore as a base for foreign businesses to expand into the region in partnership with Singapore-based companies.

Please visit [www.iesingapore.com](http://www.iesingapore.com) for more information.

**About Marshall Cavendish**

Marshall Cavendish is the leading K-12 educational publisher in Singapore and has more than 50 years of experience in educational publishing. Our materials have consistently been approved by the Ministry of Education, Singapore and are used in most schools in Singapore. We are deeply committed to developing educational materials that play a critical role in raising the quality of learning.

Adopted and endorsed by education ministries in various countries and regions such as Thailand, Hong Kong, the Caribbean and Mauritius, our educational content has also gained recognition in the United States through approval for adoption in State schools in California and Oregon.

For more information, please visit [www.marshallcavendish.com/education](http://www.marshallcavendish.com/education)

## ANNEX 1

**SPEAKER PROFILES & TOPICS*****“Understanding the Coherence of the Singapore Educational System”*****By Dr Susan Sclafani****Director, State Services****National Center for Education and the Economy**

Dr Sclafani is Director of State Services for the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE). In 2006, Dr Sclafani served as a member of the *New Commission* on the Skills of the American Workforce, and she has continued to advocate for the adoption of the recommendations of its *Tough Choices or Tough Times* report. In her new role at NCEE, Dr Sclafani is working with the coalition of states that have committed themselves to systemic education reform based on the Commission's recommendations.

From 2005 through 2008, Dr Sclafani served as Managing Director of Chartwell where she worked with governmental and non-profit organizations and developed projects in the US as well as India and China focused on improving the quality of education for students of all ages. Through Chartwell, Dr Sclafani worked part time with NCEE as co-director of the State Alliance for High Performance of the NCEE. In this role, she worked with states and arranged seminars to focus on international benchmarking of state standards, assessments, practices and results. Dr Sclafani also led international benchmarking visits for states and school districts that wished to learn from the best practices of high-performing nations.

In her former positions as Assistant Secretary of Education for Vocational and Adult Education and Counselor to the U.S. Secretary of Education, she had many opportunities to serve. She was the United States representative to the Education Committee of the OECD, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and APEC, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. Among the highlights of her term at the Department was her leadership in the creation of the Mathematics and Science Initiative, the joint E-Language On-line Learning Project with the Chinese Ministry of Education, and the Department's High School Initiative to better prepare students for 21st Century education, training and the workplace. Prior to serving at the Department, Dr Sclafani was Chief of Staff for Education Services of Houston Independent School District, the nation's seventh largest urban school district, and in that capacity focused on planning, technology, curriculum and instruction, and instructional management. Under her instructional leadership, student achievement dramatically improved, and the district won the first Broad Prize for Outstanding Urban Districts. She also has extensive state education and business experience.

***“Insights and Learnings from research and experiences with Singapore Math”*****By Dr Alan Ginsburg****Director, Policy and Program Studies Services****US Department of Education**

Dr Alan L. Ginsburg is Director of the Policy and Program Studies Service within the U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary.

Dr Ginsburg coordinates development of annual program evaluation activities and implementation studies for the U.S. Department of Education. Dr Ginsburg also collaborates with the Chinese Ministry of Education overseeing the development of the E-language Learning System, delivering English-Chinese language skills to youths 12-18.

In 1991, he received the Distinguished Presidential Rank Service Award, the federal government's highest award to its civil service employees. In 1993, he received the American Evaluation Association's Gunnar Myrdal award for his contributions to evaluation improvement. Dr Ginsburg currently is U.S. Department of Education's representative to the Education Forum of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

Dr Ginsburg received his Ph.D. in economics from the University of Michigan. He has published articles in numerous academic journals in such areas as evaluation management and utilization, the Federal role in education, school finance, and family influences over student performance.

***“Moulding the Future of the Nation through Science and Mathematics Education”***

**By Dr Yeap Ban Har**

**Assistant Professor**

**National Institute of Education, Singapore**

Ban Har teaches mathematics education at the National Institute of Education at the Nanyang Technological University. He trains both primary and secondary mathematics teachers as well as teaches graduate courses in problem solving. He also teaches in-services course in problem solving, lesson study, lower primary teaching and geometrical thinking. He conducts research in mathematical problem solving, lesson study and early numeracy, and has written numerous articles in academic publication on these topics.

He is also the author of various books for children including a textbook series for the state of California in the USA for kindergarten children. He has conducted workshops for teachers on the teaching of mathematics in various countries including Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Chile, Hong Kong, China, United Arab Emirates, Australia, South Africa and the United States of America. He is a regular presenter at NCTM conferences and has conducted several professional development courses for mathematics teachers in the US.

He had several years of experience as a classroom teacher and head of department in Singapore schools prior to joining the National Institute of Education in 1999. Ban Har holds a Master of Education, a Master of Arts in Southeast Asian Studies and a Doctor of Philosophy in Mathematics Education. He received the Excellence in Teaching Commendation Award from his university in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

National Archives of Singapore

## ANNEX 2

### BACKGROUND ON SINGAPORE MATH IN THE US

Singapore Math was first introduced in the US through the distribution of Primary Mathematics, a Singapore textbook series adapted to US needs, by [www.singaporemath.com](http://www.singaporemath.com)<sup>4</sup> in 1998. In 2007, the California Department of Education approved the Primary Mathematics series (Standards edition) for use in all kindergarten and elementary schools in the state of California in 2007. Oregon followed suit in 2008, placing the Standards edition under its K-8 Mathematics Instructional Materials List for 2009-2015. Over 700,000 school children have since used Primary Mathematics both at school and in the home school environment. There are also a substantial number of parents supplementing their children's school program by tutoring at home with Primary Mathematics.

Over 25 countries around the world have adopted the Singapore Math textbooks (adapted to local curriculum requirements) published by Marshall Cavendish Education. These include South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Chile, Panama, France, USA, Pakistan, India, Indonesia & Philippines.

# National Archives of Singapore

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<sup>4</sup> [www.singapore.com](http://www.singapore.com) is the US distributor of Marshall Cavendish's textbook series, Primary Mathematics.