Perceptions of Primary Education - Stress and Systemic Change

EveryChild.SG Parent and Youth Survey 2026

Prepared By: EveryChild.SG
October 2026

Table of Contents

EveryChild.SG Parent and Youth Survey 2026 Report

Executive Summary.....3

1. Survey Demographics.....6

2. Survey Findings.....12

A. A stressful primary education system was a factor in family size decisions for many respondents.....12

B. Tuition spending continues to rise significantly. Parents across the income spectrum view it as an unavoidable necessity.....16

C. Parents and youth are strongly supportive of EveryChild.SG's recommendations for Through-Trains from primary to secondary school (making PSLE optional), and smaller class sizes in primary school.....23

D. School environment was an area of strength, albeit with different experiences across groups.....33

3. Conclusion.....39

4. Annex A: Qualitative Analysis of Survey Data.....41

Perceptions of Primary Education - Stress and Systemic Change

EveryChild.SG Parent and Youth Survey 2026

Executive Summary

Background & Methodology:

EveryChild.SG's **Parent and Youth Survey 2026** gathered responses from 4,007 parent and young adult Singaporeans and PRs to understand their experiences of and views on Singapore's primary education system. Global market research company NielsenIQ administered the survey[1].

The survey design drew in part on the Institute of Policy Studies' (IPS) 2016 *Survey on Singapore's Education System*. Our findings on parental stress and tuition spending are also broadly consistent with those reported in IPS' recently released 2026 survey report.

The survey sample mirrored national demographics by race, gender, and housing type. It comprised:

- 2,002 parents aged 25–65 whose children currently attend, or had attended within the previous five years, a local MOE primary school; and
- 2,005 young adults aged 18–30 who were not parents and had themselves attended a local MOE primary school.

Key Findings

1. **Parents and youth seem to have strong regard for the education system:**
    - **80%** agreed that our primary education system is "among the best" compared to other developed countries.
    - ~**85%** of young people expressed that they felt physically and emotionally safe in school - but there were notable variations by income and for those

[1] NielsenIQ independently recruited respondents from the general population; participants were not recruited through EveryChild.SG's networks.

with Special Educational Needs (SEN).[2]

2. **However, the system is stressful:**

- **Some families say that it contributed to their decision to have fewer children:**
    - Fully **50%** of surveyed parents agreed that "the stress in the primary school education system was one of the factors for me in deciding to have less children."
    - This rose to **56%** among those with only 1 child.

- **Parents feel there is too much focus on academic success, and would like to put less pressure on their children in primary school:**
    - **72%** of parents wished they could put less pressure on their child, but felt unable to do so because of PSLE; this rose to **84%** among wealthier households.
    - **75%** felt children would benefit if there was less focus on academic success in primary school.
    - On an open-ended question, "What improvements would you like to see in Singapore's primary education system?", **80%** asked for:
        - a reduction in academic stress/ exam focus,
        - a pivot away from rote memorization, and/or
        - a greater focus on non-academic skills and holistic development.[3]

3. **Singapore has moved from public education to a 'hybrid education' model. Tuition is seen as an unavoidable necessity across all income groups, and tuition spending[4] continues to rise:**

- Nearly all children received regular tuition outside school; only **4%** reported "low-to-no" spending on tuition in primary school.[5]
- Mean monthly expenditure on tuition per child[6]:
    - In kindergarten - **$616**
    - In primary school - **$736**
- **2%** spent **more than $2000** a month per child on tuition in primary school
- On average, **lower-income respondents** spent **8% of household income** on tuition per child.

---

[2] E.g. among both high- and low-income youth, only about 60% agreed that they felt "seen and heard" at school, compared with 80% of middle-income youth. And **59% of SEN youth reported bullying during primary school,** vs. only **4%** of youth without SEN. Further research into these students' experiences at school would be a welcome contribution to the public discourse.

[3] This stat reflects combined codes from analysis of an open-ended question. Full code-by-code analysis can be found in Annex A.

[4] Tuition expenditure questions were asked only of parents.

[5] Defined as parents who reported spending $0-$50/month on tuition per child during primary school.

[6] These numbers are broadly consistent with IPS' 2026 findings, which reported a mean monthly tuition expenditure of $677. **Note:** In our survey, tuition spending was reported in spending ranges. Mean expenditure is estimated using the midpoint of each range.

This underscores the extent to which tuition – and academic competition more generally – is not perceived as something that families can easily opt out of.

4. **There is a strong appetite for structural changes to primary school, including Through-Trains to secondary school (making PSLE optional), and smaller class sizes.**
    - **80%** of respondents felt that "a Through-Train from primary to secondary school (PSLE optional)" would make learning more enjoyable and would reduce exam pressure.
    - **77%** of parents said they would put less academic pressure on their child if a Through-Train system were implemented.
    - **73%** of parents agreed that large class sizes in primary school contribute to the need for tuition.

    These findings are significant, because PSLE has long been viewed as an unalterable part of Singapore's education system. Yet, our survey finds that a sizeable majority of parents (almost 80%) see value in the idea of making it optional.

    These findings should also cause us to question the popular assumption that parents will just find other ways to compete if the education system changes. In fact, over 75% of parents seem to be waiting for permission to "take their foot off the pedal" when it comes to their child's primary education.

5. **MOE has an opportunity to build on this high trust and broad support for structural change by decisively reforming our primary education system to better prepare students for the AI Economy:**

    - As MOE wraps up its 'Education Conversations', it has the opportunity to make the case for visionary and ambitious updates to our primary education system.
    - This includes making PSLE optional through the use of Through-Trains (keeping only a handful of secondary schools selective), and reducing class sizes considerably.[7]
    - It can do so secure that this will resonate with most parents, and that it would be decisively tackling a serious source of stress to many families.

[7] A detailed explanation of how such a system could work, and a roadmap for getting there, are laid out in EveryChild.SG's 10-Year Plan to Transform Primary Education: https://everychild.sg/transforming-education/10-year-plan-to-transform-primary-education/

SECTION ONE – SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Data for this study were collected via an online survey administered through NielsenIQ and its network of research platform providers, mostly between 20 January and 20 February 2026. The survey was administered in English, Chinese, and Malay. Our final sample comprised 4,007 parents and youth, all of whom were Singapore citizens or PRs.

To capture public sentiment regarding public education in Singapore, the survey targeted two distinct groups:

1. **Parents:** Individuals with children currently enrolled in a local Ministry of Education (MOE) primary school, or whose children were enrolled within the past five years.
2. **Youth:** Individuals aged 18 to 30 who were not parents and who had attended a local MOE primary school.

To ensure demographic alignment with the national population, quota sampling was implemented. Quotas for race, gender, and housing type (as a proxy for socioeconomic status) were set based on national census benchmarks. Fieldwork was monitored in real-time, and quotas were closed dynamically once target representation levels were fulfilled.

While random sampling from a national registry was not feasible, no manual selection or handpicking of respondents occurred beyond meeting the screening criteria and active quotas. Participants were recruited from established online panels and received a small nominal incentive from the platform providers for their time.

The title and description of the survey did not mention EveryChild.SG's name, and respondents were not asked about their familiarity with EveryChild.SG. Surveys were completed online. NielsenIQ conducted quality checks on responses, and ineligible or low-quality responses were removed.

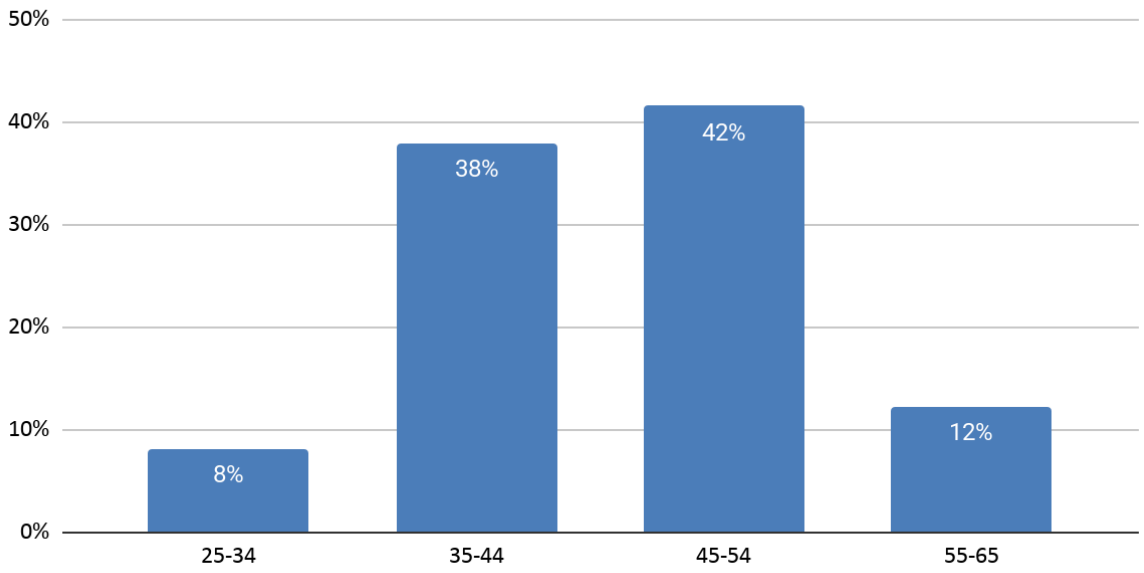
We gathered **2,002 responses from parents** whose children currently attend local MOE primary schools, or have done so in the past 5 years. Responses not meeting these criteria were removed.[8]

All parent respondents were between the ages of 25 and 65, with the large majority (80%) aged 35-54.

[8] In addition, we collected 101 responses from parents whose oldest child is currently preschool-aged. These responses are referenced in the sections on the impact of education stress on family size, and tuition spending during preschool, but have been removed from the analysis otherwise.

Figure 1: Age Distribution of Parent Respondents

N=2002



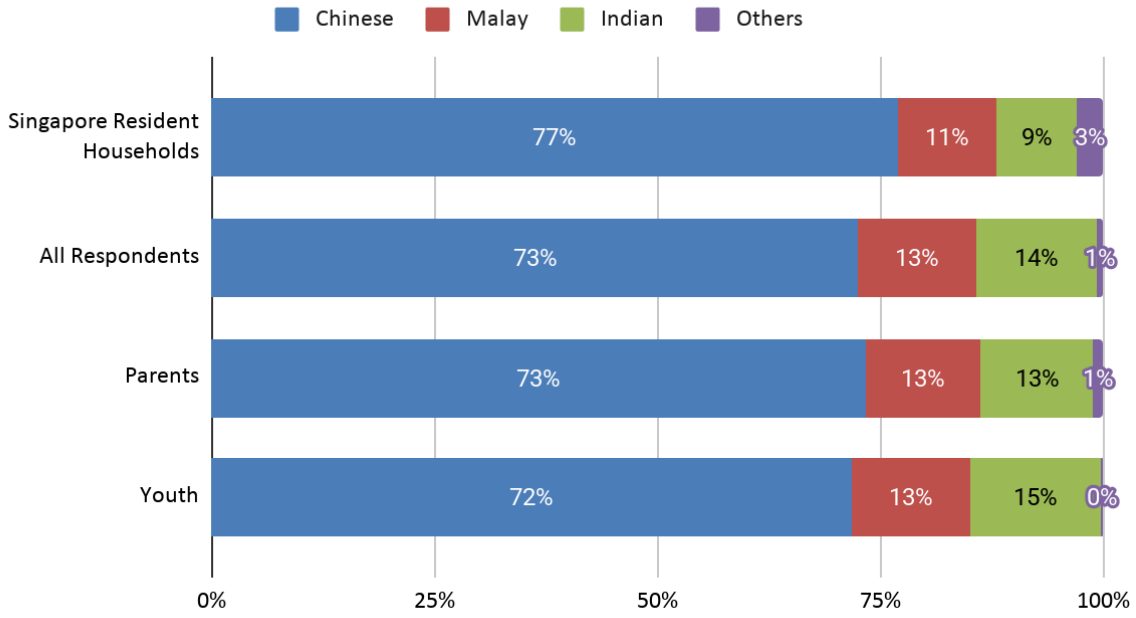
We also collected **2005 responses from youth**, aged 18-30, who are not yet parents and who attended local MOE primary schools. Although these youth are not able to comment on current conditions inside primary schools, they provide a valuable perspective as current citizens and as possible future parents, who have a stake in how the primary education system is structured going forward. Our data show that youth do have strong views on how the primary education system can be improved.

Both parent and youth respondents completed the same basic questionnaire, though parents were also given an additional set of questions related to academic pressure and average monthly tuition spending.

Responses were broadly representative of Singapore's racial diversity, though Indians were somewhat over-represented.[9]

[9] Population in Brief 2026, https://isomer-user-content.by.gov.sg/522/4267c3ea-113d-4545-b919-3bf6c604437c/Population%20in%20Brief%202026.pdf Note: The top bar in Figure 2 shows Singapore citizen households by race, while 10% of survey respondents were PRs. The top bar should thus be understood as the best-available proxy benchmark.

Figure 2: Survey Sample by Race

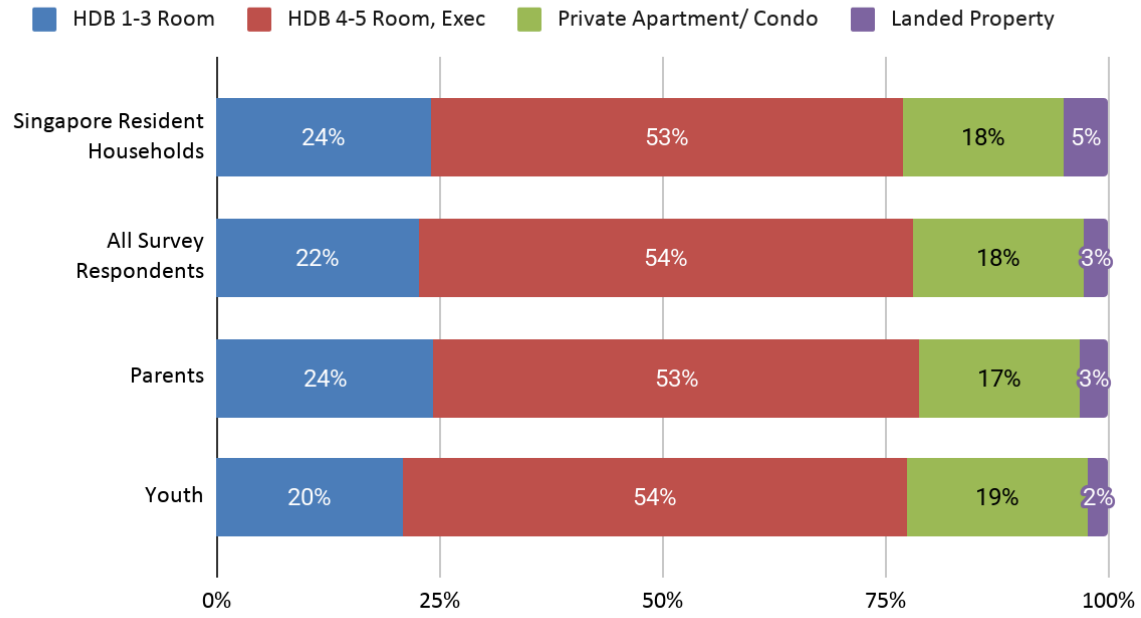


49% of respondents were male, and 51% were female. Both Parent and Youth respondent groups were equally well-balanced in terms of gender. In both Parent and Youth respondent groups, we saw negligible variation by gender on most questions.

Finally, quotas were set by housing type to align the sample with the distribution of resident households across dwelling types in Singapore.[10]

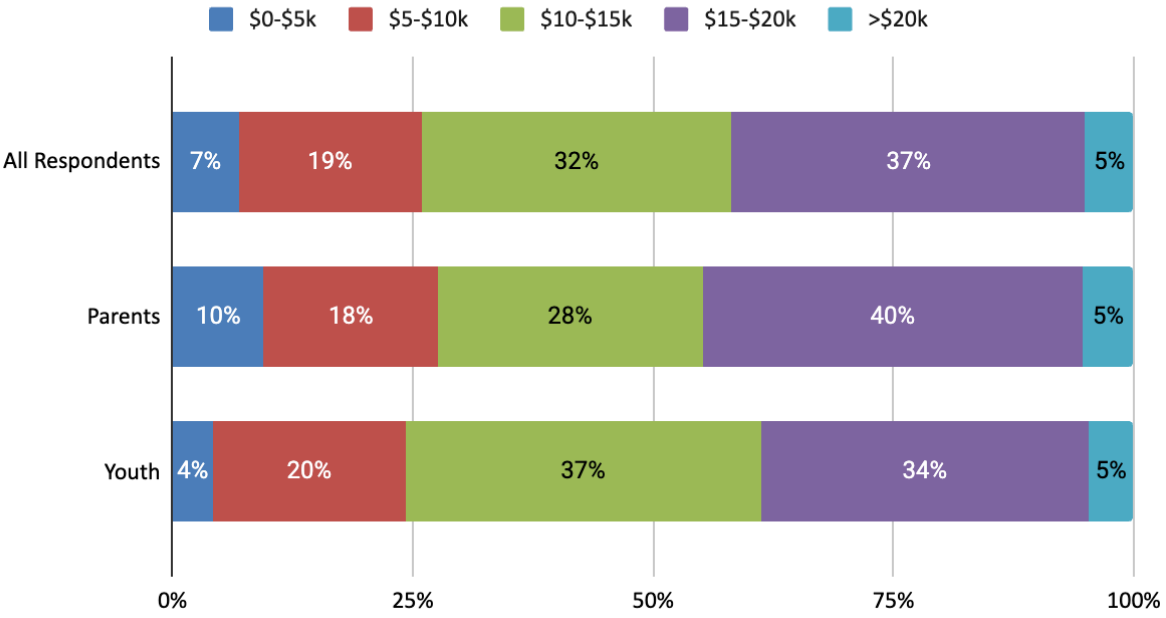
[10] https://data.gov.sg/datasets/d_4b9576c14ac3716c76807b959c3ed260/view

Figure 3: Respondents by Housing Type



Respondents were asked to report their total monthly household income. Respondents were grouped into $5k income bands for purposes of analysis. We reference income band, rather than housing type, throughout this report, as we believe this provides a more fine-grained picture of Singaporeans' different views of the primary school education system.

Figure 4: Survey Sample by Monthly Household Income



Care was taken to achieve adequate responses from lower-income households, whose voices are not as frequently heard in the national conversation on education policy. To this end, the survey was briefly reopened in July 2026 to respondents whose household income was less than $5,000/month. In the end, parent respondents in this category comprised 10% of our dataset, compared to 11% of households with children in Singapore.

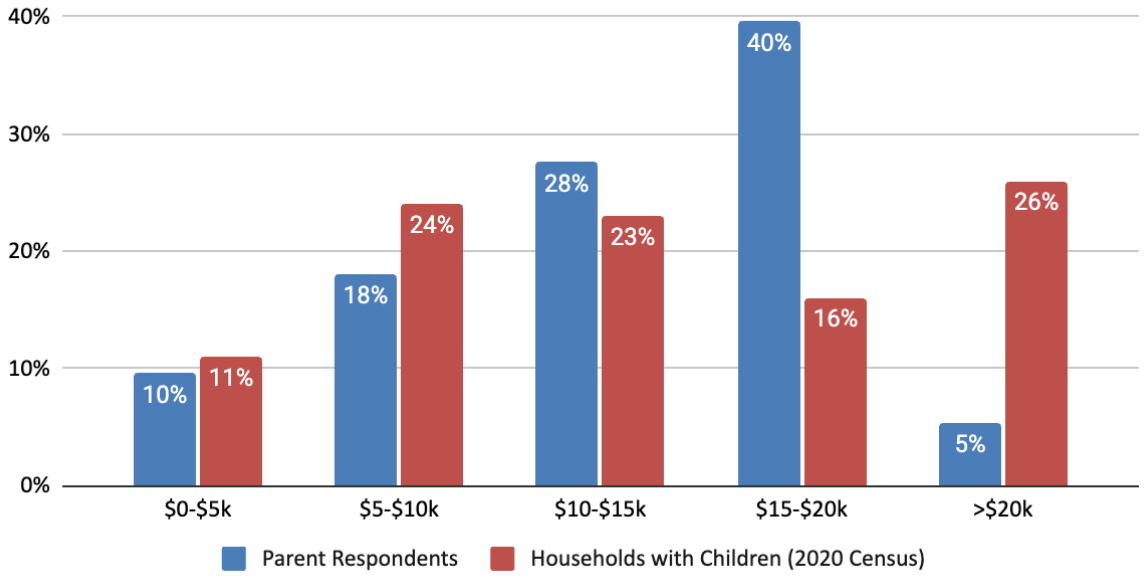
Households with children in Singapore skew wealthier than the national average. Our dataset:

- achieved a sample of lower- and middle-income respondents that roughly aligns with these national demographics,
- over-sampled upper-middle-income respondents (those with a household income of $15,000-$20,000/month), and
- under-sampled higher-income respondents (those with a household income of over $20,000/month).[11]

Despite the under-sampling in the top tier, sample sizes of 200 to 1470 respondents per income band allowed reliable comparisons across income groups.

Notable variations by income are highlighted throughout the report.

Figure 5: Parent Respondents by Monthly Household Income vs. Singaporean Households with Children (per 2020 Census)



Finally, respondents were asked about Special Educational Needs (SEN). Youth respondents were asked, “Do you have diagnosed or suspected learning needs/ SEN (Special Educational Needs)?”. Parent respondents were asked about their children’s SEN status -

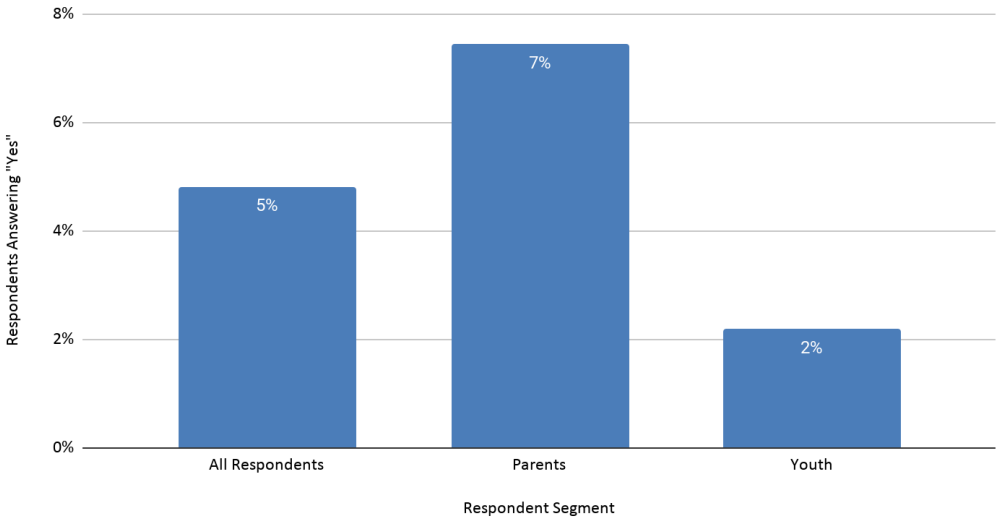
[11] Results are unweighted.

"Do any of your children currently or recently in primary school have diagnosed or suspected learning needs/ SEN (Special Educational Needs)?"

7% of parents and 2% of youth answered "Yes" to this question[12]

Figure 6: Survey Sample by SEN Status

"Do you [or any of your children currently or recently in primary school] have diagnosed or suspected learning needs/ SEN (Special Educational Needs)?"



[12] According to MOE, about 7% of the current student population in mainstream schools has SEN: https://www.moe.gov.sg/news/parliamentary-replies/20260302-proportion-of-sen-students-in-mainstream-schools-and-ensuring-adequate-training-for-teachers

SECTION TWO – SURVEY FINDINGS

A. A stressful primary education system was a factor in family size decisions for many respondents.

As this report goes to press, Singapore is still immersed in a conversation about what types of measures could realistically raise its declining fertility rate. In 2025, Singapore's resident Total Fertility Rate (TFR) fell to an all-time low of 0.87 children per woman, placing it among the lowest in the world.

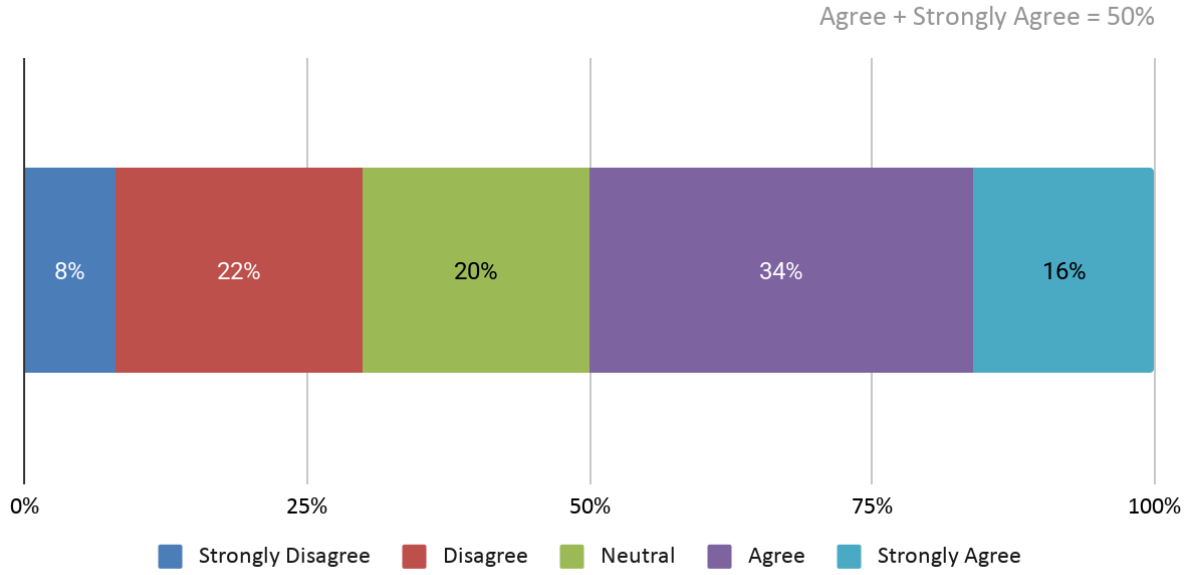
In August 2026, the government introduced a generous support package comprising ~$70,000 in lifetime financial assistance for every citizen child, as well as expanded childcare leave, with the aim of making it easier to start and raise families in Singapore. The Marriage and Parenthood Reset Workgroup is expected to announce further measures in 2027.

Our survey data strongly suggest that the Workgroup should not neglect primary school education and the concerns of primary school parents in their deliberations, as half of parents identified the stress in the primary school education system as a factor in their decision to have a smaller family.

50% of surveyed parents agreed that "The stress in the primary school education system was one of the factors for me in deciding to have less children."[13]

[13] Throughout this report, "x% agreed" includes respondents who chose "Agree" or "Strongly Agree," the top 2 choices on a 5-point Likert scale.

Figure 7: "The stress in the primary school education system was one of the factors for me in deciding to have less children."



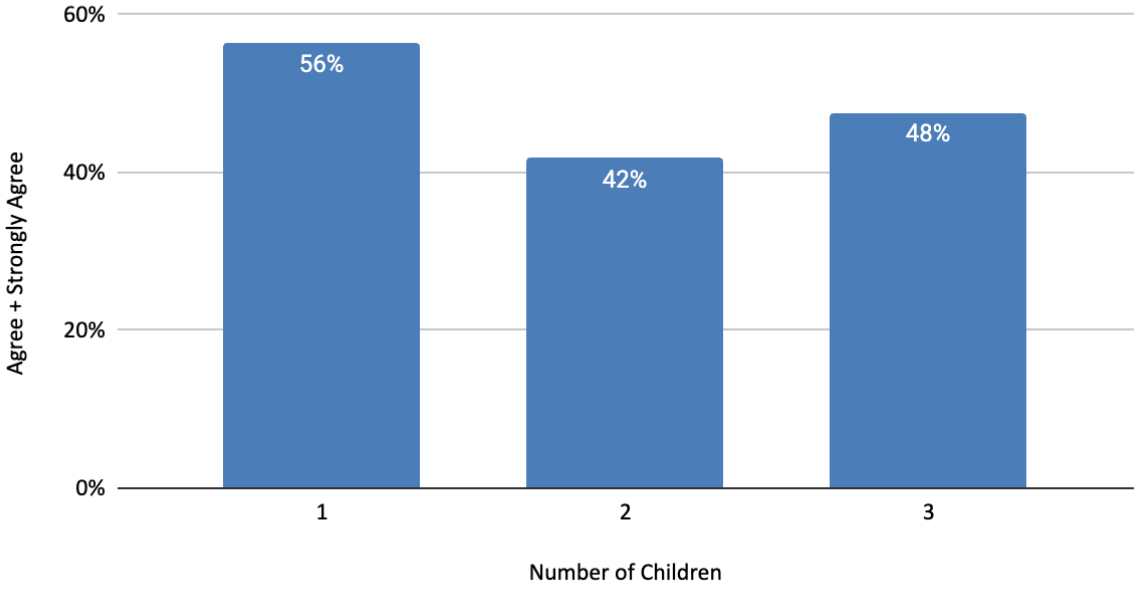
Agreement with the statement was strongest among:

- parents with 1 child, **56%** of whom agreed that stress in the primary education system had influenced their decision not to have more children;
- new parents whose *oldest* child is currently preschool-aged (**56%** agreement), many of whom may still be actively weighing the pros and cons of adding another child;[14] and
- parents whose *sole* child is currently preschool-aged (**56%** agreement).

These are the very parents that would be best poised to contribute to any near-term rise in births.

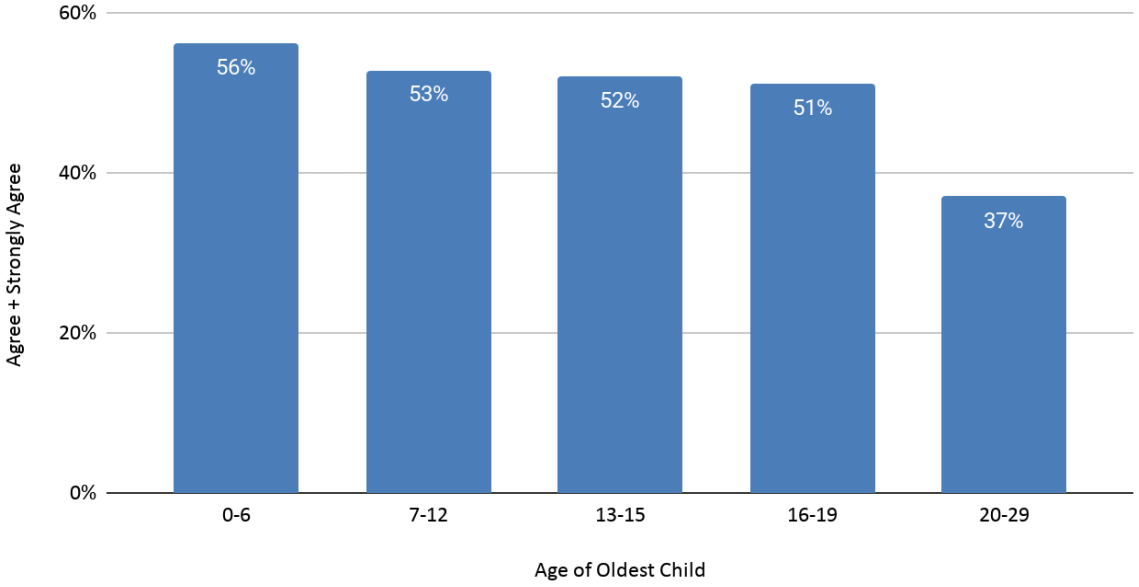
[14] These stats on parents of preschool children come from 101 surveyed parents who reported that their oldest child is currently aged 0-6. While we have excluded their responses from the rest of the analysis, on the basis that they do not meet survey sampling criteria, we include them here to shed light on the views of new parents.

Figure 8: Average Agreement by Number of Children: "The stress in the primary school education system was one of the factors for me in deciding to have less children."



Notably, parents whose oldest child is already an adult were much less likely to state that stress in the primary school system had any bearing on the number of children they had.

Figure 9: Average Agreement by Age of Oldest Child: “The stress in the primary school education system was one of the factors for me in deciding to have less children."



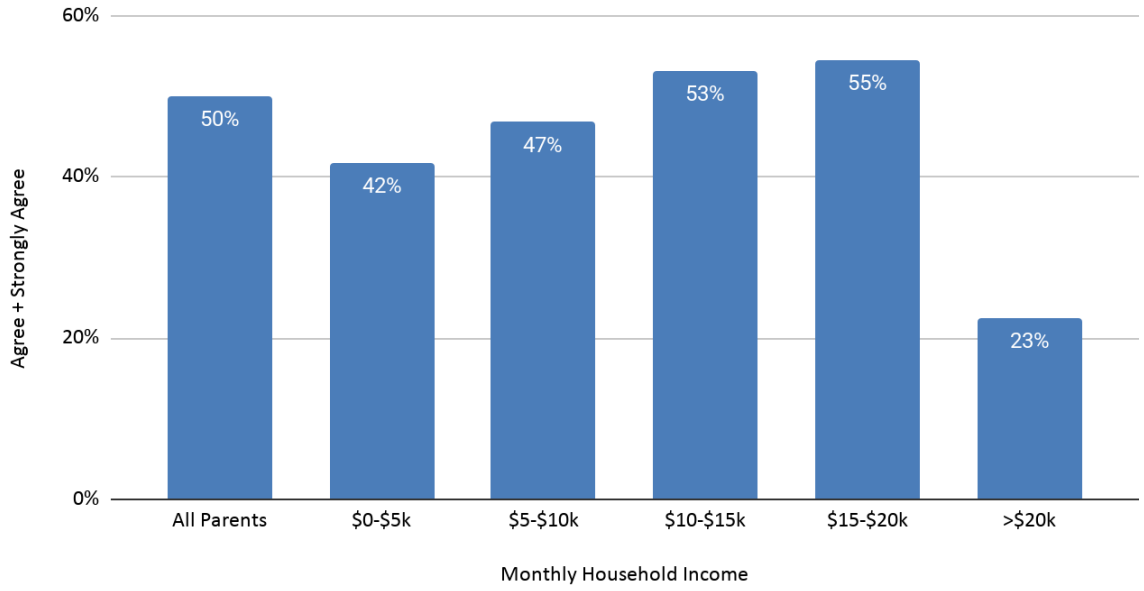
Detail – Variation by Income

Parents’ views on education stress and family planning showed no significant variation based on race or gender, but a cross-sectional breakdown by household income yielded

some interesting insights.

As household incomes rise, respondents are progressively more likely to agree that stress in the primary education system had some bearing on their family planning decisions. This agreement peaked at **55%** among upper-middle-income respondents (those with a monthly household income of $15k-$20k). However, agreement then plummeted sharply to **23%** among respondents in the highest income band (those with a monthly household income of $20k+/month).

Figure 10: Average Agreement by Monthly Household Income: "The stress in the primary school education system was one of the factors for me in deciding to have less children."



While we cannot be sure, it seems reasonable to speculate that the sizeable variation by income may reflect the burden that the perceived need for academic support outside of school places on families in the third and fourth bands (those making $10k-$20k/month). This could include private tuition, private DSA preparation, or parental attention at the expense of paid work.

As discussed in the next section, upper-middle-income families may believe that a higher amount of academic support is necessary/ desirable to produce an academically successful child, and may be pessimistic about their ability to maintain this level of support for more than one or two children.

By contrast, the wealthiest families (those making more than $20k/month) may feel more confident in their ability to purchase tuition or DSA preparation for multiple children as needed, or for one parent to forgo/ reduce paid work to provide educational support for said children, with the result that the education system does not loom nearly as large in their family planning decisions.

This is one possible explanation for the sudden dip in agreement among families in the upper income band. No available evidence suggests that academic stress or

competitiveness is less intense among this income group – in fact, we found that respondents in the upper band are *most* likely to agree that "I would like to put less academic pressure on my child during primary school, but because of PSLE I'm afraid they will lose out" (84% of upper band parents agreed with this, compared to 72% of all parents).[15] In other words, upper-income parents appear to feel considerable stress related to the education system, but may also feel that they have adequate resources to support their children as they pass through various educational milestones.

If true, this raises an important question:

In a nominally "free" public education system, how is it that only families in the top ~20% by income[16] seem confident that they have the financial means to support multiple children's education, such that they are able to make family planning decisions largely without reference to the education system?

And what changes can the government make so that less-affluent families, freed from the resource-intensive project of "perfecting" one or two children via the private tuition market, can have the number of children they want, confident that each of their children will receive a quality education?

EveryChild.SG's 10-Year Plan to Transform Primary Education presents a roadmap for reducing unnecessary academic stress and competition during primary school. Our proposals include:

- Establishing a guaranteed Through-Train from primary to secondary school;
- Making PSLE optional; and
- Reducing class sizes to facilitate more individualised instruction in the classroom.

Respondents' reactions to these proposals are detailed in Section C.[17]

B. Tuition spending continues to rise significantly. Parents across the income spectrum view it as an unavoidable necessity.

Most parents perceive private tuition during primary school as an unavoidable necessity.

76% of parents agreed that "Most children have tuition in primary school, I worry my child will fall behind without tuition."[18]

75% of parents, and 60% of youth, agreed that "Tuition outside of the primary school curriculum is necessary to do well."

---

[15] See Figure 20
[16] https://data.gov.sg/datasets/d_a4229f9345138b80bde13cb1ad17a4e8/view?dataExplorerPage=3
[17] A fourth important element of the 10-Year Plan is centralised, automated primary school allocation, to prevent competition from shifting earlier to P1 admissions. Respondents were not asked to comment on this proposal.
[18] This question was asked to parents only.

Figure 11: Parents' Views on Tuition

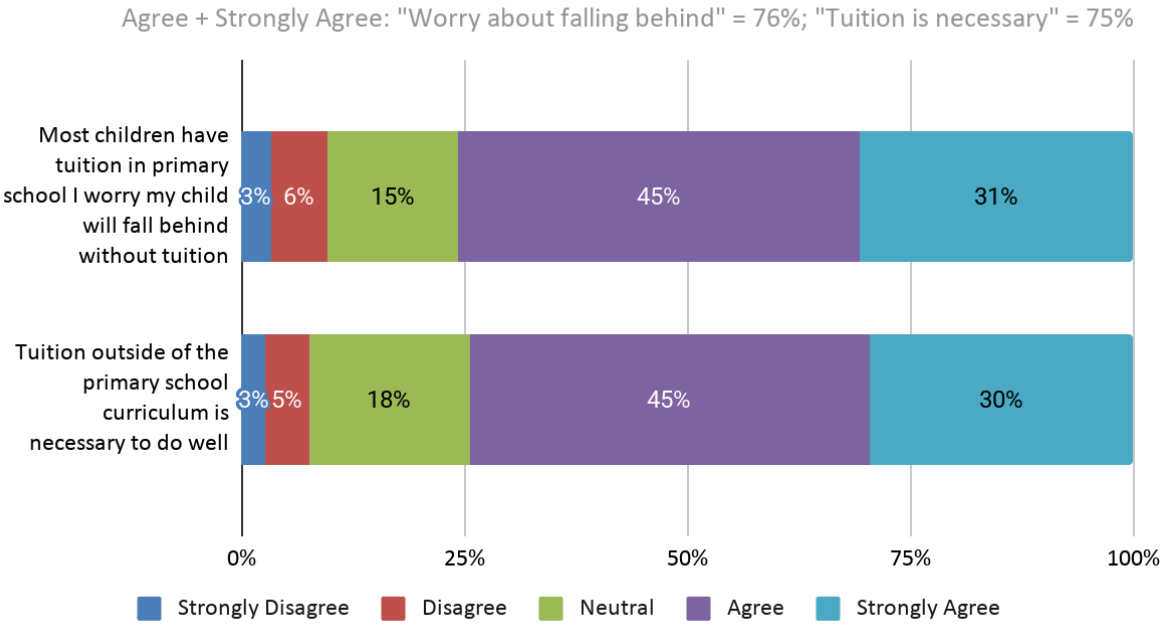


Figure 12: Parents' Agreement by Income: "Most children have tuition in primary school, I worry my child will fall behind without tuition"

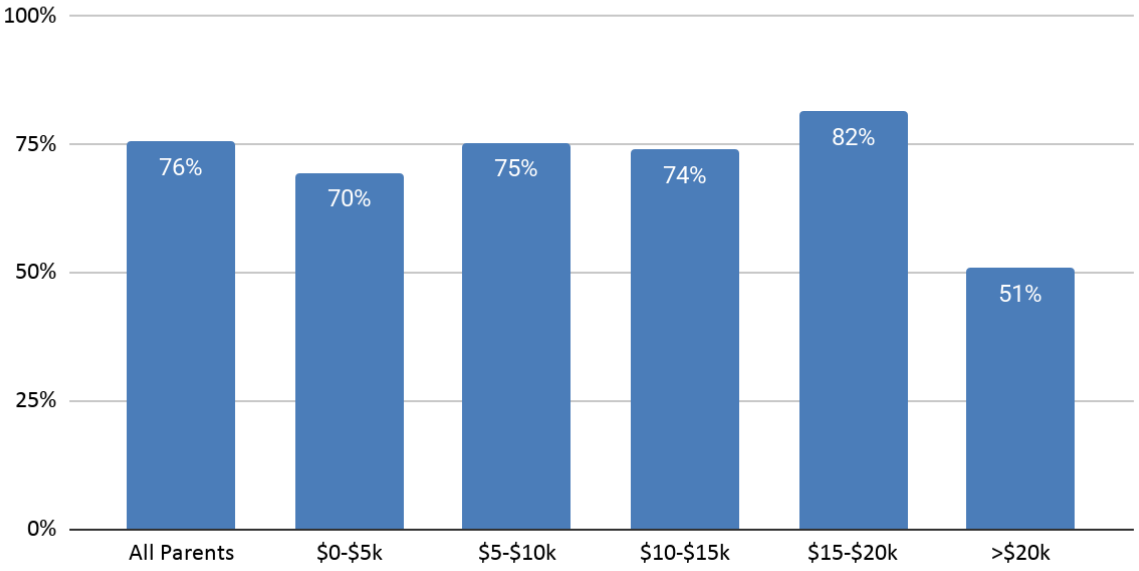
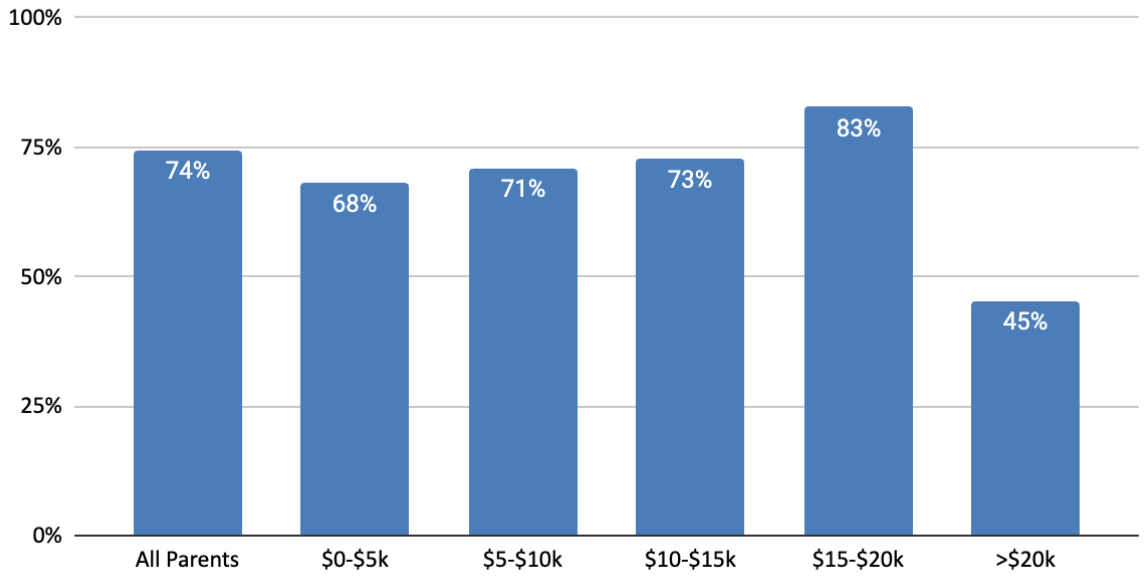


Figure 13: Parent's Agreement by Income: "Tuition outside the primary school curriculum is necessary to do well"



Further, our survey found that average monthly tuition spending per child is considerably higher than reports from previous years[19].

The median parent-reported monthly expenditure on academic tuition fell within the $400-$800 range, for kindergarten (K1-K2) as well as primary school.

Based on midpoint estimations, parents spent an average of $616/month on academic tuition when their child was in kindergarten (K1-K2), and $736/month during primary school.[20] [21]

In primary school, 32% of parents spent $400-$800/month (the modal range), while **2%** spent more than $2000/month (the highest spending category).

Virtually all respondents purchased private tuition. Only **9%** of respondents said that they spent "$0-$50" per month on academic tuition when their child was in preschool (this was the closest our survey had to a "no tuition" option); this number dropped to **4%** during primary school.

Based on these numbers, one could argue that **Singapore has effectively moved from public**

[19] The question on tuition expenditure was asked of parent respondents only.
[20] These numbers are broadly consistent with IPS' 2026 findings, which reported a mean monthly tuition expenditure of $677.
[21] Tuition spending was reported in spending ranges. Mean expenditure is estimated using the midpoint of each range. Because the highest spending category (">$2000") has no midpoint, a value of $2000 was assigned when calculating the estimated mean. Our average spending numbers thus represent a relatively conservative estimate.

education to a "hybrid education" model, with nearly all children reflected in our sample turning to private providers as a regular source of instruction.

Figure 14: Distribution of Monthly Tuition Spending During Kindergarten

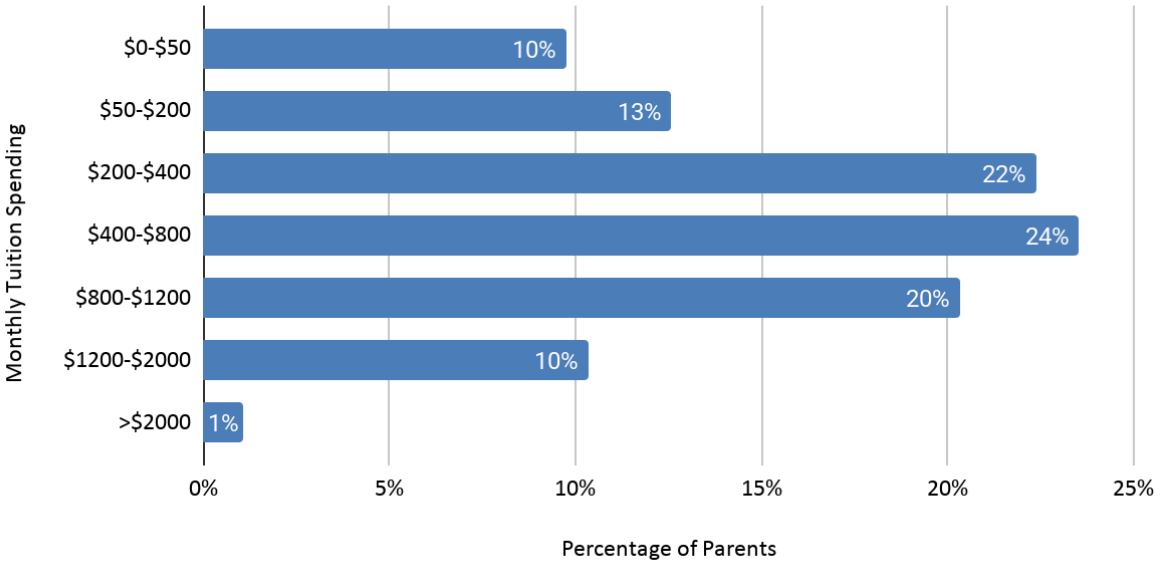
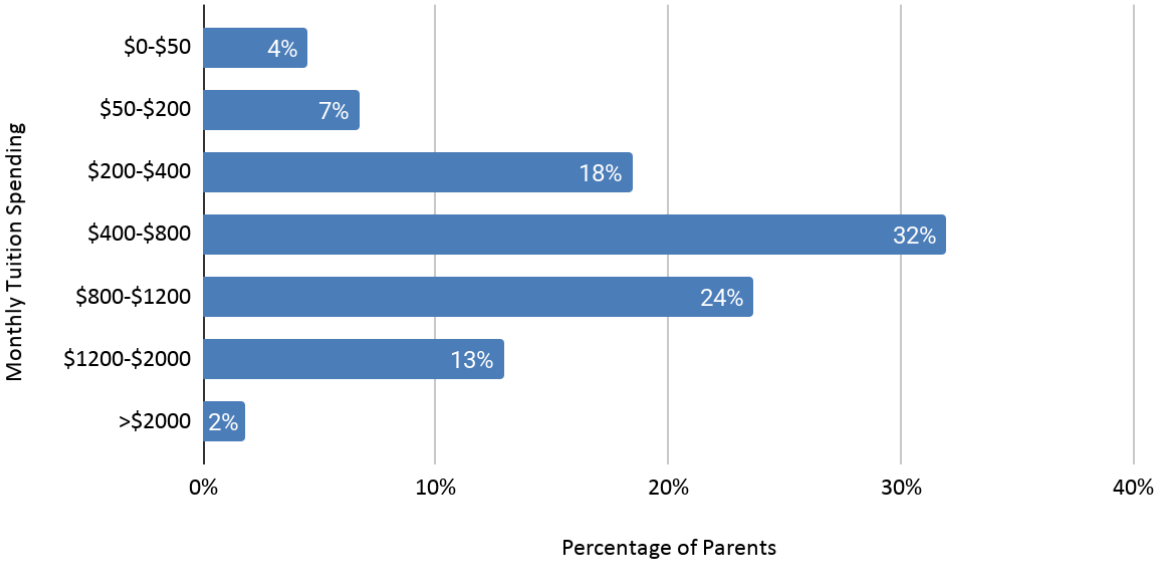


Figure 15: Distribution of Monthly Tuition Spending During Primary School

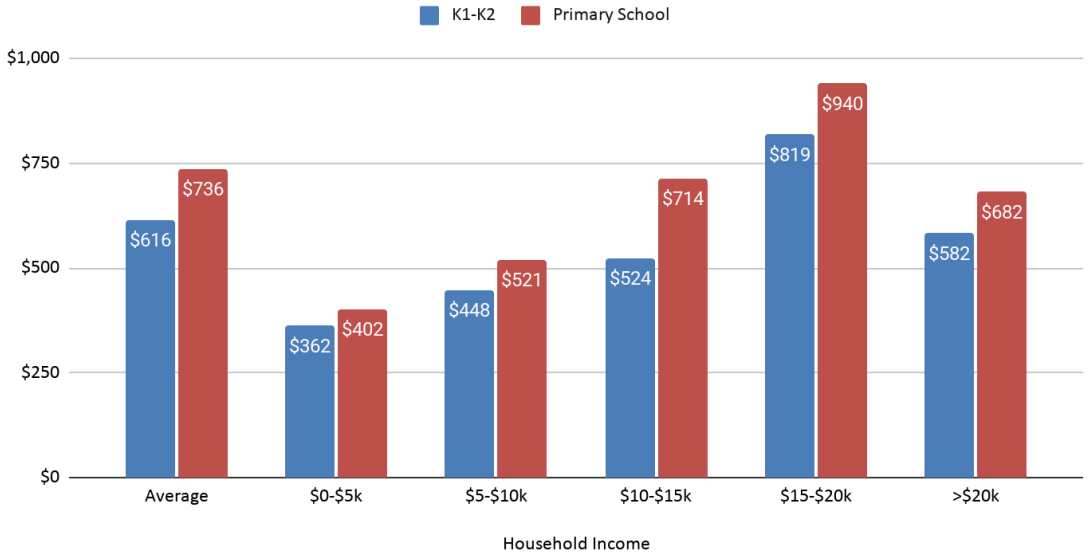


Remarkably, even parents in the lowest income band reported substantial financial outlays in this area, spending an average of **$362/month** during K1-K2 and **$402/month** during primary school.

Average monthly tuition spending climbs steadily with household income, peaking in the second-highest income band with an eye-watering **$819/month** during K1-K2 and **$940/month** during primary school – before dropping back to the overall average of around $700/month during primary school among respondents in the highest income band.

Figure 16: Average Monthly Tuition Spending by Household Income

Tuition spending was reported in spending ranges. Mean expenditure is estimated using the midpoint of each range.



While tuition spending varies by household income, it is nevertheless substantial across the income spectrum, with median spending clustering around $300 per month during Kindergarten (K1-K2) and $600 per month during primary school in several income groups.[22]

Notably, spending is not uniformly low among lower-income households: 11% of households earning under $5,000 per month report spending $1,000 or more on tuition during primary school, suggesting that some families are committing a substantial proportion of their income to supplementary education.[23]

[22] Note: Tuition spending was reported in spending ranges and coded using the midpoint of each range. In Figure 14 and 15, boxes show the interquartile range (25th–75th percentiles), with the line indicating the median. Whiskers extend to the lowest and highest observed values within 1.5 times the interquartile range. Outliers were retained in the analysis.

[23] 21 (out of 194) respondents making <$5k/month reported spending $1,000 or more on tuition per child during primary school.

Figure 17: Monthly Tuition Spending During Kindergarten (K1-K2)

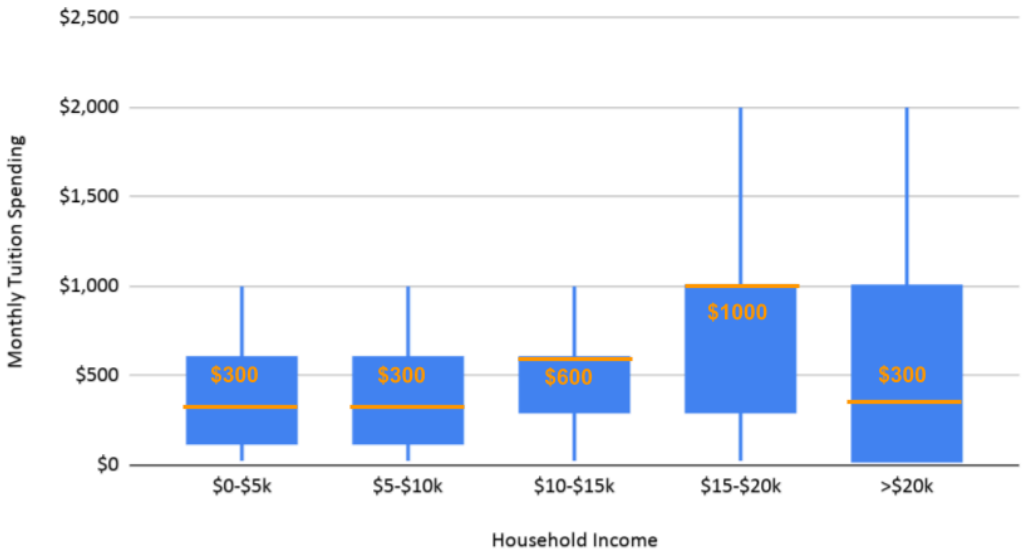
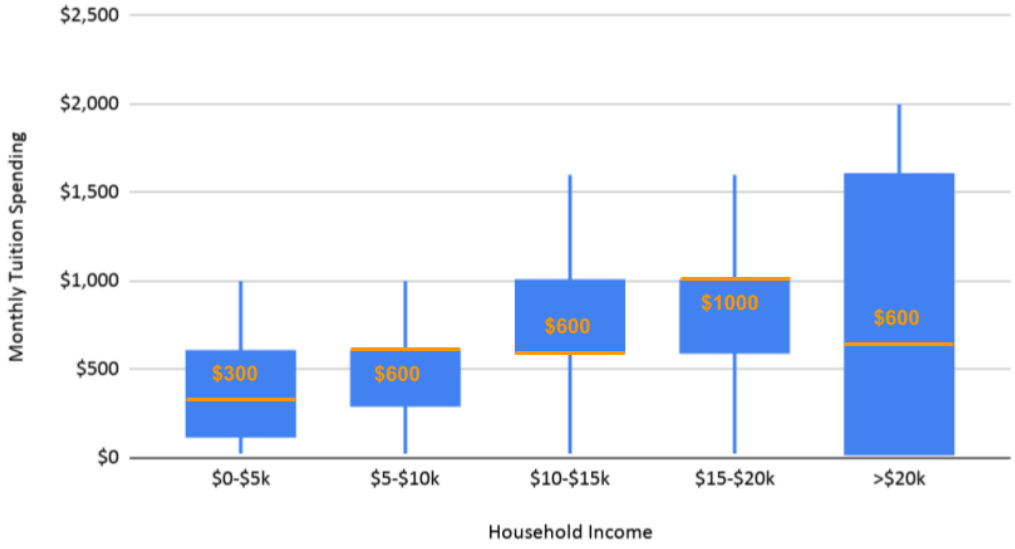


Figure 18: Monthly Tuition Spending During Primary School



Discussion

These data illustrate the significant financial burden that private tuition presents for Singaporean families. By the best publicly available data,[24] Singaporean parents appear to spend much more on private tuition than their counterparts in other high-performing Asian

[24] Including IPS 2026 survey results, which show tuition spending in a similar range

countries, like Japan and South Korea.[25]

In this Discussion, we consider the impact that high levels of tuition spending may have on two foundational pillars of Singaporean society: family formation/ birth rates, and meritocracy.

Family Size

It is striking to see how closely Figure 10 and Figure 16 mirror each other – that is, how agreement with the statement, "The stress in the primary school education system was one of the factors for me in deciding to have less children," seems to move in tandem with average monthly tuition spending. Without seeking to claim that tuition spending was the sole, decisive factor in respondents' family planning decisions, we believe that our data demonstrate a clear relationship warranting further investigation, and possibly a policy response.

Figure 10: Average Agreement by Monthly Household Income: "The stress in the primary school education system was one of the factors for me in deciding to have less children."

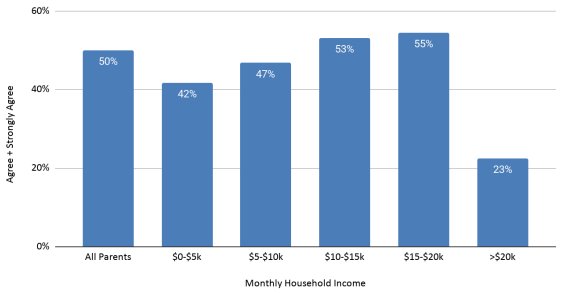
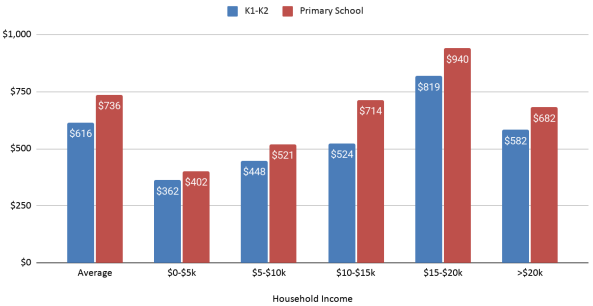


Figure 16: Average Monthly Tuition Spending by Household Income

Tuition spending was reported in spending ranges. Mean expenditure is estimated using the midpoint of each range.



Taken together, our data present a picture of a profoundly stretched and stressed middle- and upper-middle class – a group seemingly straining to meet some internalised standard of educational investment that might be sustainable for one child, but likely not for too many more. For example, a family with three children in the second-highest income band would end up spending 14-19% of their monthly household income on private tuition, assuming they spent the average amount for their income group on each child during primary school.

Given that private tuition is widely perceived as a necessity, not a nice-to-have (80% in the second-highest band agreed that "Tuition outside of the primary school curriculum is necessary to do well"), it is no wonder that parents would feel cautious about having more children than they feel they can afford.

Both Figure 10 and 16 show a sharp drop in agreement among respondents in the highest income band, those making more than $20k/month. This may reflect the extent to which wealthier respondents feel better able to prepare multiple routes to success for their child, which are not necessarily dependent upon academic success in the local system.

Meritocracy

The other unmistakable feature of our tuition spending data is the gap between low-income

[25] See comparison here: https://www.jom.media/beyond-the-rankings-how-does-singapore-fare-against-pisa-peers/

and upper-middle-class tuition expenditure.[26] While families in the lowest band spend a sizeable amount on tuition relative to their household income – demonstrating the value they place on academic success – their tuition expenditure is nevertheless less than half that of upper-middle-class families.

In IPS' 2026 Survey on Singapore's Education System, 70.2% of parents said that they would spend more on tuition and enrichment for their child if finances allowed (even as nearly 90% also agreed that children in Singapore spend too much time on tuition and enrichment).[27]

Taken together with our data, this illustrates that many families feel that the advantage tuition bestows is just simply too valuable for their own child to forgo, even if this contradicts their expressed views on how children "should" be spending their time.

This is concerning, because PSLE was initially conceived as a neutral mechanism for sorting students based on their demonstrated merit. Yet when wealthier families outspend more disadvantaged families by more than 2:1, can we rest assured that meritocracy is functioning as it should?

While public education is nominally free, gaining an advantage through tuition is considered to be "necessary" – not a nice-to-have – by 75% of surveyed parents. This is more financially burdensome for low-income families.

- A hypothetical family at the higher end of the lowest band (making $5k/month), whose tuition spending is "average" for their income bracket during primary school ($402/month), would spend **8%** of their monthly household income on tuition.
- A family at the higher end of the second-highest band (making $20k/month) would spend **6%.**
- While there is no upper limit for the highest income group, a hypothetical family making $25k/month would spend only **3%.**

C. Parents and youth are strongly supportive of EveryChild.SG's recommendations for Through-Trains from primary to secondary school (making PSLE optional), and smaller class sizes in primary school.

In addition to sharing their pain points, respondents were also asked to react to EveryChild.SG's key recommendations for updating the primary education system. Their responses revealed an openness to broad structural change, with roughly 3 in 4 respondents reacting positively to each of EveryChild.SG's recommendations, showing special support for the Through-Train concept. EveryChild.SG's key recommendations, and respondents' reactions to them, are discussed in the sections below.

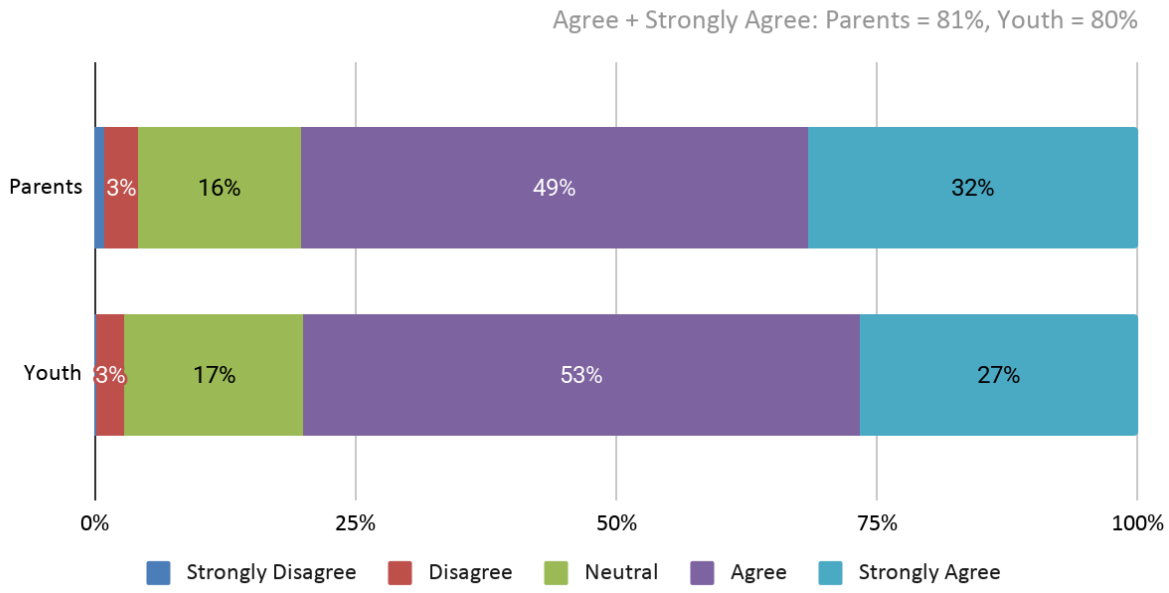
[26] This mirrors findings from earlier research – for instance, the 2023 Household Expenditure Survey (https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/increased-pre-school-expenses-contribute-to-higher-education-spending-among-spore-families)
[27] https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/docs/default-source/ips/ips-working-papers-no-77.pdf

Through-Train

EveryChild.SG has proposed "Through-Trains" from primary to secondary school (serving 80-90% of children), along with a handful of specialised academic, technical, and arts or sports- focused secondary schools to serve children with unique strengths. These selective secondary schools could retain PSLE or DSA as entrance exams, but children would not be required to take PSLE or DSA to secure a spot in their Through-Train secondary school.

In this survey, the explanation of a Through-Train was kept simple - "a guaranteed Through Train to secondary school (PSLE optional)". Survey respondents expressed confidence that a Through-Train would improve students' experience in primary school. **80%** of all respondents (parents and youth) agreed[28] that "A Through-Train from primary to secondary school will make learning more enjoyable," with nearly identical levels of agreement for parent and youth respondents.

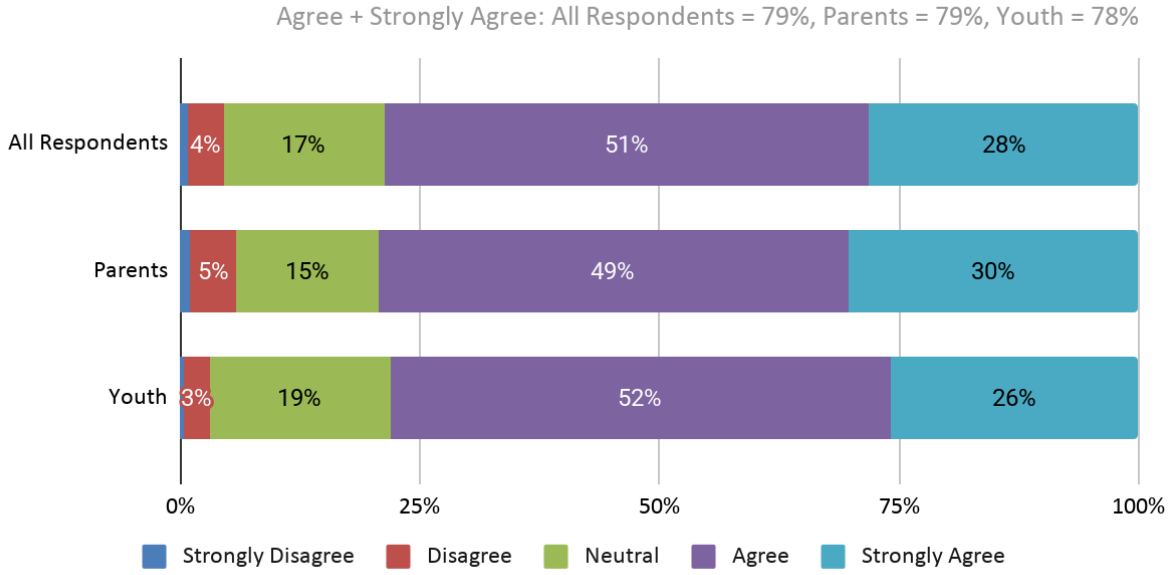
Figure 19: "A Through-Train from primary to secondary school will make learning more enjoyable"



On a similar note, **79%** of all respondents agreed that "A Through-Train from primary to secondary school will reduce exam pressure." This is meaningful because exam pressure stood out as an important pain-point for respondents, as discussed in the next section.

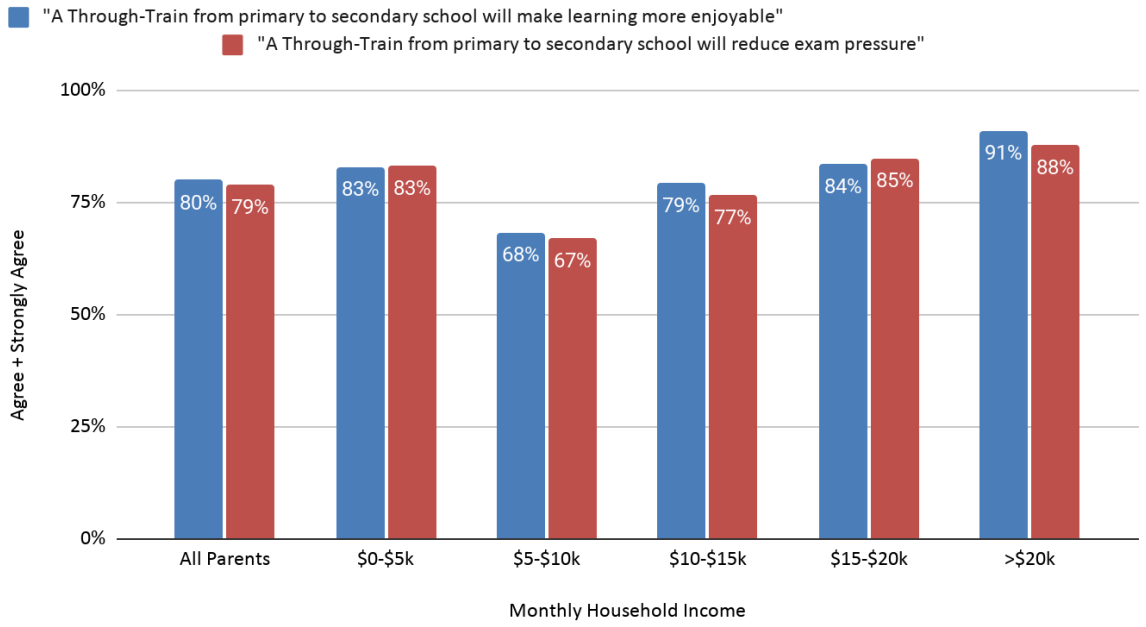
[28] Across this report, unless otherwise indicated, "% agreed" refers to respondents who answered "Agree" or "Strongly Agree"

Figure 20: "A Through-Train from primary to secondary school will reduce exam pressure"



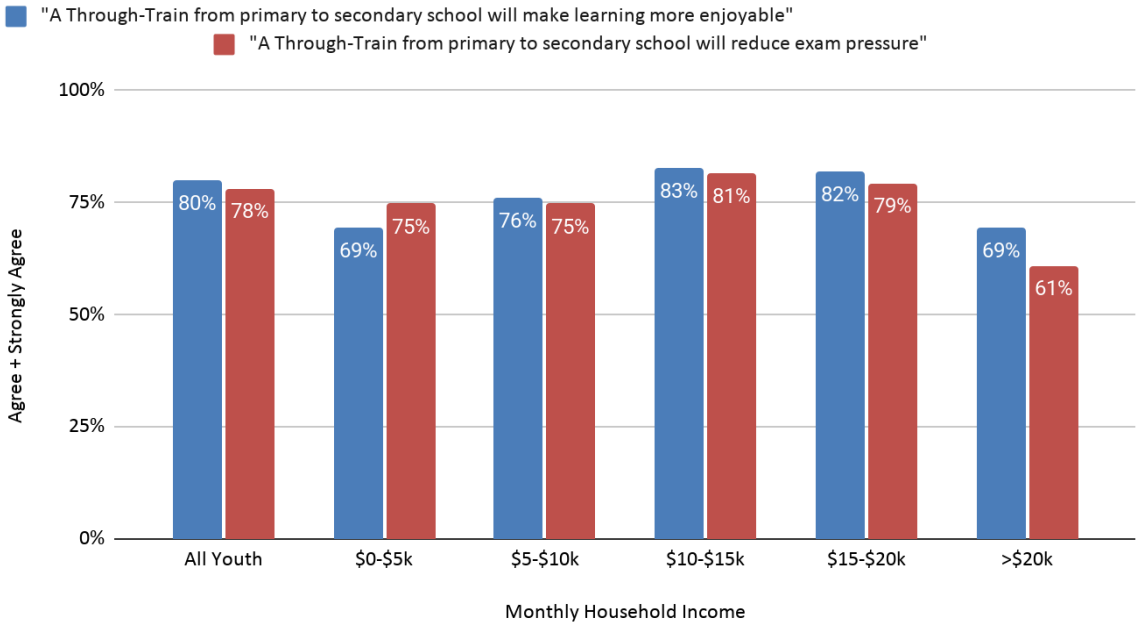
Support for these statements was strong across income groups, reaching 88%-91% support from parents in the top band (those with a monthly household income of $20-$25k). Support was lowest (67%-68%) among parents in the lower-middle-income group (those with a monthly household income of $5-$10k), a pattern that will recur across this report. However, even in this relatively sceptical group, support for a Through-Train still surpassed 2 in 3 respondents.

Figure 21: Parents' Average Agreement by Monthly Household Income: Through-Train



While youth and parent respondents expressed similar overall levels of support for a Through-Train, their patterns of support differed when disaggregated by household income. Middle-income youth were most supportive of the Through-Train, while both lower- and higher-income youth were more cautious.[29]

Figure 22: Youth Average Agreement by Monthly Household Income: Through-Train



It is worth noting that parents are reporting on their children's experiences, while youth are recalling their own experiences from an earlier period. These differences make it difficult to determine whether observed differences between the two groups reflect socioeconomic background, generational change, or differences in perspective. For these reasons, our findings should not be used as a basis for historical or trend analysis.

Despite these limitations, however, our findings present a compelling snapshot of *current* parent and youth sentiment regarding Through-Train. It is notable that, in both parent and youth respondents, Through-Train support surpassed 2 in 3 respondents in every income band.

PSLE Optional

Inherent in the idea of a Through-Train is that PSLE should be made low- or no-stakes. That is, under a Through-Train system, no matter a student's PSLE scores, as long as they have

[29] Current household income may not reflect youth respondents' socioeconomic circumstances when they were in primary school.

successfully completed P6 coursework and graduation requirements, they would be guaranteed to advance to the secondary school associated with their primary school.

There could be several ways to structure this, but EveryChild.SG's preferred solution is to make PSLE optional. Under a "PSLE-optional" system, students wishing to compete for a handful of academically selective secondary schools could choose to take PSLE, but other students would not be required to. This would reduce or remove exam pressure for the majority of students, and increase choice in the system, by ensuring that only those who genuinely wish to compete must do so.

Average performance over P5 and P6 could be used to assign students to appropriate subject levels for SBB in their Through-Train secondary school. For students who do not meet the minimum graduation requirements and would benefit from a less academic setting for secondary school, there could be a handful of specialised technical or vocational secondary schools (as exist currently).

In addition to establishing a guaranteed Through-Train from primary to secondary school and making PSLE optional, EveryChild.SG proposes centralising and automating primary school admissions, so that competition does not simply shift earlier to P1 entry.

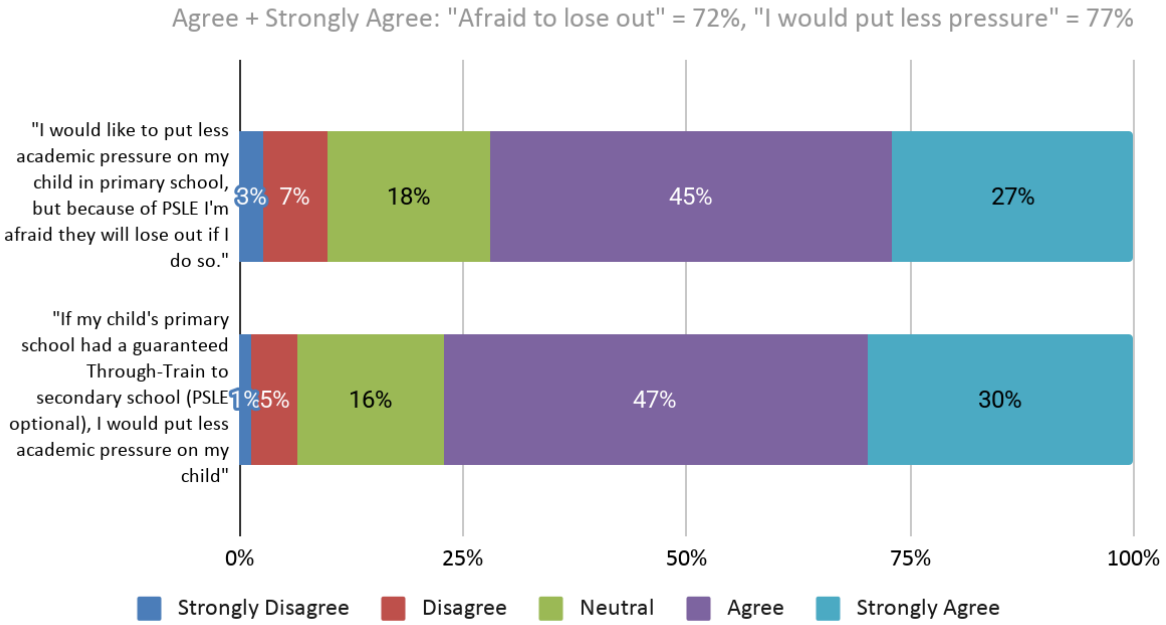
In the interest of simplicity, our survey did not delve into such a detailed explanation. Nevertheless, our survey results demonstrate that the public's appetite for such a system may be much stronger than previously appreciated.

Academic pressure linked to PSLE is a significant pain-point, with **72%** of parents agreeing that "I would like to put less academic pressure on my child in primary school, but because of PSLE I'm afraid they will lose out if I do so."[24]

A similar percentage of parents agree that a PSLE-optional system would offer them some needed relief, with **77%** agreeing that "If my child's primary school had a guaranteed Through-Train to secondary school (PSLE optional), I would put less academic pressure on my child."[30]

[30] Question asked to parents only (N=2002)

Figure 23: Parents' Views on Academic Pressure



75% of respondents (**75%** of parents and **75%** of youth) also agreed that "Children will benefit more if there is less focus on academic success in primary school."

This was reinforced by responses to the survey's sole open-ended question, "What improvements would you like to see in Singapore's primary education system?", which had over 4,000 responses. **80% of unique respondents expressed a desire for a reduction in academic stress/ exam focus, a pivot away from rote memorization, and/or a greater focus on non-academic skills and holistic development.**[31]

Given that respondents had the freedom to comment on any element of the primary education system they felt strongly about – be it canteen food, CCAs, bullying/ conduct issues, or school start times – it is striking that such a large proportion chose to highlight what they perceived as an excessive focus on academics during primary school.

We saw strong support for statements about reducing academic stress (~75%-85% agreement) across income groups, with a slight dip among lower-middle-income respondents (67% agreement).

[31] A detailed code-by-code analysis can be found in Annex A. Comments were coded using thematic analysis, and one comment could have multiple codes. However, the 80% figure cited above reflects unique comments only, meaning that 80% of unique respondents brought up these issues.

Figure 24: Parents' Agreement by Income: 'I would like to put less academic pressure on my child in primary school, but because of PSLE I'm afraid they will lose out if I do so.'

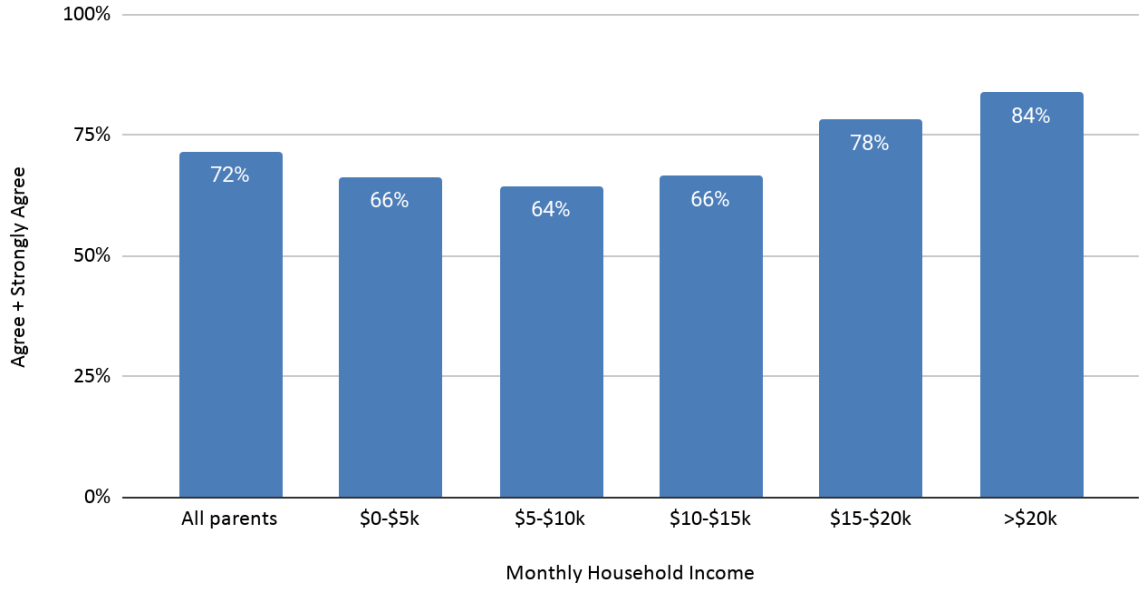
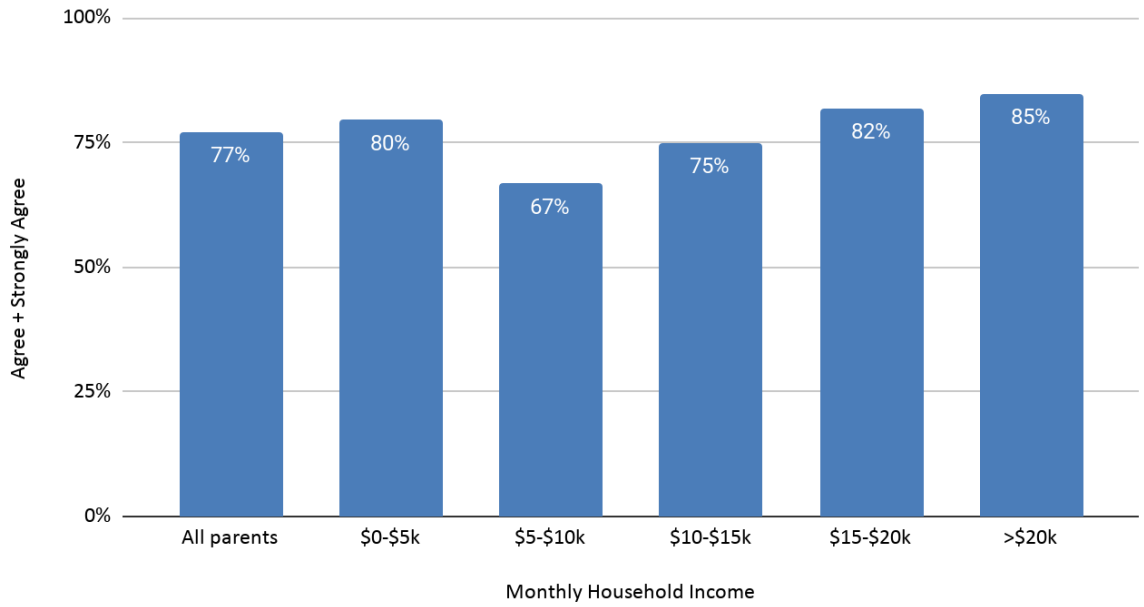


Figure 25: Parents' Average Agreement by Monthly Household Income: 'If my child's primary school had a guaranteed Through-Train to secondary school (PSLE optional), I would put less academic pressure on my child'



Parental choice & agency

Sociologist Teo You Yenn identifies a lack of "ethical agency" as being at the root of Singaporean parents' "unease."[32] By this, she means that parents may lack the ability to

[32] Teo You Yenn, *Unease: Life in Singapore Families*, Ethos Books, 2026

consistently live according to their values, because structural forces compel or strongly incentivise them to act in ways that contradict their core beliefs.

Our survey findings lend quantitative support to Teo's thesis. Fully 72% of surveyed parents are raising their children in a way that does not consistently align with their values (*"I would like to put less academic pressure on my child in primary school, but because of PSLE I'm afraid they will lose out if I do so"*). An even higher percentage (77%) would change the extent to which they pressurize their child if the structure of primary education allowed them to do so (*"If my child's primary school had a guaranteed Through-Train to secondary school (PSLE optional), I would put less academic pressure on my child"*).

These findings can also be read together with IPS' 2026 Survey on Singapore's Education System, in which only 19.4% of respondents expressed a desire for PSLE to be retained in its current form.[33] Of course, parents have varied views about how PSLE should be changed or what should replace PSLE, and survey wordings may not fully capture the full range of these views. However, IPS' findings and our findings together suggest that those who want PSLE retained in its current, high-stakes form are a minority, likely in the range of ~20%.

EveryChild.SG's recommendation for an *optional* PSLE is to allow ***choice for all parents*** – retaining the option of early academic competition, and/or long-form standardised testing, for the parents for whom this is important, while allowing the remaining parents (which could be as high as ~75% of parents, based on our survey results) to choose to raise their children in a more holistic way that better aligns with their values.

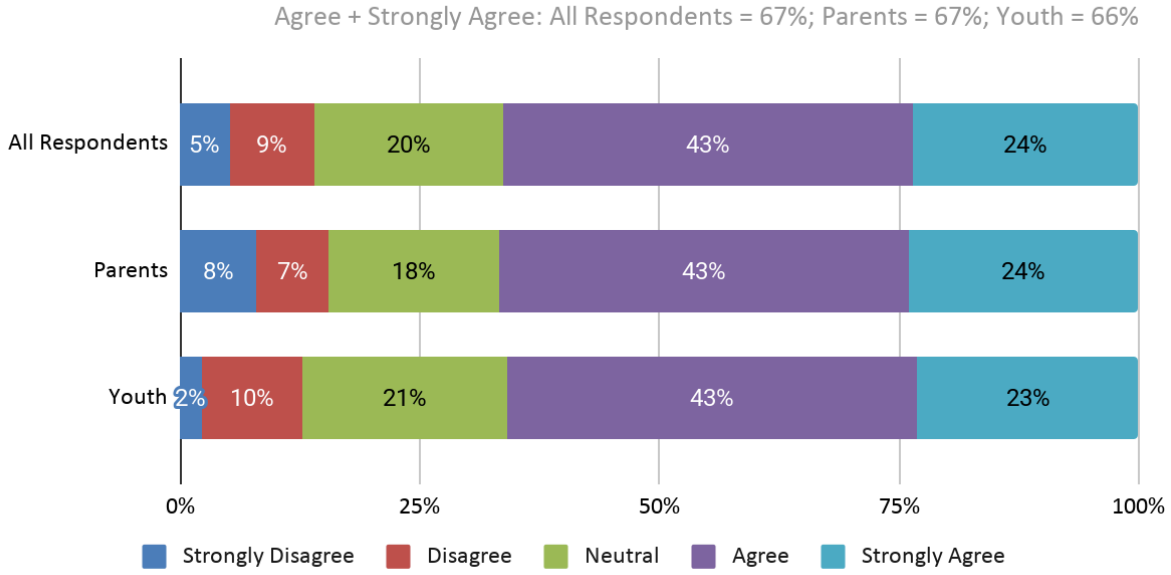
Allowing parents a meaningful choice would mean that fewer feel trapped in, and stretched by, a system they do not have the power to influence. It could also open the door to a longer-term cultural shift away from a narrow "achievement focus" and towards a broader, more holistic definition of success. This type of culture change takes time – but it can't even begin until "opting out" of the education arms race becomes a realistic possibility.

Smaller Class Sizes

The majority of respondents shared the belief that class sizes in primary school remain too large. **66%** of all respondents (both parents and youth) agreed that "There are too many students in a class for the teacher to cater to individual needs."

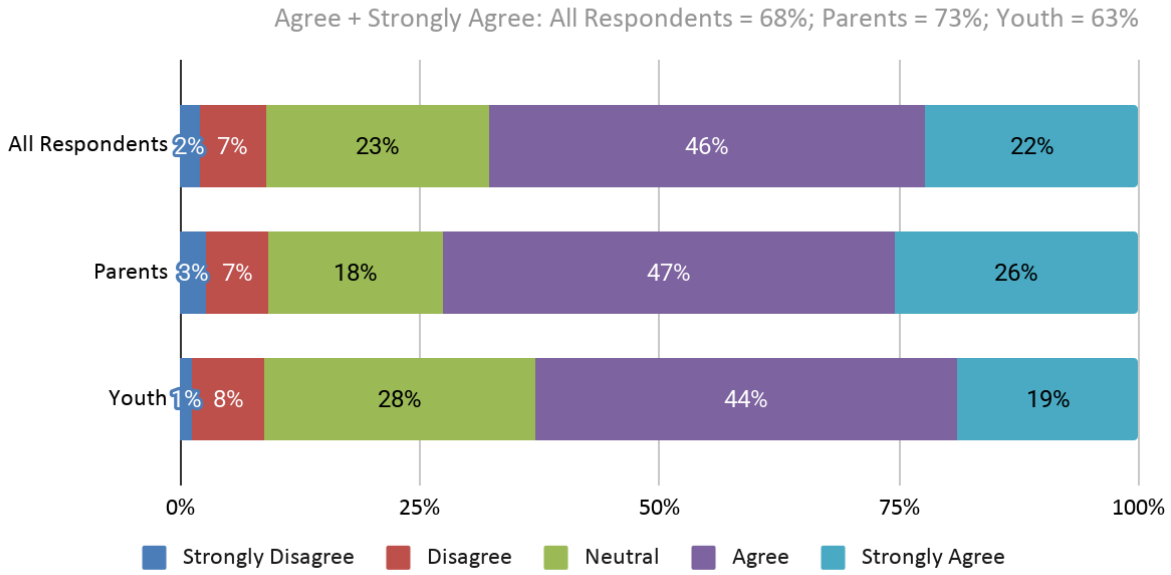
[33] https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/docs/default-source/ips/ips-working-papers-no-77.pdf, Figure 5.1.6a

Figure 26: "There are too many students in a class for teachers to cater to individual needs."



Similarly, **68%** of all respondents, and **73%** of parents, agreed that "Large class sizes in primary school contribute to the need for tuition."

Figure 27: "Large class sizes in primary school contribute to the need for tuition."



Parent and youth responses showed limited variation across income bands; however, parents and (especially) youth in the highest income band were much less likely to regard large class sizes as a contributor to the need for tuition (see Figure 25). As we know that upper-band respondents spend less on tuition than their middle-income peers, it may be that

their responses to this question reflect differing views on the "need" for tuition, rather than differing views on class sizes as such.

Figure 28: Average Agreement by Income: "There are too many students in a class for teachers to cater to individual needs"

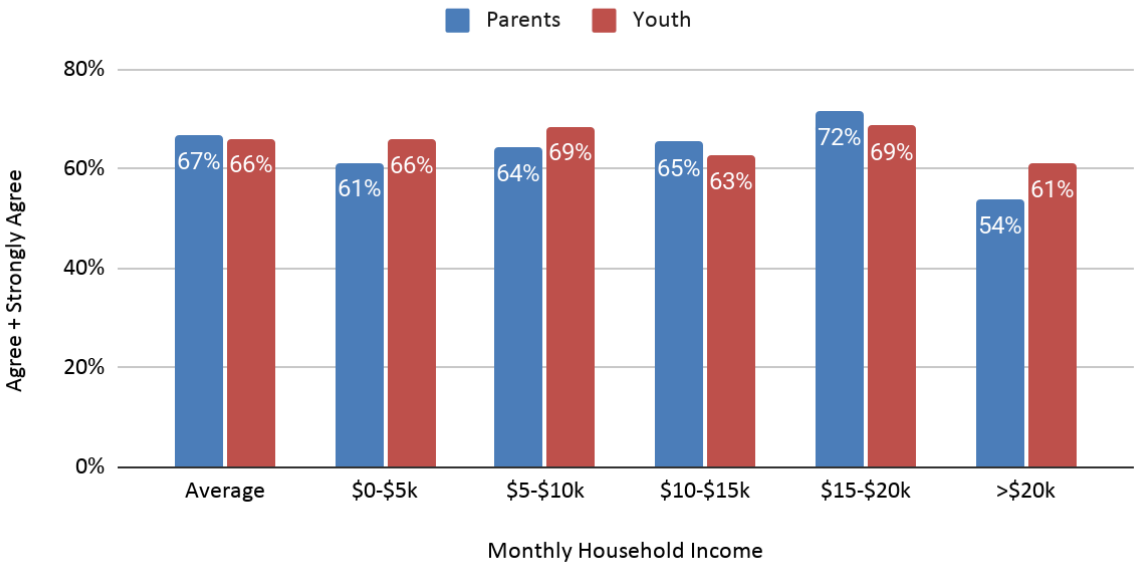
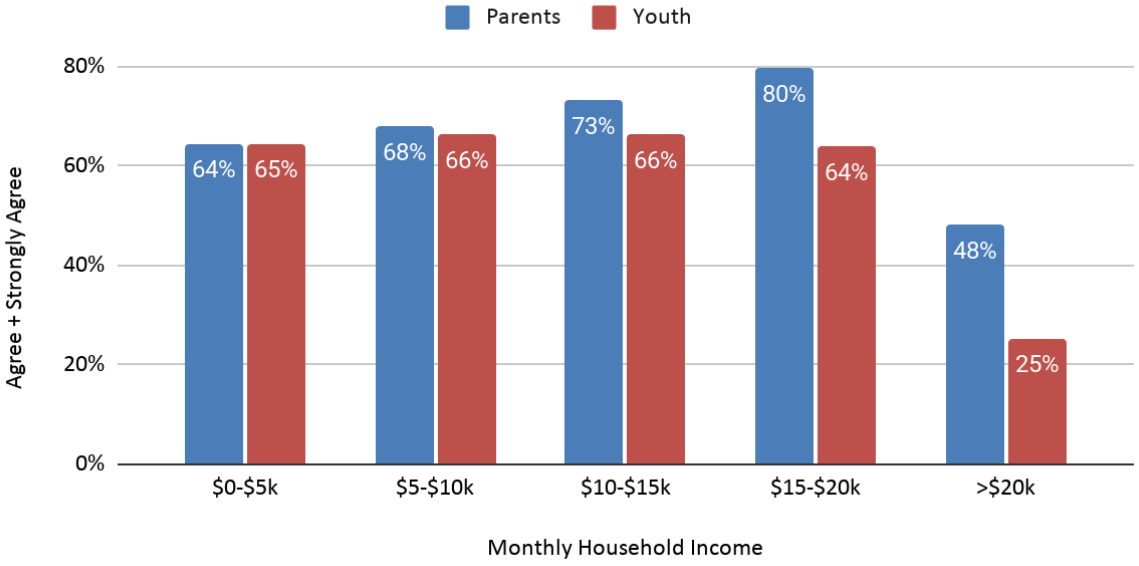


Figure 29: Average Agreement by Income: "Large class sizes in primary school contribute to the need for tuition."



Discussion

Taken together, the survey showed broad openness towards EveryChild.SG's key

recommendations across age, gender, racial, and income groups. There is *no* age, gender, racial, or income group in which a majority expressed clear opposition to EveryChild.SG's key recommendations.

Importantly, all respondents were members of the general public, most of whom would likely have had no or limited prior exposure to EveryChild.SG. This suggests that parents may be even more responsive to these policy suggestions if they came from a trusted voice, like MOE.

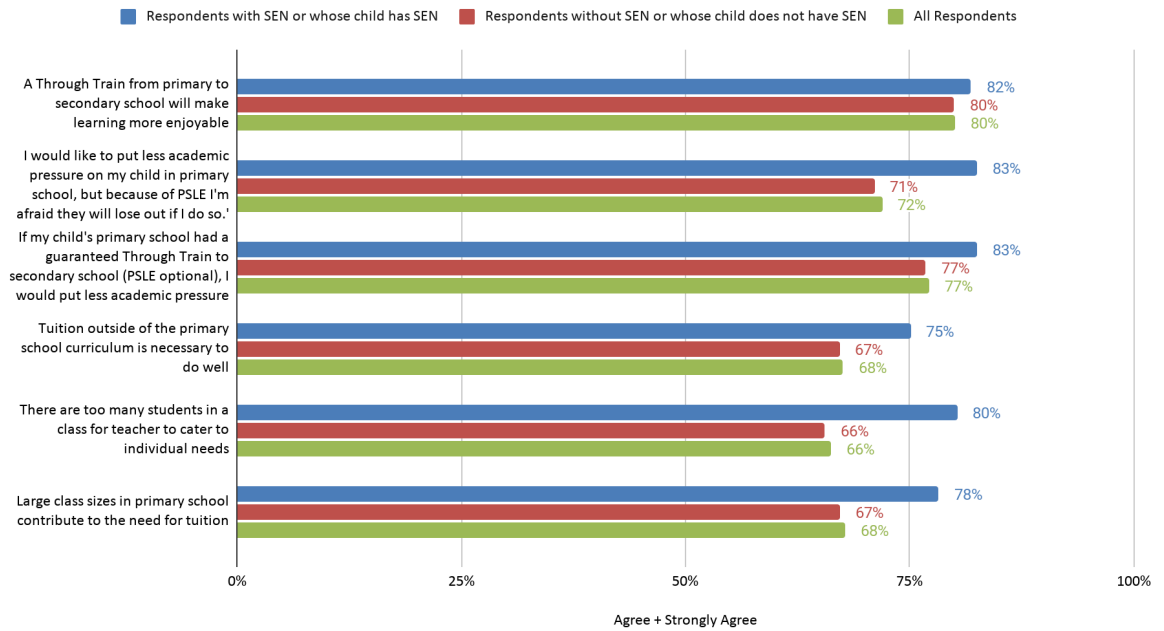
Variation by SEN Status

Among respondents who indicated that they/ their children had diagnosed or suspected SEN, support for EveryChild.SG's key recommendations was even higher than among the general public.

83% of parents of children with diagnosed or suspected SEN agree that "I would like to put less academic pressure on my child in primary school, but because of PSLE I'm afraid they will lose out if I do so" – much higher than 71% among parents whose children do not have SEN.

Similarly, **83%** of SEN parents would put less pressure on their child if PSLE were optional, compared to 77% of non-SEN parents.

Figure 30: Average Agreement by SEN Status



Class sizes also emerge as a notable pain point for respondents with SEN or whose child has SEN, with **78%-80%** of SEN respondents (parents and youth) agreeing that "There are too many students in a class for teachers to cater to individual needs," and "Large class

sizes in primary school contribute to the need for tuition." (By contrast, 66%-67% of non-SEN respondents agree with these statements.)

Respondents with SEN, or whose child has SEN, comprised only 5% of our dataset (193 of 4007 respondents). As such, they had a negligible impact on the overall response average for these questions (see the green bar indicating "All Respondents" in Figure 26). Still, their responses are notable. While the public conversation about students with SEN in mainstream schools has often revolved around ensuring more and better resourcing for these students (a goal that EveryChild.SG has also supported, most notably in our 2025 Mind the Gap Report, about students with SEN in mainstream schools), our survey findings indicate that there is also a very significant appetite for deeper, structural change among SEN students and their parents.

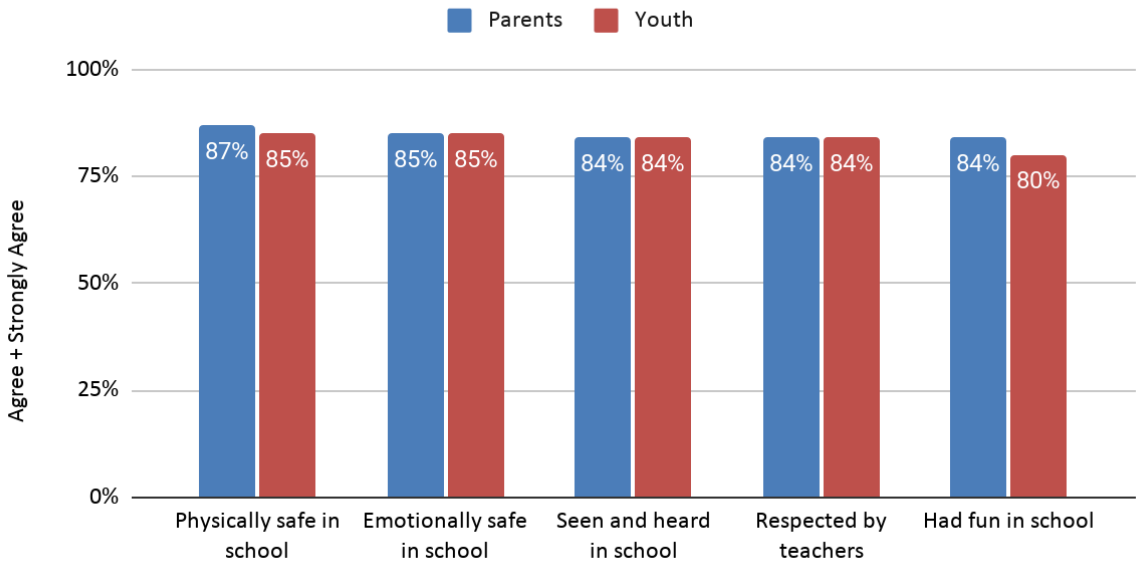
D. School environment was an area of strength, albeit with different experiences across groups.

Though they expressed serious concerns about the *structure* of the education system (e.g., academic pressure, large class sizes, and burdensome tuition spending), most respondents had a positive impression of the *environment* within schools.

School Climate

~85% of all respondents (both parents and youth) agreed or strongly agreed with positive statements meant to capture different dimensions of school climate, such as "I was/ my child is emotionally safe in school," and "I was/ my child is respected by teachers."

Figure 31: Average Agreement to School Climate Questions: "I/ my child was..."

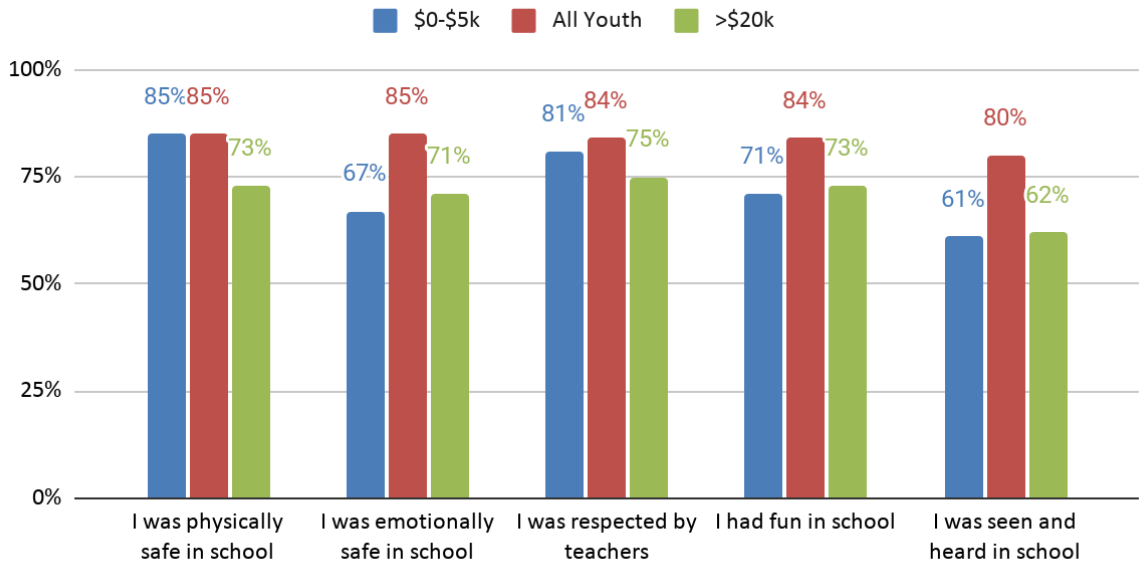


In response to the survey's sole open-ended question, "What improvements would you like to see in Singapore's primary education system?", **29% of unique respondents asked for more focus on mental health and/or a better school climate**. While this is a meaningful proportion, it is also consistent with our quantitative data indicating that school climate is not a burning/ top concern for a majority of parents and youth in our sample.

It should be noted that, while middle-income respondents – who make up the bulk of our dataset – appear to be broadly satisfied with the climate inside Singapore's primary schools, **children at *both* extremes of the income spectrum report substantially less positive experiences**.

When grouped by income, respondents' answers to the 5 "school climate" questions show a distinctive upside-down horseshoe shape. Surprisingly, youth from the highest-income households report school experiences that are on par with, or (on some metrics) even worse than, their lowest-income peers. Possible reasons for this unexpected finding are explored in the *Discussion* section at the end of this chapter.

Figure 32: Average Agreement by Income: Youth Experiences in School

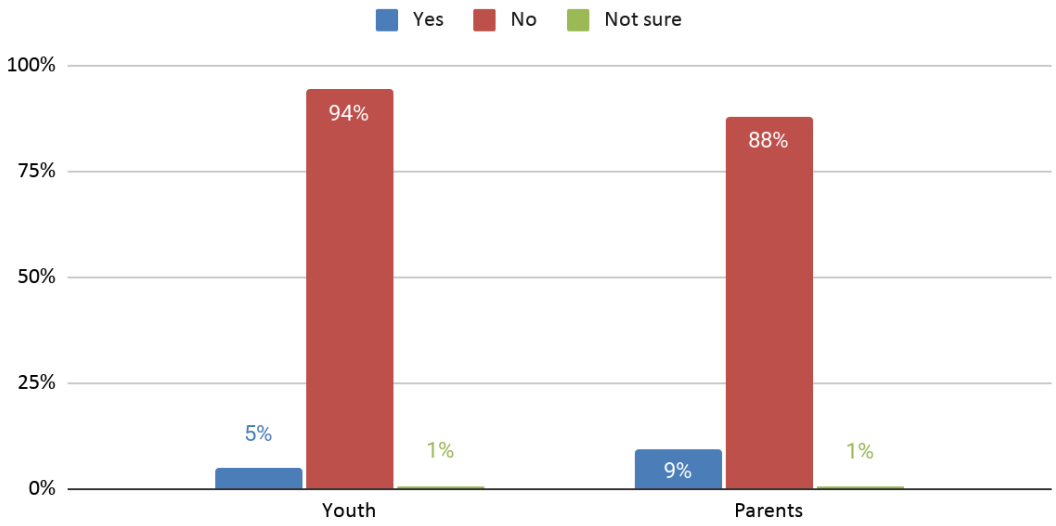


Experience of Bullying

Our survey also asked about bullying, which we defined somewhat conservatively as "physical, emotional or verbal abuse that happens more than 2 times a month and lasts for at least 2 months."

By this definition, **7%** of all respondents (**5%** of youth and **9%** of parents) indicated that they/ their child had been bullied in primary school. The difference between parent and youth responses may reflect multi-child exposure (i.e., parents of multiple children may have answered "yes" if any one of their children had experienced bullying), cohort effects, or potential differences in how parents and youth think about what qualifies as bullying.

Figure 33: "Did you/ your child face any bullying in primary school (physical, emotional or verbal)?"

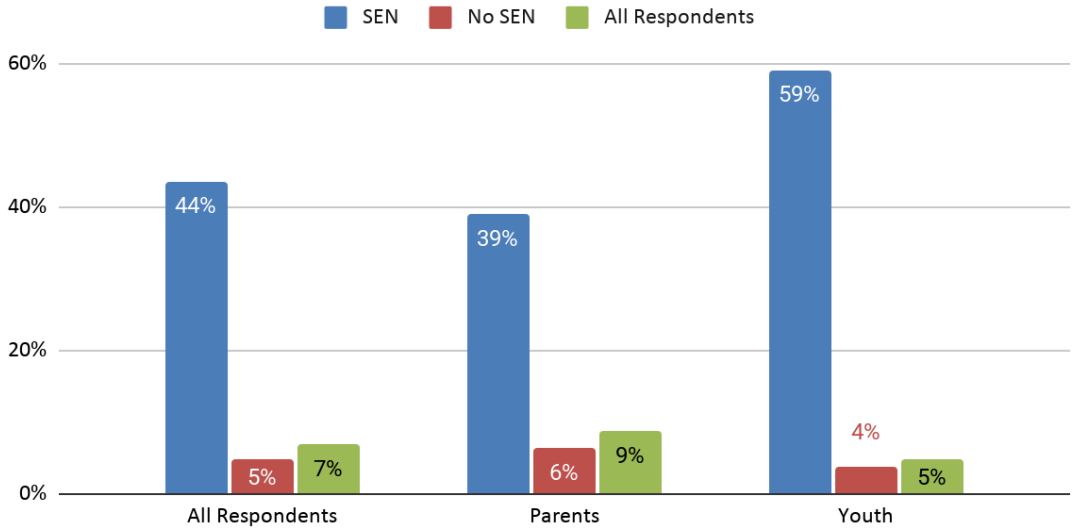


Among respondents who reported that they or their children had diagnosed or suspected Special Educational Needs (SEN), rates of bullying were markedly higher. **39% of parents whose children had SEN (N=149)** and **59% of youth respondents with SEN (N=44)** reported that their children or themselves, respectively, had experienced bullying during primary school.[34]

While the findings for youth should be interpreted with caution given the small sample size, these results nevertheless match anecdotal feedback that EveryChild.SG has received about higher rates of bullying and stigma faced by children with SEN. These results raise important concerns about the experiences of children with SEN, underscore the need for greater attention to their safety and wellbeing in schools, and highlight an area warranting further study.

[34] While youth are reflecting on past experiences, parents are reporting on experiences that are relatively recent. Taken together, these data points indicate that bullying historically has been, and still remains, troublingly high for children with SEN relative to their peers without SEN.

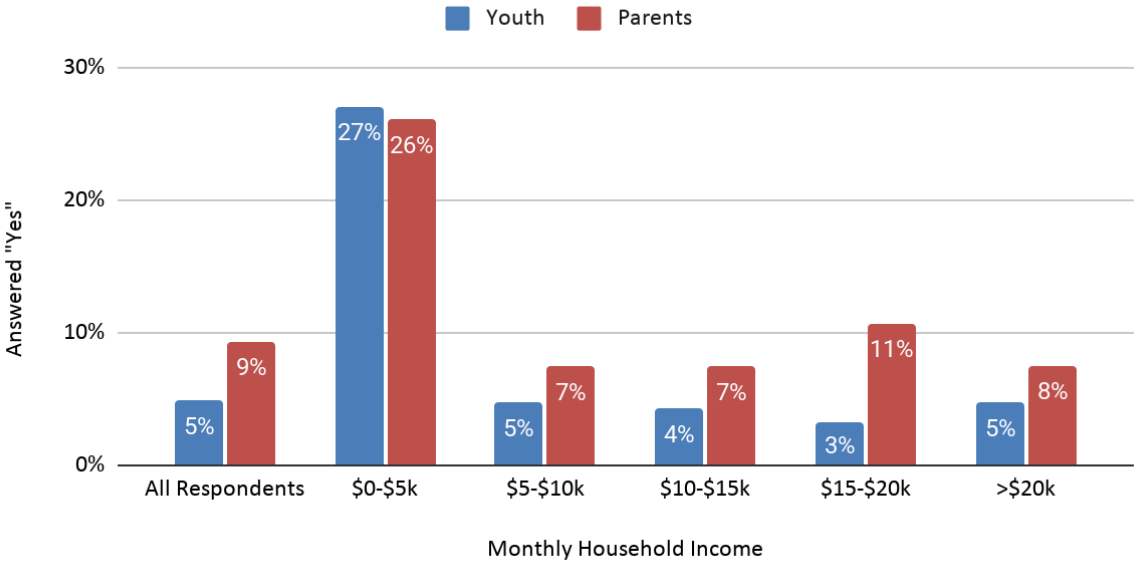
Figure 34: Variation by SEN Status: "Did you/ your child face any bullying in primary school (physical, emotional or verbal)?"



Bullying was also heavily concentrated in the lowest income band. 27% of youth from households with a monthly income of $5k/month or less reported experiencing bullying in primary school, compared to **5%** of youth from households making over $20k/month (5% was also the overall average for all youth).

Similarly, **26%** of parents in the lowest band reported that their children had been bullied in primary school, compared to **8%** of parents in the highest band and **9%** of parents overall.

Figure 35: Agreement by Income: "Did you/ your child face any bullying in primary school (physical, emotional or verbal)?"

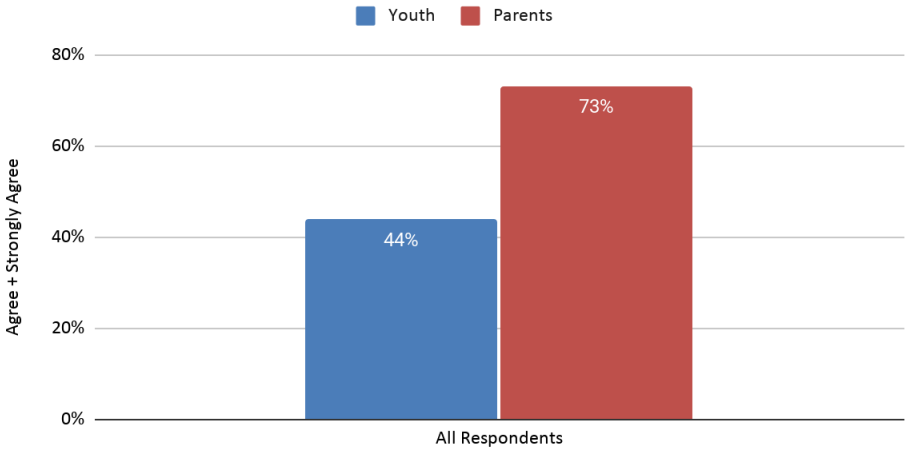


Schools' Response to Bullying

Of respondents who had been bullied/ whose child had been bullied, **62%** agreed that "the school dealt appropriately with the bullying incident."

Interestingly, parents and youth appear to have markedly different perspectives on what constitutes an "appropriate" school response. While **nearly 3 in 4 parents** were satisfied with the school's response, **fewer than half of youth respondents** were, though their experiences are based in different time periods.[35]

Figure 36: Average Agreement: "The school dealt appropriately with the bullying incident"



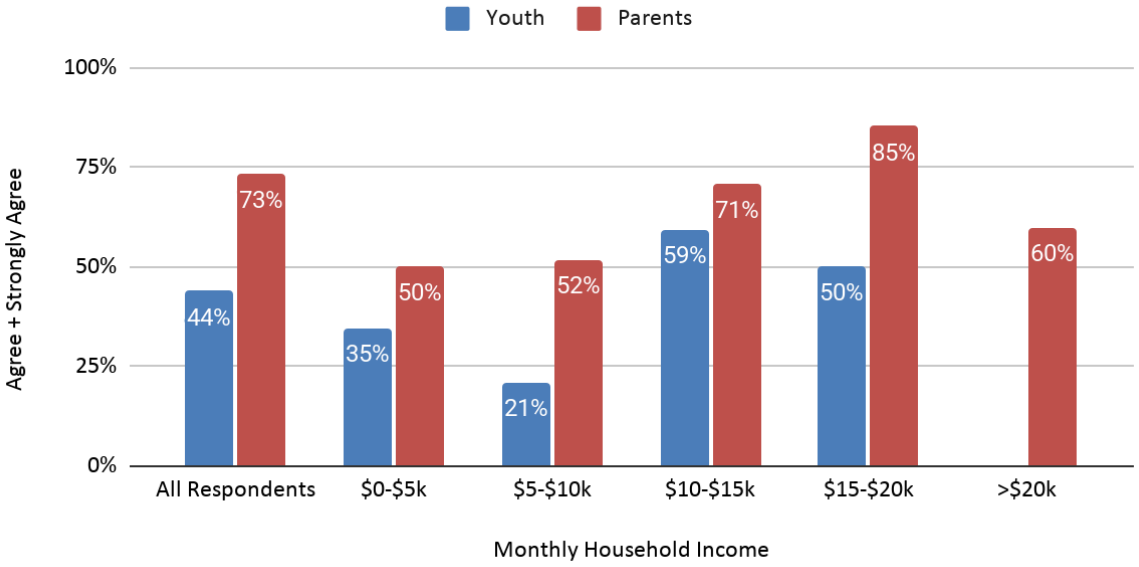
Across the income spectrum, parents were more likely than youth to be satisfied with schools' response to bullying incidents.

However, there are clear differences by income. For parents whose children had been bullied, satisfaction with the school's response rises consistently with income, before dipping again in the highest-income group. Still, even taking this dip into account, parents in the highest-income group were 10 points happier than parents in the lowest-income group, while upper-middle-income parents (those making $15-$20k/month) were a full 35 points happier.

A similar overall trend can be observed among youth respondents who have experienced bullying, with lower-income and lower-middle-income respondents generally less satisfied with their school's response than higher-income respondents.

[35] In our sample, 171 parents and 98 youth were exposed to bullying.

Figure 37: Average Agreement by Income: "The school dealt appropriately with the bullying incident"



Meanwhile, while rates of bullying were much higher among respondents who have/ whose child has diagnosed or suspected SEN, satisfaction with the school's response was also higher among these respondents, with **71%** agreeing that the school dealt with bullying incidents appropriately.[36]

School Climate and Bullying – Discussion

Taken together, these findings should prompt us to ask deeper questions about the lived experiences of children at the extremes of the income spectrum – both lower and higher – as well as of children with SEN.

While most middle-income respondents (those making $5-$20k/month) shared favourable impressions of their school environment, it is evident that there remains a sizable minority of both lower- and higher-income children who may not experience school as a place of physical and/or psychological safety. These students (and their parents) are also less likely to feel that the school has "got their back" when they experience bullying and other forms of harm.

That lower-income respondents would have less positive memories of their time in school is unfortunate, but not entirely unexpected. From engagements with community partners serving less-advantaged children, EveryChild.SG already had the impression that children from lower-income households may experience higher rates of bullying and stigma in schools, especially for children that have already been labeled "troublemakers." These survey findings confirm this impression, while also suggesting that communication challenges may exist between schools and lower-income parents, who are much less likely than others to

[36] Because a very low number of >$20k youth reported bullying, we have omitted their responses from this chart

feel that schools took appropriate action when their child was bullied.

Further research is needed to understand how lower-income children experience the school environment, and what types of additional support would tangibly improve their experiences. Further investigations could also shed light on whether schools and teachers are adequately resourced to engage with lower-income families after bullying incidents (or in any case when a child needs support) – including, possibly, whether schools have personnel with adequate linguistic capabilities and cultural sensitivity to engage productively with transnational families.

We were initially surprised by the responses from the highest-income youth, which painted a picture of school climate that was as bad as (and on some metrics, worse than) their lowest-income peers. While there are exceptions, youth from families in the highest income bracket (>$20k) are likely to attend well-resourced primary schools. Yet, the highest-income youth are the least likely to report that they felt physically safe at school, or that teachers treated them with respect.

Taken together, our findings present a snapshot of differential experiences across income groups that may warrant deeper study.

Finally, our findings indicate that there is an **urgent need to better understand the experiences of children with SEN, who appear to face a much higher prevalence of bullying than their peers** without SEN. How can we ensure that our schools are genuinely inclusive environments, where all children feel safe, supported, and accepted by their peers?

Conclusion

The findings of EveryChild.SG's Parent and Youth Survey 2026 paint a picture of an education system that continues to enjoy high levels of public trust, but which also places considerable pressure on children and families. It suggests that parents recognise the strengths of Singapore's education system, yet many feel caught in a cycle of academic competition that they would prefer to escape. The consequences seem to extend beyond the classroom, shaping family life, household spending, and even decisions about whether to have more children.

Our findings offer a compelling account of the social dynamics sustaining educational pressure. Three things stand out:

- **The coexistence of strong regard for Singapore's education system, and dissatisfaction with its pressures.**
  3 in 4 respondents agree that children would benefit from a reduced focus on academic success in primary school. When asked what improvements they would like to see in primary schools, 80% called for a shift away from a narrow academic focus, with 30% calling specifically for less academic pressure.[37]

[37] See Annex A

50% of parents agreed that stress in the primary education system was a factor for them in deciding to have fewer children.
While respondents may consider Singapore's education system to be a source of collective pride in the abstract (with 80% agreeing it is "among the best" compared to other developed countries), our findings indicate that many are experiencing significant strain at the personal level as they attempt to keep up with the system's demands.

- **The constraints parents perceive on their ability to make educational choices consistent with their preferences.**
  Over 75% of parents in our sample would like to put less academic pressure on their child during primary school, but feel unable to do so because of PSLE. Only 4% of surveyed parents do not purchase academic tuition for their child during primary school, suggesting that simply "opting out" of academic competition is not perceived as a meaningful option by the large majority.
  That a perceived lack of choice/ agency should contribute to a sense of angst (or "unease") among many is, perhaps, unsurprising.

- **The different ways families across the income spectrum experience and respond to educational competition.**
  Singapore has, by some measures, moved towards **a hybrid educational model**, with private education sitting alongside public education as a matter of course.
  Strikingly, while families' ability to spend on private education varies by income, their willingness to do so apparently does not, with lower-income parents in our sample spending more on academic tuition, relative to monthly household income, than either middle-class or affluent families.
  While upper-middle-income respondents appeared to experience the most education-related stress across a variety of metrics, what our findings underscore is that there is no income segment that can be considered "safe" from the unique stresses of Singapore's primary education system. The "education arms race" appears to be a game that everyone feels they must play, though some are able to bring more ammunition than others.

At the same time, our findings suggest that **Singaporean parents and youth are more open to meaningful structural change than is sometimes assumed.** Far from being an immovable obstacle to reform, most parents appear eager for changes that would allow them to place less academic pressure on their children. The strong support for optional PSLE pathways in this survey suggests that there is considerable room to rethink longstanding features of our education system without sacrificing public confidence in it.

Our findings also remind us that academic achievement is only one measure of a successful education system. Children's experiences of belonging, safety, inclusion and wellbeing matter enormously, and deserve greater attention, particularly for those who may be more vulnerable or whose voices are less often heard.

“Singapore has built an education system that is widely admired for its academic achievements. The challenge now is to build on these strengths while addressing the pressures and inequalities that have emerged alongside them. Our findings suggest that policymakers have an opportunity to pursue ambitious reforms, with the confidence that many parents and young people are ready for change.”

. . .

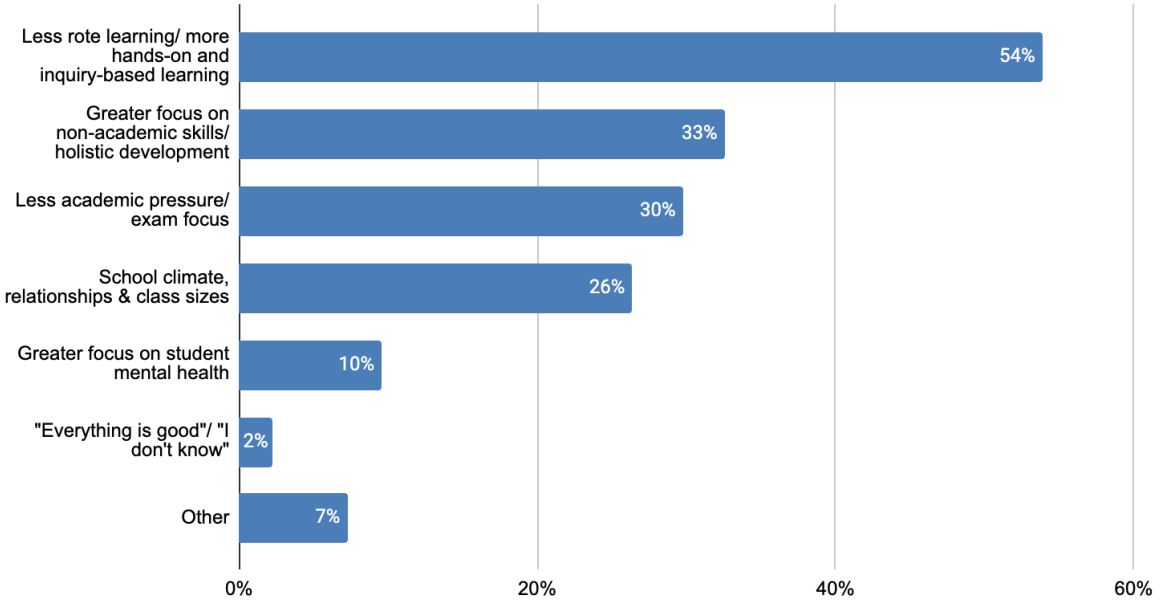
Annex A - Qualitative Analysis of Survey Data

All survey respondents were asked to answer an open-ended question, “What improvements would you like to see in Singapore’s primary education system?” There were over 4,000 responses.

Responses were thematically coded using a codebook refined to reflect recurring suggestions. Chinese- and Malay-language comments were translated into English using Google Sheets’ translation function before coding. A response could receive multiple codes, so the theme counts shown in Figure 38 are not mutually exclusive. However, “No changes needed” was exclusive.

Figure 38: "What improvements would you like to see in Singapore’s primary education system?"

Responses could receive more than one code, so percentages do not sum to 100%. ‘No changes needed’ was exclusive.



As Figure 38 shows, the three most commonly-occurring codes all touch on some aspect of primary schools’ heavy focus on academics. If these three codes were to be combined into one category, **80% of unique respondents** would fall into it, **indicating a profound concern about excessive academic focus during primary school among parents and youth in our sample.**

The fourth and fifth most commonly-occurring codes touch on the quality of the environment in which students learn, as well as their relational and psychological health. Combined, these codes account for **29% of unique respondents**.

Code 1: Less rote learning/ more hands-on and inquiry-based learning

54% of comments fell into this category. Many of these comments expressed the perception that Singapore primary **schools continue to rely heavily on rote memorization**.

Comments in this category **called for schools to adopt a modernized curriculum grounded in the science of learning**, believing that this will **better foster critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and other 21st Century Competencies** that these commenters value.

> More experiential learning through play instead of mostly formal classroom lessons that are largely academic.
>
> I wish there was less focus on rote memorization and more on developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
>
> The curriculum still overemphasizes memorization, calculation, and standard answers, while neglecting critical thinking.
>
> International school children always seem to thrive better in the real world. I think instead of just rote learning, there should also be an emphasis on personal development and creativity.
>
> Make science and technology classes more hands-on instead of just teaching theories. Singapore has always said it attaches importance to science and technology education, but science and technology classes in many primary schools are just watching videos and memorizing knowledge points, and children don't even have the chance to do simple small experiments and making projects, so they can't understand and apply what they learn at all.
>
> Make mother tongue education more "life-oriented and fun," for example, by reducing rote memorization and increasing the application of the mother tongue in real-life scenarios.

Code 2: Greater focus on non-academic skills/ holistic development

33% of comments expressed a desire to see **a greater focus on non-academic skills** during primary school, with many respondents citing **outdoor education, sports, arts, and life skills** as key domains contributing to students' holistic development. Some representative comments are shared below:

> Teach them more life skills! For example, how to cook, manage finances, and discern information online. These are much more practical than some textbook content, and they'll be useful to them when they grow up.
>
> I wish there was more focus on life skills and emotional well being alongside academics to help kids grow into resilient balanced individuals
>
> Reform the evaluation mechanism and increase the proportion of courses in arts, sports, and life skills.

> less academics focused more CCAs chosen, like one sports, one arts and one academic related with more free time to explore interest in school itself
>
> More arts, and outdoor learning, and well-being.
>
> Strengthen the cultivation of soft skills rather than focusing solely on academic achievements
>
> Increase the class hours for creative subjects such as art and music, and encourage students to develop comprehensively.

Many respondents felt that the primary school **system must focus less on academics in order to free up more time for holistic development**.

> I would like to see the primary education system place less emphasis on academic competition and more on holistic development.
>
> Students would have more time for self-directed learning, hobbies, and family time if homework and exam pressure were reduced. This would promote a healthier and more well-rounded growth.
>
> We hope that the Ministry of Education can reduce the academic burden on students and provide more practical elective courses to cultivate children's hands-on skills.
>
> Reduce homework! Children now spend 1-2 hours on homework every day, and have to do extra practice on weekends. They have no time to play or exercise; their childhood is practically consumed by homework.
>
> Add more playtime, ease academic load
>
> Reduce exam and homework workload encourage students to better balance academic and extracurricular activities and alleviate psychological pressure.
>
> Reduce academic pressure and increase time for creative play and social-emotional learning.
>
> Parents do not have to send child to various academic tuition class outside school hours. We want a happy, healthy child with creativity and passionate about sports, literature and music etc

Code 3: Less academic pressure/ exam focus

30% of comments called for **reducing academic pressure and the overall focus on exams** during primary school. While there was some overlap between Code 2 and Code 3, comments in Code 3 generally placed emphasis on reducing academic pressure **because of its perceived harms**, rather than as a means to free up time for non-academic pursuits.

Many comments **called for the PSLE system to be significantly changed** and for the **introduction of alternative assessment mechanisms**.

> Weaken the decisive role of PSLE and promote the development of diversity
>
> Weaken the sole weight of PSLE
>
> I would like to see a shift away from the heavy focus on PSLE exams
>
> Not to have our future ruined just because of the PSLE System
>
> Less exam centric culture more continuous assessment and feedback systems
>
> We should use continuous learning assessments as much as possible to reduce test pressure and give children time to develop their curiosity and interest in learning.
>
> Can we please reduce the rankings and comparisons? Every child has a different pace, and constantly being compared to others can really damage their confidence.
>
> Reduce exam ranking—kids are under too much pressure and lose the joy of learning
>
> Please give less pressure for children.... They are very small and life just begun. Give more time to enjoy their life.

Code 4: School climate, relationships, and class sizes

26% of comments suggested a need for **improvements to the school climate**. Some comments focused on **peer relationships**, with others identifying **teachers' interactions with students** as an area for improvement. A number of comments also recommended **reducing class sizes** and/or **decreasing teacher workload** as key mechanisms for **reducing teacher stress and improving the emotional climate** within primary schools.

Overall Climate

> more compassion and love
>
> A more human-centered learning environment
>
> Track joy and belonging indicators alongside academics, making engagement and safety a school priority

Peer Relationships

> Build a full anti-bullying loop: prevention, anonymous reporting, rapid investigation, restorative repair, and tracking

Strengthen anti-bullying education and empathy cultivation, integrate anti-bullying and empathy courses into daily teaching, and use role-playing, real case discussions and other methods to help students understand the harm that bullying causes to others, and also let bystanders know how to safely lend a helping hand.

Teachers

Educated teachers with more kindness

A teacher's good behavior with students can enhance student's social-emotional abilities including relationships empathy and self awareness so we need well-educated teacher in schools.

From my experience with 2 children, the primary school teachers are overworked and have very little patience and respect for the students.

Teacher training programs need to improve their methods by integrating contemporary teaching approaches and emotional intelligence development.

Strengthen teacher training for inclusive and diverse classrooms.

Class Sizes and Teacher Workload

Reduce the class size. Currently, there are too many students in a primary school class in Singapore, making it impossible for teachers to attend to every child, especially those with slow learning progress or special needs, who can hardly get targeted guidance

Lower class-size caps and add teaching assistants so teachers can support diverse needs and follow up faster

Can we reduce the burden on teachers? They're already dealing with all sorts of inspections and reports, leaving them with far too little time to prepare lessons and talk to the children.

Give teachers more autonomy in teaching, reduce their administrative burden, and allow them to focus more on classroom teaching and student tutoring.

Code 5: Greater Focus on Student Mental Health

10% of comments expressed **concern for students' mental health**, with many calling for **better resourcing within primary schools for mental health support and education**.

I think emotional well-being programs should be strengthened at primary levels.

Increase the resources for mental health counseling and pay attention to students' emotional well-being.

> Enhance mental health support with full-time counselors in every primary school
>
> Strengthening mental health education and support for kids is crucial. Competition is high; they need to learn how to handle stress and manage emotions

Code 6: “Everything is Good”/ “I Don’t Know”

2% of comments said “Nothing,” “No comment,” “I don’t know”, or indicated that the current system was “good enough.” These were coded as “Everything is Good”/ “I don’t know”.

Code 7: “Other”

7% of comments included themes that did not fit into the major coding categories; these were coded as “Other.” Some notable comments in this category called for **strengthening cross-cultural learning opportunities**, adding curriculum **content on local Singaporean culture**, **expanding the number of languages offered as electives**, and **sharing resources more equitably between schools**.

> Add more intercultural exchange activities to celebrate Singapore’s diversity and build global awareness
>
> Expanding the cultural content of mother tongue courses can not only improve language skills but also help students gain a deeper understanding of their cultural roots.
>
> To deepen local and multicultural education, and to increase the content on Singapore's local history, folklore, and ethnic culture.
>
> The uneven distribution of educational resources leads to unequal access to them, preventing people from enjoying them fairly.
>
> Narrowing the gap in inter school resources and promoting educational equity
>
> Reduce early elitism to preserve fairness and inclusivity

. . .