



**2016 School Attendance & Performance
ANALYSIS REPORT**

May 2017

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Executive Summary

With education being one of the means to attain poverty transformation, SCC sought to describe the academic performance of our students, as well as understand factors that influence academic performance. This study is designed as a follow-up to the school results analysis conducted in 2016, using 2015's school results. Data was collected through a result slip collection, with 74% of students' results received.

The key findings from the quantitative data were as follows:

- School attendance was generally good across levels, with the exception of a small percentage of secondary school students who exhibited poor attendance or school refusal
- Students did well in Mother Tongue, but performed poorly in Mathematics
- Average results of cohorts in 'transition' years (levels where major academic changes occur) tended to be lower
- The passing rate for PSLE Mathematics for SCC students (35%) was less than half of the national passing rate (85%)
- From 2015 to 2016, about a third (30%) of students dropped from the Standard stream in Primary 5 to the Foundation stream in Primary 6

Apart from the numbers, this report also included a qualitative component where top scoring and/or most improved students were interviewed to explore the elements that led to their success. Key factors included the child's own motivation and disciplined routine, the presence of parental supervision and teacher support, as well as mixing around with peers of positive influence and not negative influence.

These findings were shared through community conversations with SCC members, their children and external partners. These sessions were well attended, indicating the investment and importance that parents and stakeholders place on children's education, and provided further insights into how different stakeholders can better support children's education to help them improve. Potential implications and areas for further research are discussed.

Introduction / Research Aims and Objectives

Working towards the vision of poverty transformation with-in empowered communities, South Central Community Family Service Centre (SCC) focuses on education as one of the key tools for mobility and determining factors in facilitating transformational change among low income families. As part of SCC's effort to understand academic performance and track the progress of the children coming from our member families, we initiated a school results slip collection in 2015 to facilitate a quantitative analysis of our children's school attendance and academic performance. In November 2016, a second collection was done as a continuation of the previous year's study, also enabling progress tracking of last year's cohort.

This follow-up study also adds a qualitative dimension to the analysis in the form of interviews with students and their families. Aligned with SCC's philosophy of Asset-Based Community Development and strengths-based approach in the community, this year's study identified 8 children who were either top scorers among their cohort in our data sample, or who had made significant progress in their academic achievements. By gathering stories and insights on these children's academic performance and progress, it deepens our understanding of how they have been able to perform and rise against all odds, and also enables us to share and celebrate our community achievements. Beyond that, this school results study also aims to serve as a spark for conversations with the community and advocate towards transformational change.

This report is divided into three sections: first, a brief highlight of the key statistics from 2016 and a comparative analysis of the research findings from 2015 to 2016; second, stories of hope and insights from 8 interviewees who have shown progress or achievement; and finally, insights from the mass sharing sessions held with communities within each of the centre's three neighbourhoods – Bukit Ho Swee, Henderson and Lengkok Bahru.

Literature Review

Studies have consistently shown positive associations between an adult's educational attainment and economic status, suggesting that education promotes an escape from inter-generational poverty (Chen & Kaplan, 2003; Haveman & Smeeding, 2006; Kao & Thompson, 2003; Porter, 2002; Sewell, 1971; Wilson, 2001). It has also been empirically presented that education is a strong predictor of individuals who escape from disadvantaged family backgrounds and climb the social ladder (Machin, 2006). Through improving the earning potential of individuals, educational attainment provides upward mobility with increased earnings (Awan, Iqbal, & Waqas, 2011). Hence, paying close attention to factors that help children and youth perform well academically will be key in enabling them to break out of poverty. These include psychosocial factors such as child's self-efficacy, parental involvement and structure in children's lives, which aid a child's development and academic performance (Bempechat, 1992; Jeynes, 2011; Smith, 2006). Valentine et al. (2001) also found that the self-system alone (motivation, self-esteem and personal values towards success) might not necessarily be able to counter and mediate the effects of family disadvantage, such as poverty, on academic performance.

Therefore, apart from psychosocial factors, one should also consider how environmental and systemic structures that low-income families are bounded within affect the development of these psychosocial factors. Environmental factors such as school and the neighbourhood might also have an influence on the academic performance of low-income children and youths as well as aspirations to perform well academically. A study based in the US indicated that schooling experiences such as the positive perceptions of the students' own ability and a sense of school valuing and belonging were predictive of educational achievement and aspirations for rural youth from high and low poverty communities (Irvin, Meece, Byun, Farmer, & Hutchins, 2011). Furthermore, in a study conducted locally by Mendaki among 22 low-income Malay families, they found that 18 households are unable to be sufficiently involved in their children's education because of the "rigor of the educational system and the lack of familiarity of the curriculum, which differed significantly from the curriculum of the previous generation" (Brassard, 2015). An unpublished dissertation from NUS that explores the educational aspirations of working class Malay youths also discovered that peer associations of Malay youths within the neighbourhood play an important role in 'moulding the low educational aspirations and dismal perceptions of success among the working class Malay youths'. In addition, this peer socialization coupled

with the popular portrayal of Malay youths not being able to do well academically as compared to other ethnic groups “makes it harder for them to even begin to think about achieving higher levels of education, let alone attaining them”, as argued by Senin and Ng (2014) in their studies exploring the educational aspirations of Malay youths from low income families in Singapore.

Hence, developing high aspirations is an important factor that contributes to academic achievement and consequently poverty transformation, as supported with a quantitative longitudinal study in the US which found that when children from low-income families develop high educational aspirations and expectations, they are more likely to graduate from high school and are more likely to have higher income at age 30 and thus able to break out of poverty (Lee, Hill, & Hawkins, 2012).

2015 School Results Study Findings

Before delving into the analysis for this year’s school results, it would be of benefit to revisit the key findings from the 2015 School Results Study. Last year we have found that attendance is consistently high across both primary and secondary levels, regardless of neighbourhood or educational stream. Overall, there is a high average attendance of over 80% across levels implying most children are in school most of the time. Despite their high attendance, subject performance still remains low, with 49% of students failing 2 or more of the 4 basic subjects (English, Mother Tongue, Mathematics and Science), with little difference in the average attendance of those who failed 2 or more subjects and those who did not. In terms of academic performance, a jump in fail rate and significantly lower subject scores were noted for P3 onwards at the primary level and between Sec 2 and Sec 3 at the secondary level. Subject performance trends remain the same across primary and secondary levels and streams; that Mother Tongue is our children’s strongest subject, English at borderline, Mathematics and Science the weakest. 51% of our children from the 2015 PSLE cohort were admitted to the Normal Technical (NT) stream, - about 5 times higher than the national average. It is with this context set that we will proceed to our analysis of this year’s school results in the next section.

Methodology

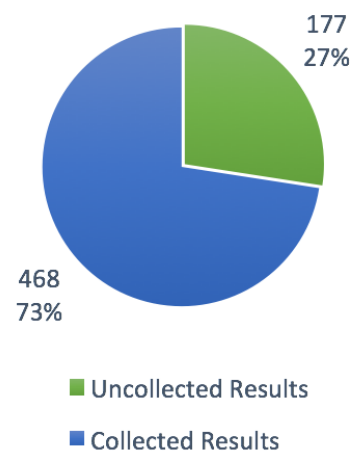
Result Slip Collection

In alignment with SCC's community-centric work philosophy, the entire data collection process has been in practice a co-ownership between the SCC team and members of the community. From November 2016 to December 2016, member families could choose to submit their result slips through walk-in, through WhatsApp or through passing it directly to their respective social workers. This ensures that community action starts from bottom-up and that the onus of data collection does not lie solely on the social workers of these families, but that families also choose to take on the initiative to ensure successful data collection.

The term 'school-going children' is used here to refer to children in primary, secondary, post-secondary schools and institutions (such as Institutes of Technical Education, Polytechnics and Junior Colleges), as well as children from special-needs schools.

In 2015, the drive facilitated a 74% collection rate applicable for analysis (565 out of 766 result slips were collected and analysed). Collection rates in 2016 were met with similar results of 73% collection rates. This means that from a universe of 645 school-going children coming from 262 families (based on SCC's 2016 case load), data from the result slips of 468 school-going children was entered into the database and analysed over approximately 4 months, from December 2016 to March 2017.

Collection Rate in 2016



**Total number of
school-going children
in SCC (as of Jan 2017):
645**

Qualitative Interviews

In addition, 2016's study interviewed the families of 8 of the most improved or top scoring members of the community to gather their stories and insights. Interviewing these families was necessary to illuminate the psychological and social factors that helped the child succeed in school. Given that report cards do not reflect what happens on a day to day basis, it was critical to employ a research method that allows families to share their tips, mistakes, aspirations and dreams. This sits in line with SCC's belief that our community members are agents of change and not subjects of study. Interviewing multiple families ensures that the data collected is not from a single source of information, facilitating a deeper understanding on the factors resulting in good academic performance and progress. The 8 selected students are as follows:

S/N	Member's Name ¹	Child's Name	Level in School (2016)	Neighbourhood	Category
1	Mdm Dinah	Sati	Sec 3 NA	Bukit Ho Swee	Most Improved
2	Mdm Dinah	Siti	Sec 3 NT	Bukit Ho Swee	Most Improved
3	---	Deedee	Sec 4 NA	Lengkok Bahru	Most Improved and Top Scorer
4	Mdm Nora	Izzah	Pri 5	Lengkok Bahru	Top Scorer
5	Mr Chandra	Rajarajan (Rajan)	Pri 5	Lengkok Bahru	Top Scorer
6	Mdm Aisha	Indah	Pri 4	Henderson	Most Improved
7	Mdm Yati	Aleeya	Pri 6	Lengkok Bahru	Top Scorer
8	Mdm Preethy	Amrita	Pri 4	Bukit Ho Swee	Most Improved

¹ Names have been changed to protect the identity of the interviewees.

Interviews took place in the second half of Mar 2017, each lasting between 45 minutes to 90 minutes. All families were interviewed in a safe space with 6 in the convenience of their homes while the other 2 chose to come down to one of the chat rooms in SCC. All families were taken through a series of questions regarding their family dynamics, parent-child relationship, thoughts and feelings about their child's school and the neighbourhood, and ended off with a segment on their dreams and aspirations moving forward. The exact questions can be found in Appendix 2. In addition, verbal consent was sought before the interview began and 6 out of 8 members interviewed were willing to have the interview recorded on film. The other 2 members gave consent for the interview to be recorded in an audio form. All parties were also asked to sign an informed consent form (found in Appendix 3). All interviews were conducted in English except for a handful where families had a very limited command of English. In those instances, Malay was used for the interview and the transcript was later translated into English for analysis purposes.

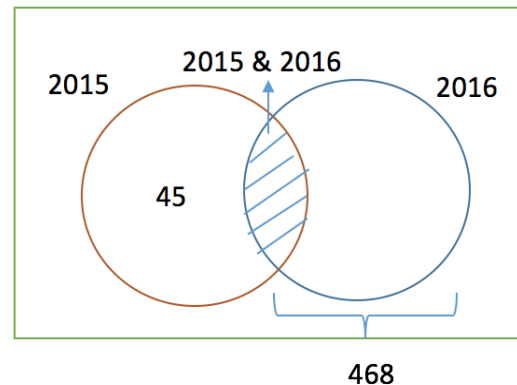
Data Analysis

Quantitative results were analysed using Microsoft Excel and STATA, reported in Section I of the report. Qualitative interviews were coded and major themes were identified and reported in Section II.

Section I: Quantitative Research Findings

Profile of Data Sample

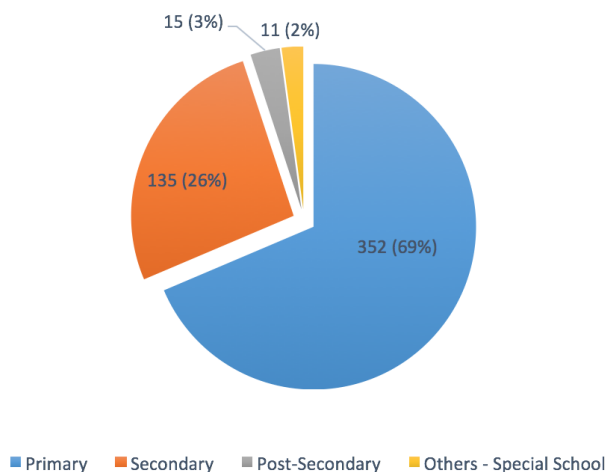
As mentioned in the section above, SCC's database received 468 unique school result slips for 2016's study. A significant portion (42%) of these result slips collected came from members who also submitted their child's result slips in 2015, thus ensuring continuity. In addition to 45 other members who only submitted their results slips in 2015 but did not submit any result slips this year, this bring the total number of students whose records are recorded in the SCC school results database to 513.



**Total number of students in database:
513**

Collected Responses (According to Level)

n = 513



**Total number of children in current
database for analysis
= 513**

Scope chosen for research:
*Primary and Secondary school-
going Children*
= 487 (94.9%)

Like 2015's study, a clear 95% majority of school-going children are either in primary (69%) or secondary school (26%), with the remaining 5% in post-secondary (3%) or special-needs institutions (2%). To streamline efforts for data analysis and keep in line with efforts from 2015, this study will similarly select school-going children in the primary and secondary levels for analysis purposes.

Choice of School

A breakdown of the top 3 primary and secondary schools that SCC's member's children attend can be found below. Most of these schools are in the vicinity and neighbourhood of SCC and thus might provide insights on the effect of neighbourhood on a child's academic performance.

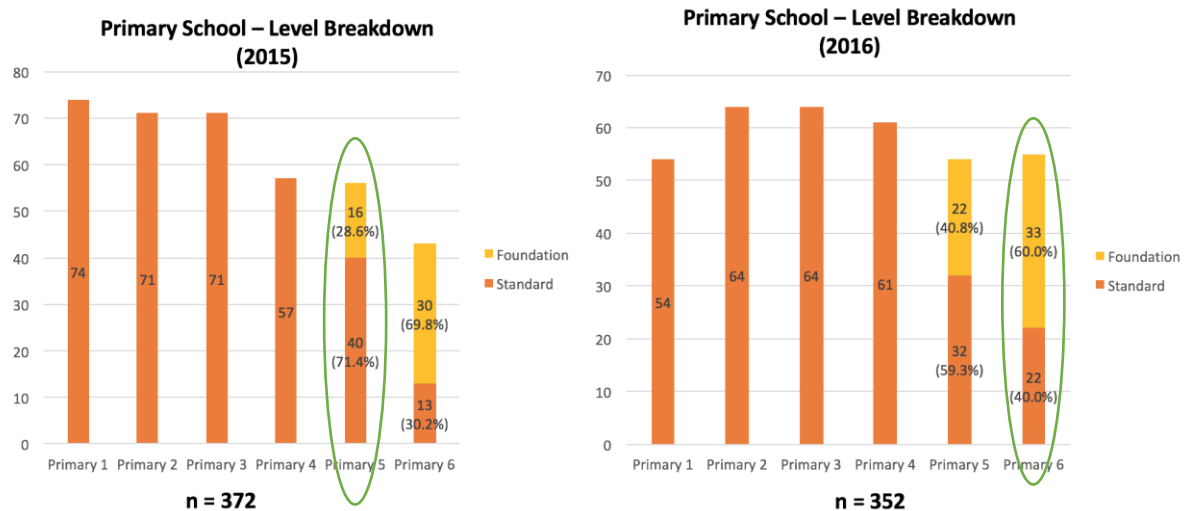
No.	School	Number of Students	Percentage
Primary School (n = 352)			
1	Gan Eng Seng Primary School	139	39.5%
2	Zhangde Primary School	46	13.1%
3	Blangah Rise Primary School	27	7.6%
Secondary School (n = 135)			
1	Bukit Merah Secondary School	20	14.8%
2	Outram Secondary School	18	13.3%
3	Gan Eng Seng School (Secondary)	16	11.8%

Primary School

A further breakdown by level revealed that for primary school children, majority of the children come from lower primary levels, with an average cohort size of 60 students, a drop from an average cohort size of 70 students from 2015's study. When it comes to the Primary 5 and 6 levels, the numbers by cohort are observed to decreased significantly by about 10 students. It is not clear why the cohort size drops so radically and future effort to track for potential drop-out rates will be taken into consideration.

At the end of Primary 4, some students are given the choice of subject-based banding where they are recommended to take subjects at either the Standard or Foundation (more basic) level. For those who choose to take 2 or more subjects at the Foundation level, they will be banded under the Foundation stream. This assessment and recommendation is not based solely on the child's Primary 4 end year results, but rather on observation through the years to ensure a more holistic approach. Parents are then advised on the teacher's assessment in the process of placement at this juncture.

It is possible for children at Primary 5 to be banded once again as they enter Primary 6 – at this stage, the teacher’s assessment is final. Based on data collected, in 2015, about 28.6% of Primary 5 students were in the foundation stream. This number doubled in 2016, increasing to 60% for the same cohort of pupils. This means that an additional one-third of students end up dropping an additional one or two more subjects to the Foundation level when they enter Primary 6.



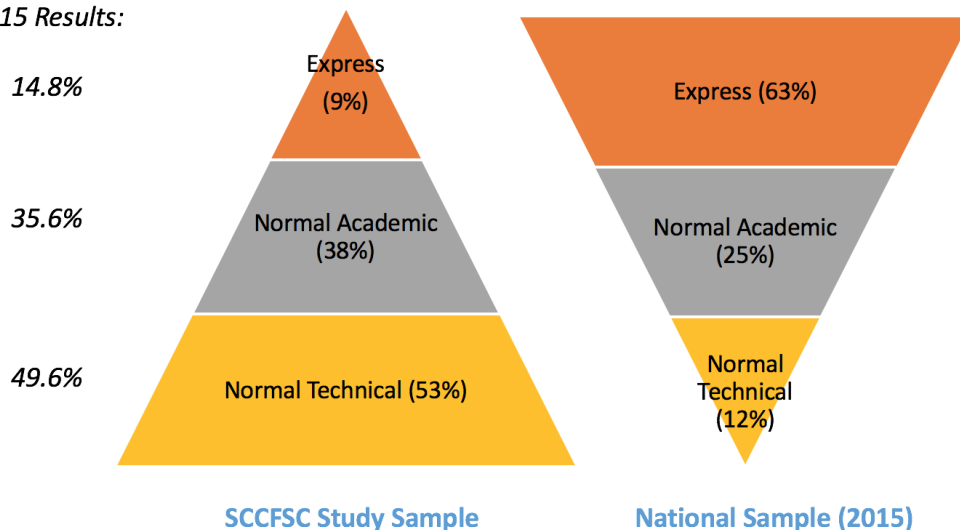
Secondary School

For students in secondary schools, a similar trend to 2015 is observed. Out of the collected secondary universe, more than half of all students (53%) are in the Normal Technical stream in 2016, a 3% increase compared to 2015. For the Express stream however, a 5% decrease is observed, bringing the total percentage of students in SCC attending the Express stream to less than 10%. This highlights that more than 90% of all secondary school students in the SCC community are in either the Normal Academic (NA) or Normal Technical (NT) stream.

This contrast significantly with Singapore’s national sample of 63% in Express, 25% in NA and 12% in NT. It should also be noted that the NA and NT streams cannot be singularly described as the ‘Normal’ stream as they are significantly different in approach and syllabus. The NA stream is much closer in level to

Express, the main difference being a five-year pace before the 'O' levels are taken, instead of four years in Express. In addition, better-performing NA students are also given the option of attending a Polytechnic Foundation Programme (PFP) where they can gain direct entry to the course they desire at the end of Secondary 4 instead of taking the 'O' levels at Secondary 5. The NT stream however, is distinctly vocational in nature, with entirely different subject options such as Elements of Business Studies and Computing. These structural distinctions have great bearing on the children's future where options for their tertiary education and career tracks are limited, largely restricting NT students to the Institute of Technical Education (ITE).

2015 Results:



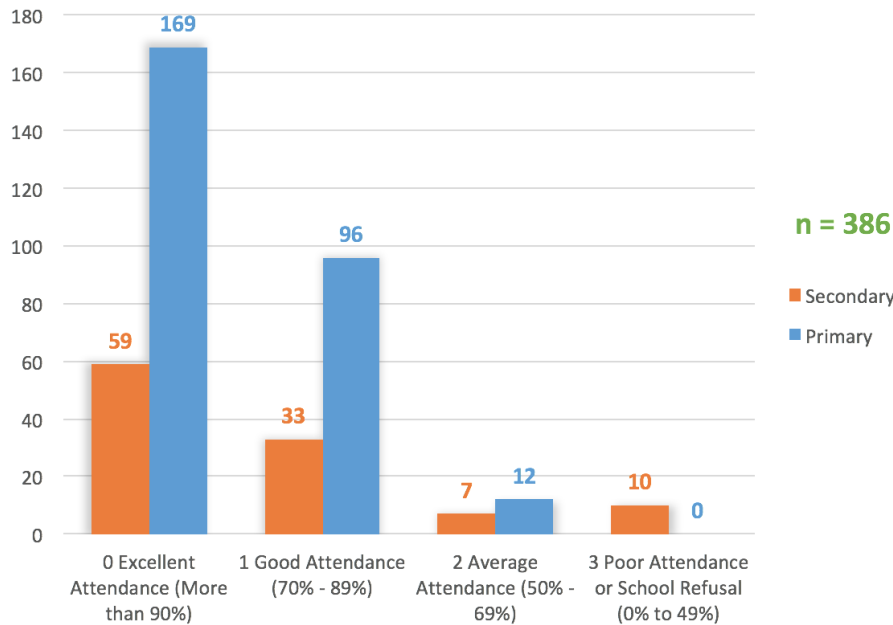
Similar to data collected in 2015, a breakdown per level revealed that most students are streamed to NT in their lower secondary years. However, when students are streamed again according to their subject combination in Secondary 3, the number of students in both NT and NA streams even out. It is unclear whether the jump in percentage connected across cohorts and future efforts could take into consideration the reason for such a shift in stream patterns.

N

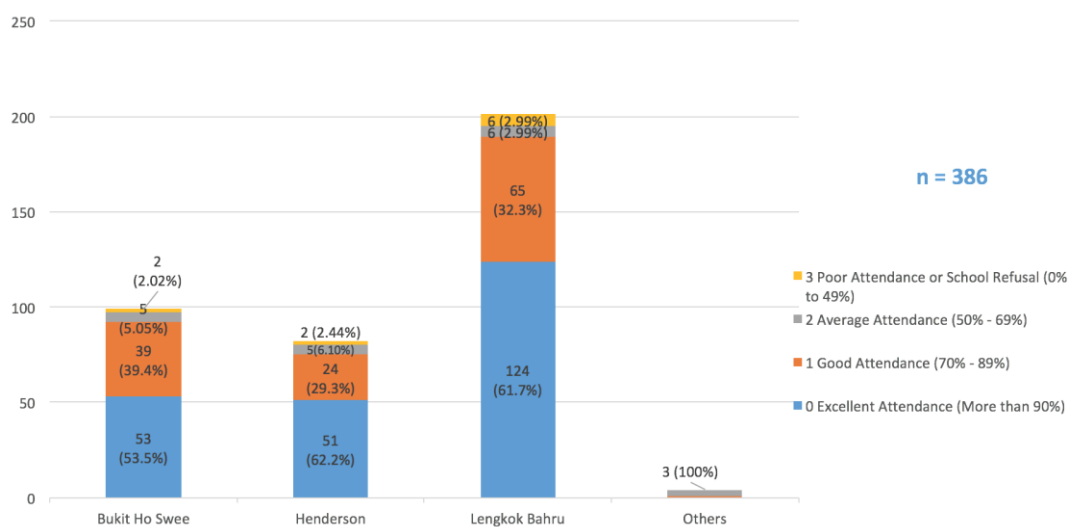


Attendance Rates

It is important to note that not all result slips came with attendance ratings, possibly due to differences in the various school systems and records. From our sample of 468 result slips collected in 2016, only 82% of all result slips (386 result slips) had an indication of the student's attendance. 59% of all students (169 from primary school and 59 from secondary school) had excellent attendance and attended school more than 90% of the time. Another 33% of all students attended school between 70% - 89% of the time (meaning they were in school on an average of four out of five days), while the remaining marginal 8% were in school on less than three out of five days. It is also interesting to note that all the poorest attendance record came from secondary school students. However, when numerically qualified, there are only 10 students (out of 386) who fall into this category. Although this represents only 2% of the total population, it accounts for 7% of secondary school students, which while not a cause for alarm, is important to keep in mind for future tracking purposes and investigation.



Attendance distribution by neighbourhoods also revealed that in all three neighbourhoods, regardless of size, over half of the neighbourhood's children attended school more than 90% of the time. In 2015, Lengkok Bahru was at the lower end for attendance rates; however, Bukit Ho Swee seems to be on the lower end of this year's trends. Therefore, it would be premature to claim that the specific SCC neighbourhood is a significant factor affecting student attendance.



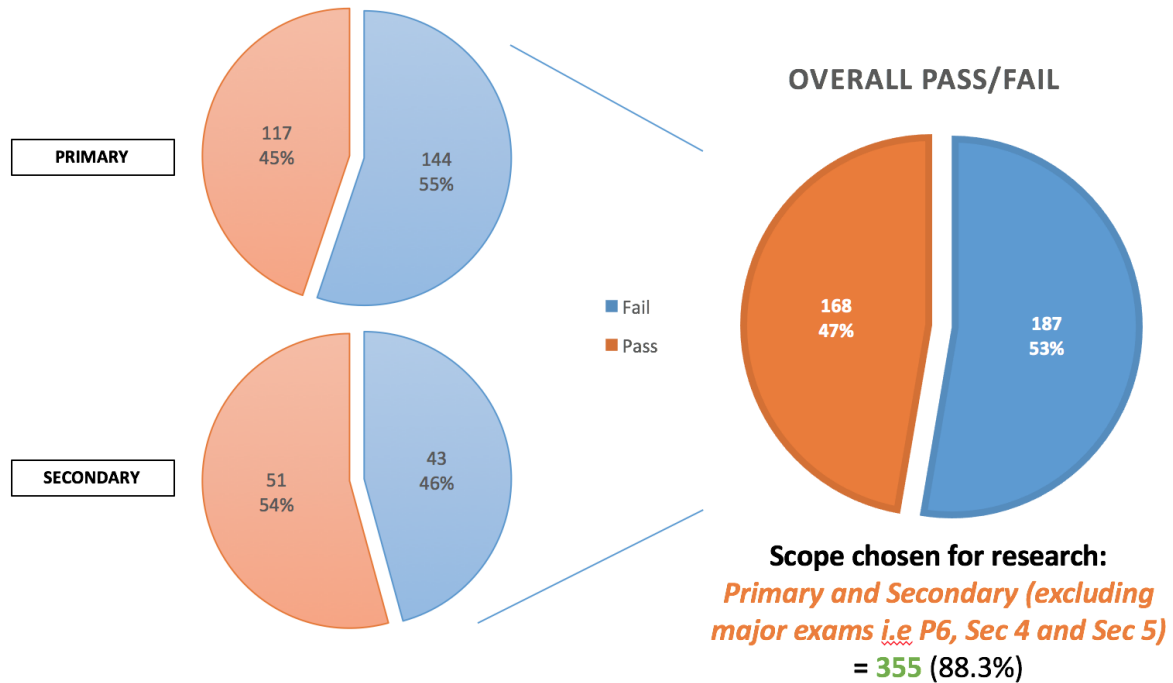
Academic Performance

While attendance rates have been encouraging and must be acknowledged, analysis of SCC member children's academic performance in 2016 shows that despite high attendance in general, the cohort's academic achievement remains low.

This study followed the same measurements as 2015 to maintain consistency across the years. This includes only considering levels which were not involved in major exams, hence excluding Primary 6 students who were taking their PSLE, Secondary 4 students taking their respective 'N' and 'O' Levels and Secondary 5 students taking their 'O' Levels. This leaves us with a sample of 355 students for this section. Other measurements include accounting for the four basic subjects (English, Mother Tongue, Mathematics² and Science) across all levels (primary and secondary) to ensure consistency across target groups. 2015's measure of pass/fail rates was also applied in this year's analysis – when children have failed two or more subjects (where fail means a score of less than 50%), they would be grouped as 'fail' since they have in effect failed at least half of the basic subjects that count towards the final grade.

The results from 2016's analysis did not defer much from 2015. In 2015, failure rates were at 49% while passing rates were at 51%. This year, consistent with 2015, the passing and failing rates were close to the 50-50 mark, where 53% of all SCC children were considered to have failed and only 47% passed.

² For mathematics at the secondary level, the only compulsory mathematics subject – Elementary Mathematics - was used as a basis for analysis.

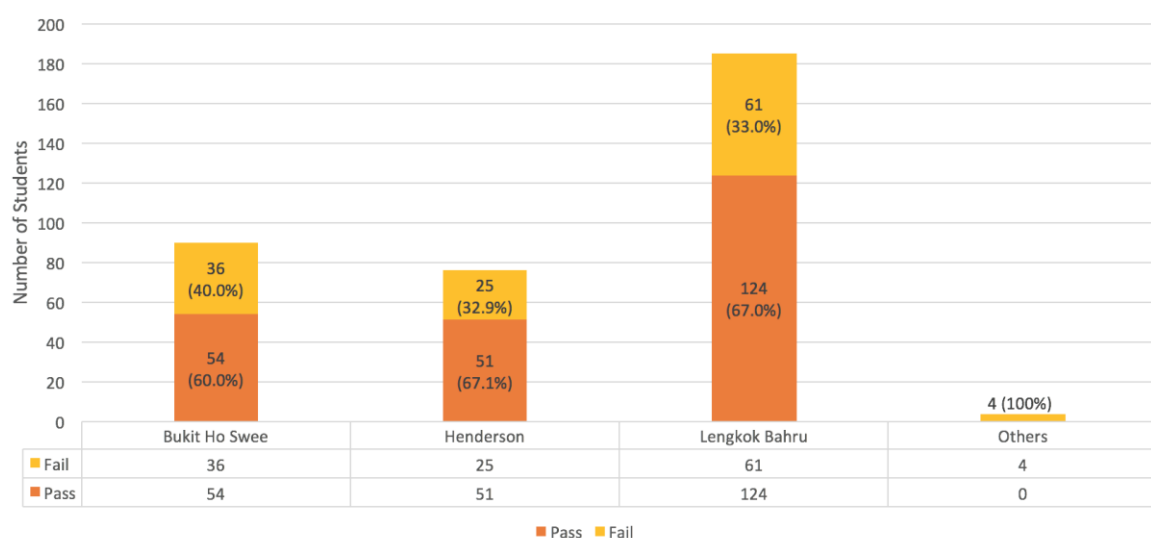


A further breakdown by level revealed that levels that have more failures than passes tend to be levels that have a big jump from the previous level, or what we term as 'transition years'. These years includes Primary 3, where Science as a subject is introduced for the first time, Primary 5 where a different scoring system is used³ and Secondary 3, where streaming into different subject combinations is implemented and new subjects are introduced. It would be helpful for further research to delve into the ways in which students can cope with these transition years better.

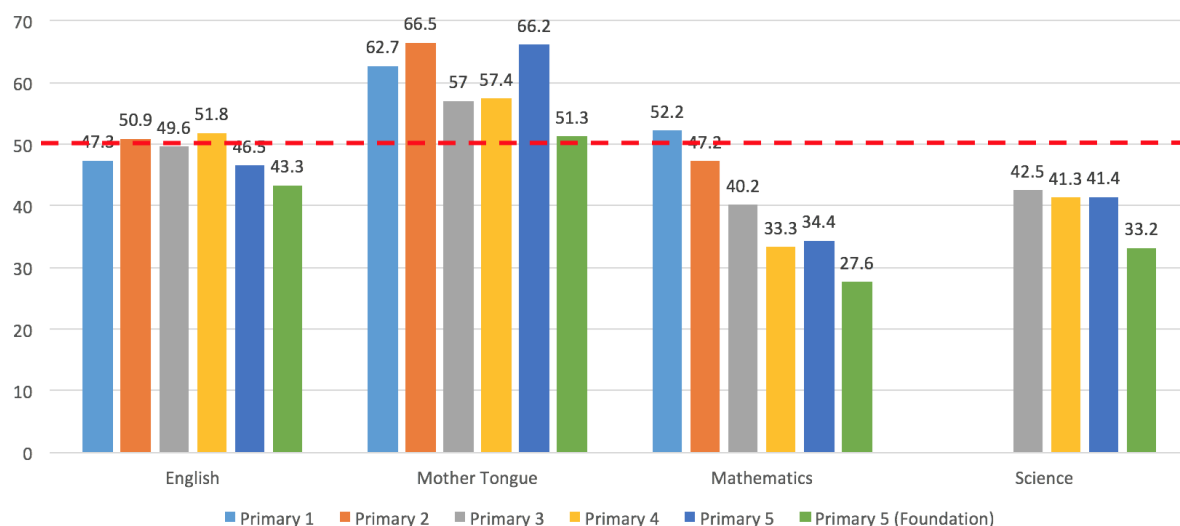
³ From Primary 1 to 4, students are classified from Band 1 to 4, Band 1 being the highest. In Primary 5, letter grades are introduced from A* - E and an Ungraded (U) grade, with A* being the highest.



There was also no significant difference in pass/fail rates across neighbourhoods, with an average of 65% passes and 35% failures, ruling out hypotheses that the specific SCC neighbourhood plays a critical role in the child's academic excellence. However, without comparison with other neighbourhoods outside of SCC boundaries, it is difficult to conclude that this lack of difference is due to the lack of neighbourhood effect rather than similarities within neighbourhoods.



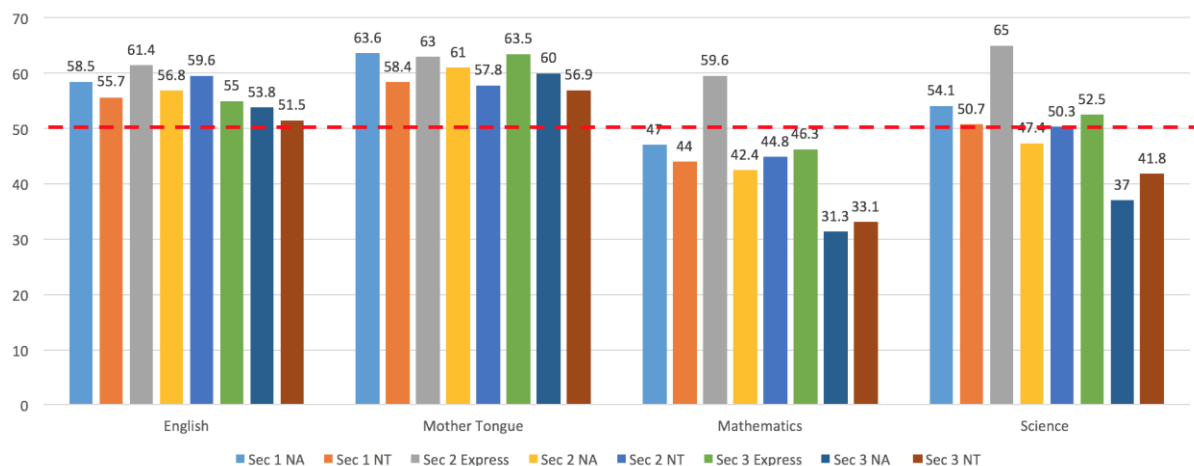
A subject-by-subject breakdown across levels reveals that for primary school students, Mother Tongue has the highest subject average. This stands out from the rest of Singapore where TODAY featured an article on how “Mother tongue proficiency affected’ as more students speak English at home”⁴ (TODAY 17 Sep 2013). The lowest subject averages are for Mathematics and Science. This is congruent with 2015’s findings. In terms of languages, results from Primary 1 to Primary 5 are fairly consistent with minimal fluctuations with a +/- 5 score. Except for Primary 1 Mathematics, scores are below the passing mark for Mathematics across the board, with a general decrease over the years. This is the same for Science despite it being introduced at a later stage.



The same pattern occurs for secondary school, where regardless of streaming differences, Mathematics and Science are still the worst performing subjects. Only Secondary 2 Express has a passing average score for Mathematics, while all other streams and levels do not have a passing average score. Likewise, Mother Tongue was the highest performing subject, with a passing average score for all levels

⁴ Retrieved from: <http://www.todayonline.com/singapore/mother-tongue-proficiency-affected-more-students-speak-english-home>

and streams. Surprisingly, English also received a passing average score for all levels and streams, showing an improvement from the primary level where only Primary 2 and 4 had passing average scores, despite secondary school supposedly being at a higher level.



Percentile Analysis

Apart from analysing the average scores for each subject, 2016's study includes a new element of analysing scores using percentile graphs. The purpose of these percentile graphs act as a complement to subject average measure and aims to glean insights from how the scores are being distributed. From the percentile graphs, we would be able to understand not just the average scores, but also how students at the 20th percentile, 50th percentile and 80th percentile are faring.

Primary School

For primary school, what is interesting is the huge range of scores for all levels, especially in Mathematics. Ranging from single digits to close to full marks, SCC children have a wide range of abilities for this subject. Broadly, for all levels except Primary 1, scores are below the passing score at the 50th percentile. It is also worrying to note that for Primary 4 and Primary 5 (Foundation), the scores for Mathematics at the 80th percentile are still below the passing score. This means

that despite belonging to the top 20% of the level, that child had still failed Mathematics.⁵

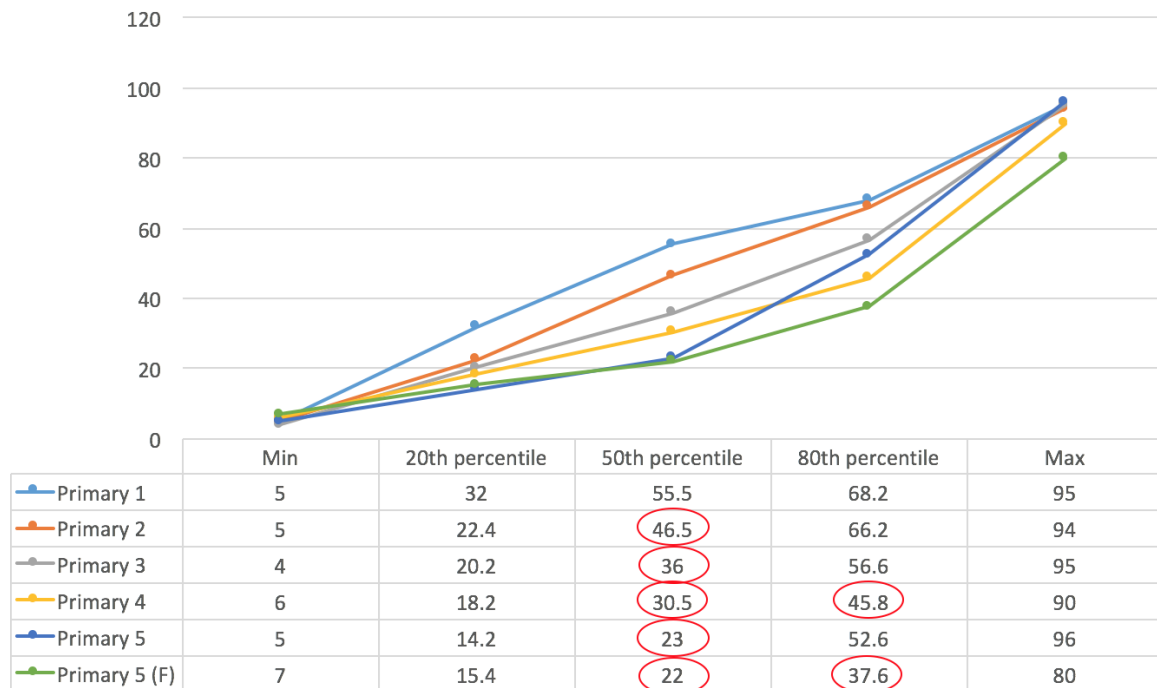


Figure 1. Primary School Mathematics results by percentile.

Mathematics at the primary level stands in stark contrast with Mother Tongue, the best performing subject at the primary level. From the percentile chart below, there are no failures at the 50th percentile unlike Mathematics and most scores are above 60, with the exception of Primary 5 Foundation. Even at the 20th

⁵ It should also be noted that the maximum score for Primary 4 and Primary 5 (Foundation) are both approximately double the score of the 80th percentile. Possible reasons to account for this discrepancy are highlighted in the interviews with top scorers in Section II.

percentile (meaning the child ranked at the bottom 20% of the cohort), Primary 1 and Primary 5 have passing grades.

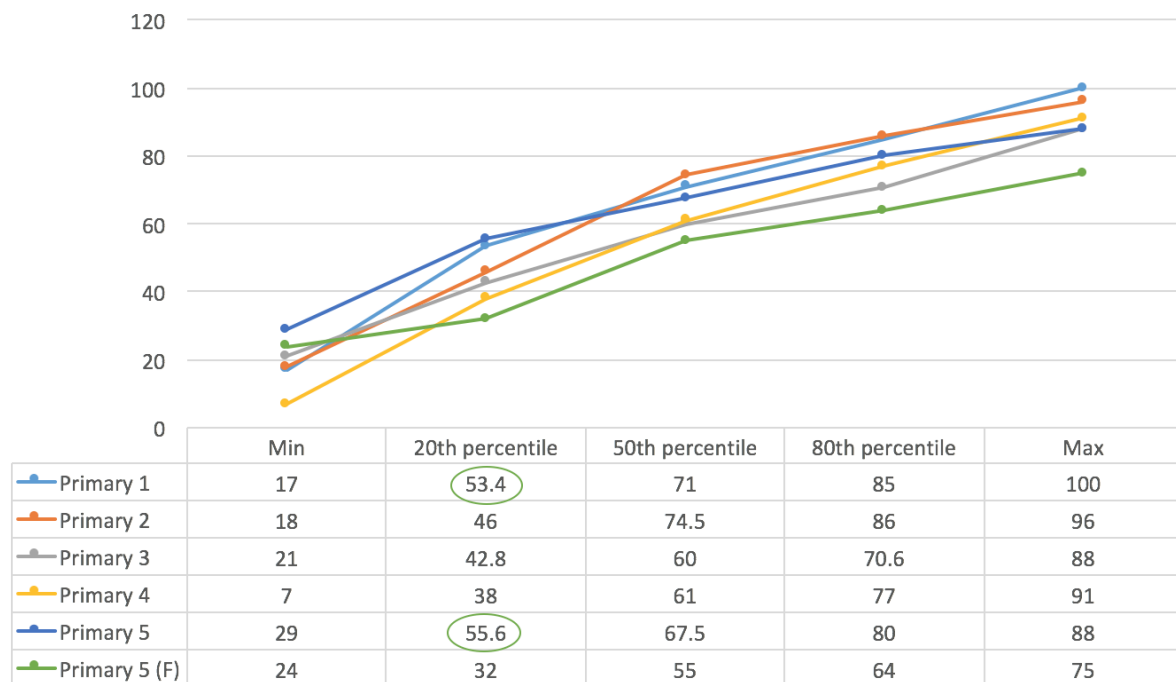


Figure 2. Primary School Mother Tongue Results by Percentile

Secondary School

Academic performance at secondary school level followed a similar pattern to primary school. For Mathematics, scores are consistently at a wide range (ranging from single digits to more than 80 marks), scores at the 50th percentile are below the passing mark and for Secondary 3 NA, scores at the 80th percentile were also below the passing mark.

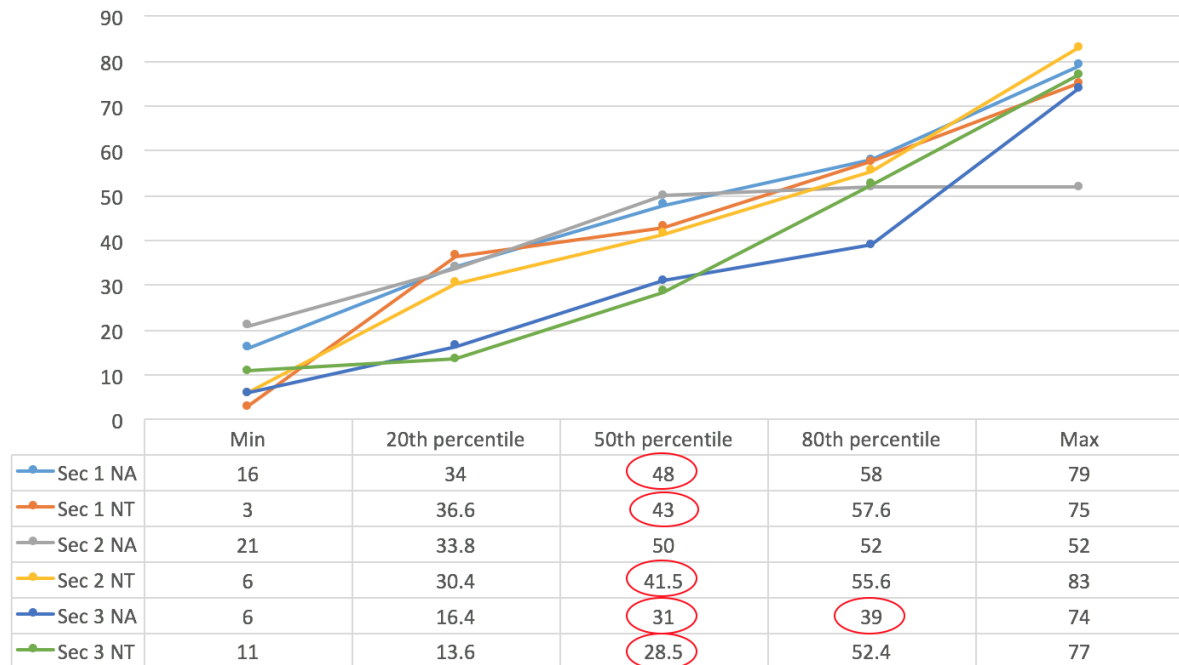


Figure 3. Secondary School Mathematics Results by Percentile

Similar to primary school level, students performed best at Mother Tongue at the secondary level, with no failures at the 50th percentile. Even at the 20th percentile, all 3 levels of NA achieve a passing score.

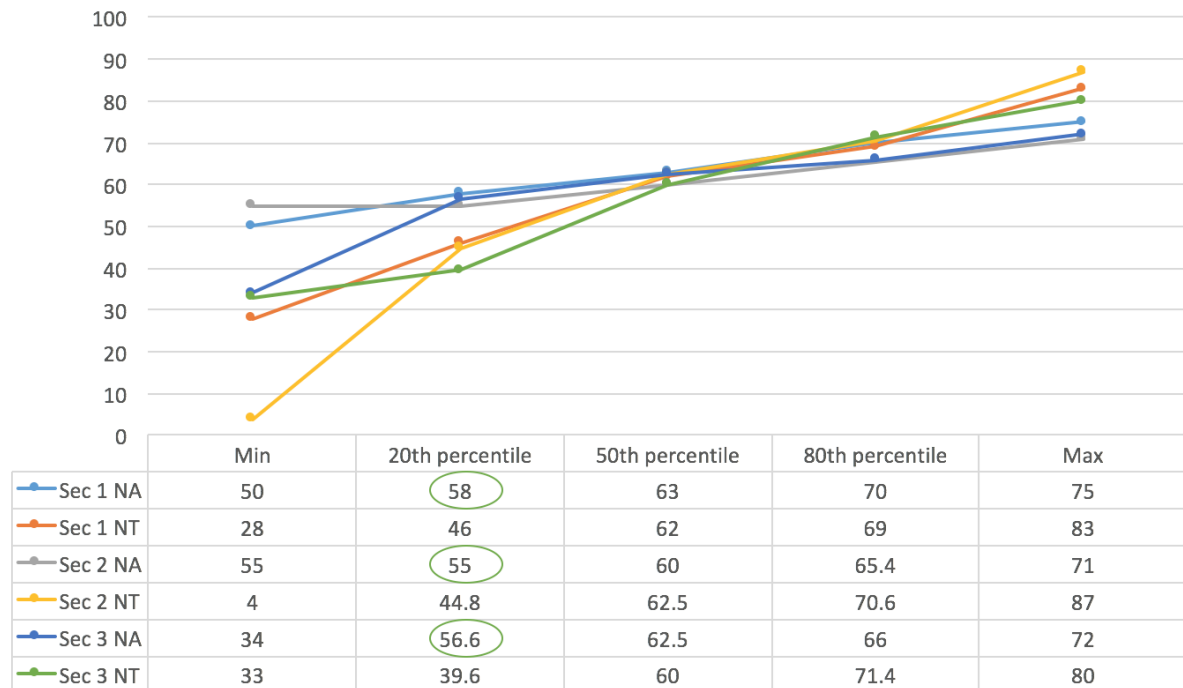
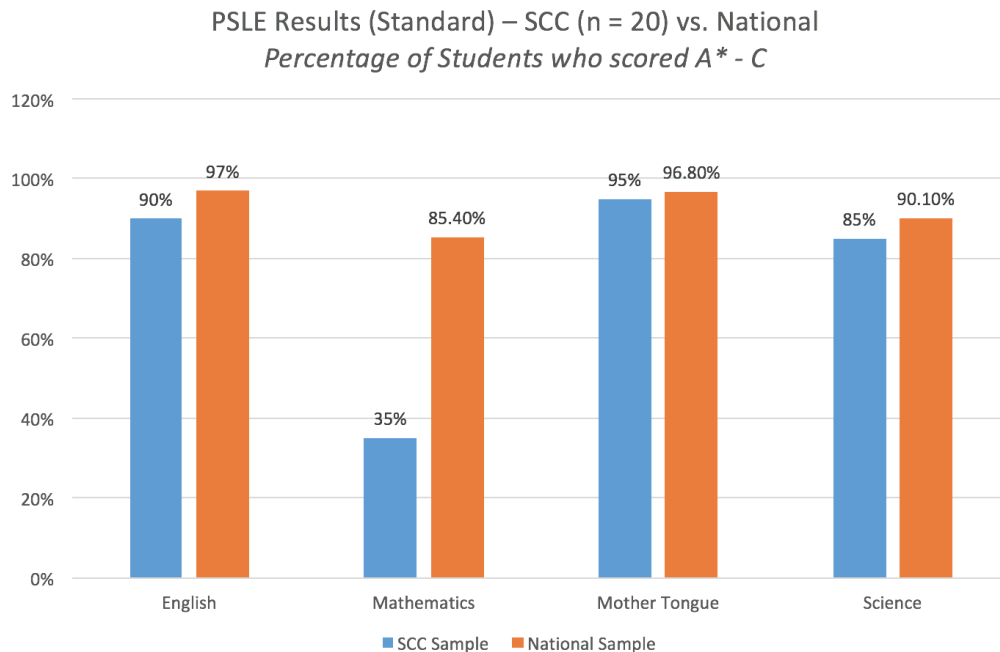


Figure 4. Secondary School Mother Tongue Results by Percentile

Major Exams

In terms of major examinations such as the PSLE, out of 55 result slips collected from Primary 6 students, only 44 had PSLE scores. The Primary 6 standard cohort scored a higher range of aggregate scores (ranging from 133 to 206 for their PSLE T-Score) compared to the Primary 6 Foundation cohort, whose scores range from 74 to 172, with no one making it to the Express stream in secondary school. 86.4% of the population (38 out of 44 students) are eligible to advance to secondary school compared to the national average of 98.3%. For the standard cohort, only 35% of SCC students scored a passing grade (A*- C) for Mathematics, less than half of the national rate of 85.4%. Future efforts could focus on helping PSLE students catch up in the area of Mathematics.



Cohort Study

With the benefit of having 2015's results, cohort-sequential analysis was conducted to track and take note of any observable changes as the batches of students progress year-by-year. Data from the 2016 sample was added to the cohort study group if complete information for the student's academic performance was available, i.e. student's 2015 attendance, 2015 school results, 2016 attendance and 2016 school results were available. A total of 195 out of the 513 students in the database (38%) had this complete information. In general, attendance for all levels has stayed consistent throughout the years. Batches going through 'transition years' were also seen to have a dip in their academic performances, i.e. results for the various subjects decreased as students progressed from Primary 2 to Primary 3, Primary 4 to Primary 5 and Secondary 2 to Secondary 3.

Graphical information about each cohort's attendance changes and academic performance can be found in Appendix 1.

Preliminary Insights and Recommendations

Consistent with the 2015 report, school attendance remained high across all levels, with 92% of school-going children attending school four out of five days on average. In addition, Mother Tongue remained the subject with best performance followed by English, while students performed more poorly in Mathematics and Science.

In addition, this report included analysis at percentile levels, indicating how students at the lower (20th percentile), middle (50th percentile) and high (80th percentile) ends of the sample were performing. For the subject with the lowest average score, Mathematics, student's results reflected a large range of scores, from single digits to close to full marks. At the 50th percentile, all levels except Primary 1 and Secondary 2 (NA) fail Mathematics, and even at the 80th percentile some levels still score a failing mark. On the other hand, Mother Tongue, which had the highest average score, had passing marks at the 50th percentile for all levels, ranging from 55 to 74.5 marks. This indicates a need for particular subject focus on Mathematics to help students improve their academic performance.

The study also looked at critical years where academic performance suffered the most. In particular, years with the highest failure rates coincided with the 'transition years' of P3, P5 and Sec 3, where Science, letter grading and subject electives are introduced respectively. Furthermore, at the PSLE major exam, only 35% of students scored a passing grade for Mathematics, compared to 85.4% of the national population.

Our school-going children also tend to perform better as they go on to secondary school. School-going children have both higher subject averages and smaller score ranges in secondary school as compared to primary school. One possible reason is that streaming into Express/NA/NT streams allows students to learn appropriate content at a pace more suited to their abilities, hence improving their performance in their respective streams.

Finally, a cohort study was conducted to observe trends as one cohort moved from 2015 to 2016. Attendance remained consistent throughout all levels and transitions; however, results were generally inconclusive regarding changes in subject averages across the year. Nevertheless, the data did show a decrease in subject averages for all subjects in the transition years of Primary 2 to Primary 3, and Secondary 2 to Secondary 3. This is consistent with the findings of poorer subject performance during such transition years, and also indicates that the poor performance during those years was not specific to the 2015 cohort of that level.

From the analysis presented above, it seems that despite going to school regularly, children from the SCC community are still unable to perform academically. Hence, it is crucial to take a step away from policy recommendations that suggest sending students to school more regularly to improve their school performance (Blyth and Milner 1999), and take a more targeted approach in helping students excel at school. Based on the quantitative results, the following approaches are recommended:

- 30% of Primary 5 (Standard) students in 2015 dropped to the foundation stream in 2016, which limits their secondary school prospects as seen by no one from the foundation stream making it to the Express stream. More can be done at this stage to help students in the P5 standard stream to maintain their results, while also trying to understand whether the outcome of dropping to foundation stream is positive (i.e. does it allow the students to learn at a more comfortable pace for them and hence improve their results?)

- The comparison of Primary 6 (Standard) results with the national statistics highlighted Mathematics as a key subject that SCC member students require help with. Along with the percentile analysis, this shows the importance of helping students gain a strong foundation in Mathematics and enable the SCC community passing percentage to catch up with the national passing percentage.
- All students with poor attendance (less than 50%) are from secondary school, representing 7% of the secondary school going sample. Hence, it is important to investigate the factors that cause poor attendance for secondary school students as opposed to primary school students, such as the amount of parental involvement, which will guide measures to ensure that these secondary school children go to school.

Section II: Qualitative Research Findings

A qualitative dimension was incorporated into 2016's study to gather stories and insights on 8 of the most improved or top scoring members of the community. Given that there is a gap between what is seen on the report card and what happens on a day to day basis, interviewing these families was necessary to illuminate the thinking, beliefs and motivations that helped the child succeed in school. The following findings will be presented in a form similar to that of the interview questionnaire (found in Appendix 2), where a series of questions was asked to understand factors influencing good academic performance. These questions were grouped as follows: individual factors (such as aspirations, dreams, self-motivation), a child's family relationship dynamics, influence from school, influence from the neighbourhood/community and any other factors that helped a child excel in school that did not fall under the other categories.

Stories from the Ground

Mdm Dinah, Sati (Sec 4 NA) and Siti (Sec 4 NT)⁶

Mdm Dinah, Sara and Sari belong to a nuclear family with 4 children. Sara is the 2nd child and Sari is the 3rd child. They have an older brother currently in National Service and a younger brother in primary school. When we arrived at their 2-room apartment in Bukit Ho Swee, Sara was home alone looking after her younger brother. Sari and her mother, Mdm Dinah, arrived 45 minutes later from school and work respectively. During the interview, Sari was not vocal and answered questions minimally, although she stayed throughout the interview. She also was not willing to share much about school this year, saying that "Sec 4 is bad". The turning point came when we asked her about her dreams and inspirations, and she got all excited speaking about her dream to "open a cat café and cupcake shop". She looked to her sister, Sara and said "I'll need your help for that – the baking part", and Sara gave a cheeky reply saying that "I'll be too busy flying around to help you" (she wants to be a cabin crew member when she grows up). From this, we deduced that the siblings share a very close relationship and this

⁶ Levels indicated here refer to the level of the student at the point of interview.

support and bond shared could be one of the reasons why both siblings from the same family ended up as one of the most improved in the community.

Possible Factors	Details from Interview
Individual	<p>Both Sara and Sari's faces lit up when they spoke about their ambition – Sara wants to be a cabin crew member, Sari wants to start her own business (cat café + cupcake shop). Sara mentioned that Sari "does not study but still can do well". We observed that Sara is more driven than Sari when it comes to academics. She mentioned that she "will do up her own revision notes for exams".</p> <p>✓ Both motivated by dreams and aspirations</p> <p>✓ Sara is more driven</p> <p>✗ Sari "does not study but still does well"</p>
Family	<p>Mdm Dinah instills discipline and a sense of responsibility by giving children a strict curfew of 10pm, confiscating their phones and assigning household chores to both sisters (Sara cleans the house and Sari does all the laundry). Mdm Dinah also emphasizes going to school, and does not encourage them to skip school unless they are really really sick. In addition, Mdm Dinah motivates them by asking them to work hard, focus and to not be like her. She thinks that they can still do better in school if they put in more effort. Sara mentions that her mother does not really pressure her to do well in school, and if she fails, her mum does not reprimand her either. They will still have regular meals together. She mentioned that she felt "blessed". Mdm Dinah however, mentions it's hard to coach her daughters in their studies.</p>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Parent instills discipline to help child stay focused✓ Also uses softer approach of encouragement and motivationX Parent is unable to coach child academically
School Teacher	/	<p>Both Sara and Sari mentioned that they do not have many close friends in school. Sara mentioned a Math teacher (Miss Huang) who motivated her to work harder.</p> <p>We conducted a phone interview with Miss Huang after the interview. She says that Sara has a weak foundation in Math and was sieved out after the first class test to have weekly small group consultations (5 people per group). During consultations, instead of re-teaching concepts, Ms Huang tries to get students to explain concepts to Sara and teach each other. When she sees certain topics that Sara is good at, she would pick Sara to explain those topics to her classmates to help her gain confidence. "Sara tries hard but it will be better if she can be motivated to study. Good to use her need to have freedom to do things she likes to get her interested in her studies". She believes that "when students know you care, they will reciprocate".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Sara mentioned the good support received from teacher. Sara's teacher goes the extra mile of providing extra consultation✓ Teacher believes in the childX Sari did not mention any influences from her teachers

Neighbourhood / Community	<p>Mdm Dinah does not really mix around with her neighbours. Sara and Sari however, have a very strong relationship with 2 other children in the next block. They will go roller blading together and study together. Sometimes, they will also “sit outside and chit chat”. Sara says that they are “good influence”. In terms of tuition support, Mdm Dinah also feels that there is not enough tuition support in the community and thinks that more tuition will help her children do better in school.</p> <p>✓ Both have good peer influence in the community</p> <p>X Mdm Dinah feels that there’s not enough tuition support</p>
Others	NIL

Some main findings from the conversation and possible interventions that can strengthen Sara and Sari’s academic foundations include:

1. Mdm Dinah balances her parenting style well with both the hard and soft approach. She would get them to complete household chores as a way of instilling discipline and “nags” her children to do well in school. Yet at the same time, she also tries to communicate her expectations to her children by telling them her own stories as a form of motivation, and does not penalise them when they do badly in school. Parental support is a strength in this family and such parental support creates a stability and structure that is useful for the child. More support can be given to Mdm Dinah as she continues to motivate both her children in their ‘N’ Level year in 2017.
2. Both Sara and Sari are also very self-motivated. This could possibly be due to them having a concrete aspiration for the future. However, Sari mentioned that she is not in a good place this year (2017). Volatility could be seen in this family, where they might perform well one year but that

effort is not sustained over a long period of time. A possible intervention would be to work on protective factors such as the children's aspirations and show them that their dreams are possible. This could be done in collaboration with their good friends in the neighbourhood or with the school to ensure continuity.

Deedee (Sec 5 NA)

Deedee belongs to a split generation family. Together with her older brother, both children live with their grandparents in a 2-room flat in Lengkok Bahru. Deedee's father "abandoned them" when she was 12. Her mother had also re-married and is currently living with her husband and 2 younger children. Deedee came down to SCC for the conversation. She was very lively and required no prompting to share about her reasons for doing well. Deedee is also very reflective and was able to pinpoint specific instances in her journey that led her to where she is today. On her way out of SCC, Deedee noticed one of the new cushioned benches and mentioned that she has never owned a bed before (she had always been sleeping on mattresses). Upon asking whether she would like to own a bed, she said that she would rather have a table and a table lamp to do her work as the flat she lives in is very small and very dark. The table she currently owns is also very small and things tend to fall off the table often.

Possible Factors	Details from Interview
Individual	<p>Deedee is very determined to do well in school. Her motivations last year were to get into the Poly Foundation Programme (PFP) and to be an accountant. Also, her friend made fun of her, so a big part of her motivation is to beat her friend. She also wants to "put in effort" so that she can "make it in life". She gave a lot of tips for students who are struggling. She is also willing to share her life experiences during the community sharing sessions.</p> <p>These tips include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "It does not matter whether your family situation is bad, you need to be self motivated".



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "It is best to reduce trouble in school, such as having better attendance and to have good attire. When there's less trouble from the discipline master, you would feel happier too. Then you can focus and study hard".• "Anything is possible. You see, metal cannot float. But how come boats are made of metal?" <p>✓ Self-motivated to have a better future</p>
Family	<p>Deedee's father sold the house and kicked her family out when she was 12 and went away with another woman. Her mother had her brother when she was 17 (teenage pregnancy), and left the family when the father left and remarried. She remembers that she scored over 90+ marks for dictation last time, but her father still scolded her. She thinks her mum does not care - when she was deciding to go to express or NA, her mum refused to see her report book and told her that it's her life she can make her own choices. She says, "I know my grandmother loves me" but elderly "don't understand" and can be "naggy".</p> <p>X No guidance from the family; complicated family situation.</p>
School Teacher /	<p>Deedee mentioned her Math teacher a lot during the interview, saying that her teacher believes in her and tells her very encouraging and motivational things to keep her going.</p> <p>We conducted a phone interview with her Math teacher, Ms Tan. She mentioned that she got to know Deedee better in the past 2 years through teacher-pupil conferencing sessions and started to pay more attention to her since Deedee shared about her family. They had a lot of interactions, and both Ms</p>



	<p>Tan and Deedee spend a lot of time in remedial sessions. Ms Tan would also catch up with Deedee after the sessions to see how she's doing. In terms of teaching strategies, Ms Tan tries to bring in real life examples from the news etc. to make lessons more fun, rather than solely teaching concepts. She says Deedee is very self-motivated compared to the rest of the class and thinks that it's because she wants to "escape this cycle" due to her family background, that gives her the additional drive to do better.</p> <p>✓ Deedee's teacher goes the extra mile of providing extra consultation</p> <p>✓ Teacher takes time to know the child and believes in the child</p>
Neighbourhood / Community	<p>Deedee says that she "does not know her neighbours". However, she participates in Learning Kampung at SCC and said that her tutor is very inspiring because "he will tell me his real life story and ask me to work harder so that I will have a better future than him".</p> <p>✓ Learning Kampung tutor motivates and encourages child</p>
Others	<p>Another of Deedee's motivation is her boyfriend (who got a police scholarship). She is inspired by his determination and wants to get a scholarship like him as well.</p> <p>She also mentioned wanting to be better than her competitive classmates to prove them wrong.</p>

	<p>✓ Boyfriend is good role model</p> <p>✓ Healthy competition in class</p>
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Some main findings from the conversation and possible interventions that can strengthen Deedee's academic foundations include:

1. Helping Deedee with small concrete steps towards her aspirations. She mentioned that she was "quite disappointed" that she did not make it into the PFP. Nevertheless, she refuses to give up and wants to find other ways to get into the accountancy programme. One-to-one mentoring and career coaching from a trusted mentor (such as her Learning Kampung tutor) could go a long way.
2. Deedee gave a lot of tips for students who are not doing well in school, saying things like "it does not matter whether your family situation is bad, you need to be self motivated." She also says it's best to reduce trouble in school, such as having better attendance and to have good attire. When there's less trouble from the discipline master, you would "feel happier too". Having Deedee share at the community sharing sessions would be helpful to motivate other students.
3. Sometimes, small steps such as providing a table, chair and study lamp to students living in small purchased flats or rental flats could go a long way in emphasizing on the importance of education. One small actionable would be to help Deedee gain access to a table lamp as this sends across the message that SCC cares for her education and wants her to succeed in life.

Update: Deedee has been provided with a table and table lamp to aid her in studying, and she has also received sponsorship for English tuition.

Mdm Nora and Izzah (Primary 6)

Izzah belongs to a nuclear family where she is the eldest of 9 children from her father's second marriage. Her father also has 2 other children from his first marriage. All 11 members of her family (Izzah, 8 siblings and 2 parents) live in a 1-room rental flat at Lengkok Bahru. When we arrived at her house for the conversation, both parents as well as 7 children were home (age ranging from 8 months to Primary 2). Izzah and her sister (in Primary 1) arrived home 30 minutes later. Mdm Nora, Izzah's mum is a full-time house wife and is in-charge of the day to day running of the house. Her father works as a busker/musician at Orchard Road and goes to work from 4pm to 10pm each day. He earns about \$1200/month and says it is "tight, but enough for the whole family".

Possible Factors	Details from Interview
Individual	<p>Izzah will always attend school and complete her homework on time. She wants to go to express stream, either at Gan Eng Seng Secondary School or Bukit Merah Secondary School. She wants to be a teacher in the future.</p> <p><i>Update: Izzah qualified for express stream in 2017 PSLE.</i></p> <p>✓ Izzah is disciplined and motivated to have a better future.</p>
Family	<p>Mdm Nora was educated in a madrasah and hence unable to coach the children in their school work (different syllabus). Her dad also finds it difficult to coach her in her homework as he finds the problem sums to be "less straightforward".</p> <p>Izzah will talk to her dad about life and Mr Salman would tell her that if she does not study, she would be poor. He wants her to get out of the poverty cycle. He also tells her about friendship, and how she needs to have good company (if not she will end up like his son from the other marriage - in and out of prison). He vocalises his expectation to her often, asking her to get into express,</p>



	<p>or to be a class monitress. Izzah is also close to her mum.</p> <p>✓ Father actively motivates and encourages child</p> <p>X Parent is unable to coach child academically</p> <p>X Complicated family situation (Child needs to step up to care for younger siblings)</p>
School Teacher /	<p>Both Izzah and her dad mentioned Mr Wu as a very inspiring and concerned teacher.</p> <p>We conducted a phone interview with Mr Wu, Izzah's form teacher for the past year. "I try to build rapport with my students", he said. There was once sometime early last year, Izzah did not turn up for school. When Mr Wu approached her, he said "I knew it was clearly a lie". During their one-to-one time, he asked her "why not you tell me the truth" and Izzah broke down and owned up to it. Since then, there had been no more late coming or absenteeism. He constantly tells Izzah that if she has any problems, she needs to tell an adult. "No matter how poor you are in Singapore, there's always someone that will help you". For instance, when Izzah had no money to apply for a passport to get to Batam for her service learning trip, her two close friends identified the problem and told Mr Wu. Mr Wu then got the school to provide a \$40 assistance, while he paid another \$30 from his own pocket. Mr Wu says he "encourages open communication in [his] class". Izzah has "always done her best" and "her parents are also banking on her". He says "I think the formula to help my students excel is that I have the belief in them, and that makes the difference. They might not hear encouraging things at home, so they must hear it from me. I may not teach her everything, but I think it's important to teach her to not be afraid to stand up for what is</p>



	<p>correct. I know she can do it". There was also another time that Izzah asked to skip school for 2 weeks to look after her other siblings while her mother went to deliver her 9th child. Mr Goh tried negotiating the number of days Izzah was taking off from school, and helped her to catch up with her school work when she came back. He is willing to share during the community sharing sessions.</p> <p>✓ Teacher helps the family through financial difficulties for child to have a better learning experience</p> <p>✓ Teacher takes time to know the child and believes in the child</p>
Neighbourhood / Community	<p>Mr Salman says that the family does not have any friends in the neighbourhood as most of the neighbours are older folk. There was a neighbour that was about the same age, but they were not good influences ("say bad word") so he refused to let his children play with them.</p> <p>✓ Family is aware of neighbourhood dynamics; enforces structure and rules to ensure child grows up in nurturing environment.</p>
Others	<p>Izzah used to go for tuition at Mendaki but requested to stop going when she felt that the people there were not serious about studying.</p> <p>✗ Tuition was not effective</p>

Some main findings from the conversation and possible interventions that can strengthen Izzah's academic foundations include:

1. Both Mdm Nora and her husband have strong parenting and family functioning checks in place. They are able to successfully communicate their expectations, aspirations and the importance of education to their children. It would be useful to strengthen the partnership that SCC has with Mdm Nora and her husband to ensure that Izzah gets the parental support she needs to succeed in her PSLE year (2017).
2. Izzah also has a very nurturing and caring teacher who would go the extra mile to help her succeed. Schools could also partner with SCC to ensure that children get the support they need both when they are at home, as well as when they are in school.
3. If financial reasons are the only factor keeping Mdm Nora and her family in a rental flat, SCC could step in and help this family move out of the "bad neighbourhood" soon, ensuring that the neighbourhood effect or negative socialization that may prevent Izzah and her siblings from reaching their full potential does not take place.

Mr Chandra and Rajesh (Primary 6)

Rajesh belongs to a nuclear family where he is the youngest of 2 children. His older sister is in JC1 and studying in a junior college in the north-eastern part of Singapore. Together with their parents, Rajesh lives in a 3-room purchased flat at Lengkok Bahru. The family was friendly throughout the interview that took place at their home, and all members of the family would make occasional jokes and references to each other. Rajesh was also able to openly share his feelings and thoughts with his family. On the wall above the sofa in the living room, there was a poster that read "Happy Birthday Daddy". This was probably drawn by Rajesh or his sister when they were younger. This signals the good relationship that Rajesh shares with his parents, as well as the good relationship that both his parents share.



Possible Factors	Details from Interview
Individual	<p>Rajesh thinks that he is not working hard enough and agrees with his parents that he needs to put in more effort into his studies. Last year, he was given a scholarship from SINDA for a mentorship programme by RI students. The programme aims to motivate primary school students and that has helped him by giving him life facts and tips. He wants to get into either ACS, SJI, VJC or RI for secondary school. Rajesh is also a very outgoing boy who's very involved with co-curricular activities in school. He ran for head prefect candidacy and is often called to be Master of Ceremony for events.</p> <p>✓ Child is motivated to get into a good school.</p>
Family	<p>Rajesh's dad works as a security guard on night shift but spends his weekends playing sports with Rajesh. Rajesh's mother is a house wife and would bring food or his badminton racket to his school gate on days that he has remedial or CCA.</p> <p>They think that Rajesh can do better and expresses their expectation for him to get into a school with IP programme. Rajesh is 9th in the level and they are proud of him, though they think he needs to be a lot more motivated. Rajesh's mother coaches him in his school work and he would often ask his sister for help in his school work. Rajesh's mum would like him to go to ACJC, even though Rajesh's choice is to go RI.</p>



	<p>The family uses monetary rewards to entice him to do well. For instance, the family bought Rajesh an x-box for doing well in school last year.</p> <p>✓ Parents play a huge role in motivating Rajesh – mostly through their expectations of him and through material rewards.</p> <p>✓ Parents care for the child tangibly (delivering lunch daily) and spend a lot of time with him.</p> <p>✓ Parents and sister are able to coach child academically.</p>
School Teacher /	<p>Both Rajesh and his father speak of Mdm Indrani, his form teacher, prefect teacher in charge, badminton teacher in charge and english teacher as his inspiration. Mdm Indrani also communicates closely with Rajesh's parents through email.</p> <p>✓ Teacher has a close relationship with child and parents.</p>
Neighbourhood / Community	<p>The family is close to the neighbours in the community. Rajesh plays football with the kids in the neighbourhood. He says that he would be sad if he were to move away from this neighbourhood and his friends here.</p> <p>✓ Close ties with neighbours</p>
Others	<p>Rajesh enjoys going to school and says that he "learn a lot from [his] friends". He looks up to this boy called Ah Jie who</p>

	<p>knows everything before class, with classroom lessons acting as a refresher for him.</p> <p>✓ Child has healthy competition with classmates</p>
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Some main findings from the conversation and possible interventions that can strengthen Rajesh's academic foundations include:

1. Compared to the other families interviewed, Rajesh and his family seem to be doing relatively better off. His parents are supportive and understanding of what is required academically. Rajesh is also motivated and has concrete dreams of getting into one of the top schools in Singapore.

Mdm Aisha and Indah (Primary 5)

Indah comes from a single parent family. Her mother, Mdm Aisha, is in the process of divorce. Mdm Aisha has 4 children who all live together with her in a 2-room rental flat in Henderson, except the eldest. The eldest boy lives with his uncle in a flat nearer to his school, but the whole family gathers at their grandmother's house each weekend. Indah is the 3rd child in the family and was very vocal, animated, lively and outgoing when we arrived at her house for the conversation. Both of Mdm Aisha's children whom we met, Indah and Intan, are very comfortable and warm when interacting with their mum, indicating that they are quite close to each other. When her daughters came home, Mdm Aisha prepared food for them, and prepped her youngest daughter, Intan, for shower as well.

Possible Factors	Details from Interview
Individual	Indah did very well in school last year and received the MOE Bursary for good progress (\$150 cash). She will "ask if [she] doesn't know anything". She hopes to get to Poly and Uni and finish her degree.



	✓ Child is motivated for her future.
Family	<p>Mdm Aisha ensures that her children are very disciplined. They follow a pretty strict routine (Go to school in the morning, head to student care, then tuition with Mendaki from 6 to 9.15pm or dance class 7pm to 9pm before heading home). She ensures that her children get enough rest - "when they come home, I don't let them open book. They work so hard the whole day already, tired ah". She says "I believe they can do it" and that she tries to motivate and encourage them by telling them her life story - about how she was a good girl last time, "don't believe you go and ask grandma", and also by comparison "you see now even degree also hard to find job, you better study hard". She also assigns them household chores so that they can relieve the household burden. She also tells them that they need to focus, and also to constantly remind them and ask them to ask for help when they need.</p> <p>Indah also mentioned that her motivation for doing well in school is also to not let her mother be unhappy.</p> <p>✓ Parent instills discipline to help child stay focus</p> <p>✓ Also uses softer approaches of encouragement, motivation and comparison (sharing stories of her own past)</p> <p>✓ Child's motivation for doing well is to not disappoint her mum</p>



School Teacher /	<p>Indah speaks of Ms He who would help her in her studies. Whenever she does not understand, Ms He would repeat the concepts and explain again.</p> <p>✓ Patient teacher who is willing to help children understand concepts</p>
Neighbourhood / Community	<p>Mdm Aisha says the neighbourhood is very bad - there are people in gangs, smoking and doing drugs - and she wants to buy her own house if she can. She does not let her kids play downstairs.</p> <p>The family gets support from Mendaki where the children get free tuition, as well as the RC/Wellness Centre downstairs where there are free dance classes. Aunty Jenny from the centre was mentioned a lot in the interview as well - Mdm Aisha says that she is "very concerned" and will "call to ask why my daughter never turn up". Aunty Jenny will also send the children home if their older brother is unable to pick them up after class.</p> <p>✓ Family benefits from tuition and free classes from RC/Mendaki in their neighbourhood</p> <p>✓ Caring community and key anchor person who is concerned for the welfare of the family</p> <p>X Unsafe neighbourhood</p>
Others	<p>Indah has a good friend called Queenie who is the top student in class. She says that "it is important to have more</p>

	<p>encouragement from friends to cheer me up". Indah would also often help her friends with their school work if her friends do not understand the topic.</p> <p>✓ Child has healthy competition with classmates and helps her classmates out in their studies.</p>
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Some main findings from the conversation and possible interventions that can strengthen Indah's academic foundations include:

1. Mdm Aisha's parenting style stood out in this conversation. Similar to Mdm Dinah, she adopts both a hard and soft approach to instill discipline in her child, yet gives them the encouragement and motivation they need. Mdm Aisha also seem to be educated and socialized by her own upbringing and family, and knows what is best for her children. Parental support is a strength in this family and this parental support creates of a stability and structure that is useful for the child. More support can be given to Mdm Aisha as she continues to motivate her child in the important PSLE year next year.
2. Another factor that stood out from this conversation would be the support that the family has received from the community and neighbourhood. Auntie Jenny is a key anchor person that helps inspire dreams in Indah, as well as provide the structure that she needs to succeed academically.

Mdm Yati and Aleeya (Sec 1)

Aleeya comes from a single parent family, where her father has been incarcerated since 2014 for drug consumption. Mdm Yati, her mother, brings up all 3 children on her own, with Aleeya being the eldest. When they came to SCC for the conversation, both mother and daughter were quiet at first but opened up halfway through the conversation. They sat very close to each other and were exchanging frequent eye contact during the interview. This indicated the closeness of their relationship, and the interaction between both mother and daughter was warm and genuine.



Possible Factors	Details from Interview
Individual	<p>Aleeya mentioned that the main reason she did well was that she faced cyber-bullying and wants to prove to her haters that she can be better than them (her haters are people who gossip about her). She is motivated by her quote "the more haters I have, the more better I become").</p> <p>She also wants to show her father's family that she can still do her best, even though her father is not around, and not to be looked down upon.</p> <p>Her dream jobs include working in CNB (Central Narcotics Bureau), CID (police) or to be a stewardess or journalist as she loves to solve puzzles. When asked why CNB, she said that it was because of her father (who was caught for consuming drugs).</p> <p>✓ Child is motivated to prove others wrong (both the bully and her father's extended family).</p>
Family	<p>Mdm Yati says she gets her idea of parenting from her own mother and that shapes the way she parents. She takes her husband's side's parenting style as a lesson that she cannot repeat. To her, "it is important that parents need to monitor their child. I notice some parents don't care, they just let their child go down and play and bad company. Parents need to care, how can parent don't care?" Mdm Yati says that "parent should know what the child is doing", so she knows who Aleeya is chatting with on the</p>



	<p>phone and will advise her on how to respond in the bullying situation.</p> <p>Mdm Yati is very concerned about Aleeya's progress in school. She quit her job in May last year to ensure that Aleeya studies for her PSLE and relieve her of caregiving duties even though she was the sole breadwinner. She fixes a routine for her children (after school, come home, relax, do what they want to do, after dinner 7pm all children have to start doing their homework and revision). She buys them assessment books for practice purposes and says that it is "very important". Mdm Yati also sets a target for Aleeya, telling her to get "above 185" for PSLE. When Aleeya was in Primary 5, Mdm Yati wanted to build a good foundation for Aleeya and decided to send her for 1-on-1 tuition (which was co-funded by her brother). In P6, Aleeya went to Mendaki for tuition instead as her private tutor migrated out of Singapore.</p> <p>✓ Parent instills discipline and structure to help child stay focused.</p> <p>✓ Parent stops working to concentrate on fully supervising her child and relieve her of caregiving duties.</p>
School Teacher	<p>/ Her Mother Tongue teacher, Mdm Faridah, motivates her to do well. She is her co-form teacher, Malay teacher and Higher Malay teacher. She "talk to me", and "talk to her about my problems and she understands".</p> <p>✓ Teacher who motivates the child to do well (not that significant).</p>



Neighbourhood / Community	<p>Mdm Yati does not allow her children to play at the playground under the void deck because the people in the area do not go to school. They are also not close to their neighbours - Mdm Yati says they stay opposite a "crazy uncle" who would scream when their youngest child makes noise and would drink everyday.</p> <p>Mdm Yati goes to Mendaki for tuition every weekend but thinks that it's a waste of time. Both Mdm Yati and Aleeya thinks that the school should have extra classes for poor students. But she thinks that the school is a not a good school as she has seen people acting like gangsters and fighting in school.</p> <p>✓ Family benefits from tuition and Mendaki in their neighbourhood.</p> <p>X Negative influence from neighbourhood (children not going to school).</p>
Others	<p>Mdm Yati describes Aleeya as "fierce, smart and crazy" while Aleeya describes her mother as "scary, amazing, fearless and strong". From her mother she learnt how to be a "strong person, and if anything I know how to control myself (especially when someone bullies me in school)".</p> <p>✓ Child looks up to mum as role model.</p>

Some main findings from the conversation and possible interventions that can strengthen Aleeya's academic foundations include:

1. The sacrifice that Mdm Yati made stood out in this conversation. Her willingness to forgo her only source of income to ensure that her daughter does well in school shows the value she places on education. With Aleeya looking up to her mother as a role model and describing her as someone “fearless” and “strong”, Mdm Yati sets a very positive example for her child to model after. More support could be given to Mdm Yati both financially as well as in the form of mentoring so that she is able to continually influence her child positively.
2. Aleeya also has very concrete aspirations, like the rest of the children we spoke to. This indicates the intensity of the driving force that these children have – it might not be good enough for them to dream of having a good future, but having a concrete dream gives them something tangible to work towards. Therefore, it is important to partner these children and help them have a taste of their dream coming true, and to nurture them so that they do not give up on this driving force as they progress on in their education journey.

Mdm Preethy and Amrita (Pri 5)

Amrita belongs to a single parent family where her mother, Mdm Preethy, is widowed. Together with her mother, her mother’s partner and her older and younger brother, Amrita lives in a 2-room flat in Bukit Ho Swee. Mdm Preethy’s oldest child is diagnosed with dyslexia and her youngest child has some health problems coupled with a suspicion of dyslexia as well. The interview was conducted in the comforts of Mdm Preethy and Amrita’s home. The whole family was present during the interview and both the youngest and oldest brother sat in to listen. When asked about her challenges, Mdm Preethy was quite reserved about revealing these challenges to us and focused on how she coped with these challenges instead. Throughout the conversation, Amrita was also quite reserved but was polite in giving her thoughts on the questions we put forth.

Possible Factors	Details from Interview
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Individual	<p>Amrita loves to play computer games, but she would do her homework diligently every day.</p> <p>Mdm Preethy described Amrita as very caring. When asked, Mdm Preethy told us how Amrita actually saves up for the family, so that if there's any emergency in the family, she would actually be the one to offer her savings for her family to use. When her brothers are being bullied by others, Amrita would stand up for the both of them.</p> <p>When asked about what she wants to be in 20 years, she said that she wants to "carry baskets like her grandfather". She was quite shy about it.</p> <p>✓ Child is diligent at doing homework and is very responsible.</p>
Family	<p>Mdm Preethy is a very enterprising mum. She mentioned her previous work had long hours, so she stopped so she could care for her children and started to sell drinks, ice kachang and milkshakes at a hawker centre near her house to earn income. However, she stopped the business when it wasn't profitable and turned to catering instead, which she recently stopped as her aunt wasn't around to help her with the catering. She is currently doing online sales and is also looking for a small space with low rent, so that they are able to open a small flower shop.</p> <p>Amrita describes her mum as "encouraging" and who would often teach her. Mdm Preethy claims that she is "not too close" to her children, that they don't really talk too much with each</p>



	<p>other. But sometimes, she would talk to them and advise them saying that whatever they are doing, they are doing for themselves, for their own good. If the children are meeting difficulties or failed their exams, she would often ask them to “come back to the family”, that the family is here for them.</p> <p>When asked about some of the challenges that she had faced and how she overcame them, Mdm Preethy said there were “too many I’d rather not say”. She adds that they “still manage to tackle all these problems” and thanked YWCA for helping them.</p> <p>✓ Parent often encourages her children and expresses support for them.</p> <p>✓ Parent stops working so that she can supervise and take care of her children.</p>
School Teacher /	<p>Mdm Preethy also mentioned keeping in touch with Amrita’s school counsellor, Mrs Uma, who would often update her on Amrita, and showing care and concern for Amrita too.</p> <p>✓ School counsellor shows care and concern for the child and keeps in touch with parent often</p>
Neighbourhood / Community	<p>Amrita has been going for one-on-one tutoring with YWCA, which she has been going for thrice a week for two years. She has improved because of the tuition and really enjoys going for the tuition.</p>



	<p>Mdm Preethy says that she has benefited a lot from YWCA. She started off from Empowering Mums and through networking with them, she was linked up with the opportunity of a mentoring programme for Amrita, which includes tutoring, going out for outings, baking, coaching and many other activities, which Amrita and her said she's "really thankful to YWCA [for]. They really helped us a lot."</p> <p>The family does not have much friends in the neighbourhood. Mdm Preethy says that a lot of the kids in the neighbourhood would bully her oldest son and call him names. Her oldest son was in the community soccer team but she took him out due to the bullying.</p> <p>✓ Family and child benefit greatly from mentoring programme at YWCA</p> <p>X Bullying in the neighbourhood</p>
Others	NIL

Some main findings from the conversation and possible interventions that can strengthen Amrita's academic foundations include:

1. Both mother and child benefited a lot from the support they received from YWCA. Amrita "does not have any friends in school and the neighbourhood" but "her only friends are from YWCA". It would be helpful for SCC to partner with these other organisations and refer families that need more tailored support and assistance.

Preliminary Insights and Recommendations

Through the interviews, we identified factors within 4 main domains that could influence a child's good academic performance.

Self

- Had concrete ambition/plan for the future
- Had strong motivating reason e.g. to prove others wrong
- Had a positive mindset. Quote from Sara: "if you have like family problems, you try to like move on and don't think about your family problems. Like think for your future, and study for your future, don't really care about your family la"

Family

- Parents created a structured routine for the child through discipline and supervision
- Family members gave strength and motivation through encouragement and open communication
- Parents with low income 'pressure' child not to end up like them and escape poverty cycle

Community

- Children are kept away from negative influences in the neighbourhood
- Key anchor persons that help child succeed and act as role models
- Platforms to interact with such people e.g. Learning Kampung, YWCA Mentoring Programme

School

- Support of teachers who invested extra time in their academics and beyond
- Close relationship between parents and teachers
- Classmates who set positive examples and provide healthy competition

Based on the interviews, these are some recommended ways to help the children improve in their academic performance:

- The importance of community support was highlighted when children identified people who motivated them like teachers or volunteers. As a sign of such support, SCC can perform simple interventions such as providing families in 1-room and 2-room flats with a desk, chair and study lamp to communicate the message that SCC cares for and values the child's education.
- While the parents strive to help their children in their education, they also struggle with the lack of time and unfamiliarity with the curriculum. Families and volunteers with the relevant assets can be targeted to help support parents in helping their children in their studies
- Many of the most improved and top scorers had concrete plans for the future, whether in education or career. Hence, SCC can partner with schools and children's peer groups to help affirm these student's dreams as possible realities, and to expose them to more possibilities in order to expand their worldview and their goals

Section III: Conversations on Education – Celebrating Our Success: ‘My Children’s Education and I’

In conjunction with the qualitative interviews that we have had with some of our families on their success, our conversations on children’s education this year similarly revolves around celebrating our families’ successes. This year, we aimed to highlight the ‘success ingredients’ shared by the families that we interviewed and provide a platform for parents and members from the immediate and larger communities to come together and share their own ‘success ingredients’ and tips with one another.

Our conversation at WeLL Centre with the members of the Henderson community, in collaboration with the Super-Mummy’s Club, saw a turn-up of over 80 participants, of which 58 are parents, 20 are children and 8 are external stakeholders. We also had a joint community conversation with members from Bukit Ho Swee and Lengkok Bahru communities in our centre’s premises which received over 90 participants, comprising 43 parents, 40 children and 13 external stakeholders. The presence and participation of our community partners and external stakeholders - ranging from volunteer tutors, social service agencies, funding bodies and grassroots organizations - demonstrated the interest and dedication of stakeholders towards discovering more about our parents’ efforts in improving our children’s education. Among those who participated were:

SCC Volunteers

Community Foundation of Singapore

Beyond Social Services

Social Service Office @ Bukit Merah

Montfort Care

Kreta Ayer FSC

Tanjong Pagar FSC

Ministry of Education

Healthy Start Child Development Centre

Gan Eng Seng Primary School

Bukit Merah Secondary School

A. Community Feedback

The school results analysis was facilitated using an interactive quiz format by two Community Social Workers from SCC. Overall, many parents appeared to be engaged and made the following observations:

- Our children seem to be more in need of support in Primary 3 and Secondary 3, which are transitional years (where they take on more subjects or are subjected to streaming). Results in Science, Maths and English tend to go down during this period.
- Secondary 3 Express, NA and NT are different in terms of curriculum and assessment, so it would not be accurate to compare them. The facilitators agreed, and responded by comparing Secondary 2 Express/NA/ NT subject grades and their equivalent in Secondary 3.
- The results in secondary school tend to be better than primary school, which is surprising since there are more subjects and the syllabus tends to be more challenging.

B. Forum Theatre

The main highlight of this year's conversations was the forum theatre, where we invited children, families, and their community support whom we have interviewed and community members to share their personal experiences in school or in supporting children's education. For the Henderson community, we invited a student interviewee Indah, a community member and Aunty Joyce from WeLL Centre as the forum theatre panellists. For Bukit Ho Swee and Lengkok Bahru communities, we invited two youths who did well in school, Deedee and Aleeya, their families and Deedee's volunteer, Paul, from Learning Kampung.

Their sharings were powerful and invigorating. The following are some snippets of their sharing during the forum theatre:

Many students and parents were able to relate with Deedee's sharing (who had completed Secondary 5 NA), that she was generally not motivated to study, frustrated with her parents' nagging, and did not see the importance of academics.

A turning point for her was when her upper Secondary teacher expressed disappointment in her because she/he thought Deedee could do better. **The teacher's belief in Deedee led to her working harder, which became a virtuous cycle, as her improved results increased her motivation to work even harder and score better.** She ended the school year being recognised for "most improved results".

She shared that "the difference between an A and F grade is **how you handle the stress**"- whether responding by losing motivation or to improve motivation and working harder.

In Secondary 5, she asked for help in English. Her social worker referred her to a volunteer tutor from Learning Kampung. What she found helpful was that he did not change her writing style, but focused on improving her weaknesses.

A youth (Ishak) who empathized with Deedee's story added on and shared with the participants how he felt the same way as her.

Another child – Aleeya (Secondary 1) also shared her journey in school towards doing well for PSLE. She and her mother shared that her "success factors" were to ensure she had **adequate rest** and **routine studying time** from 7.30pm onwards. **Her mother's discipline style is firm but not overly strict** e.g. she did not want to stress Aleeya by confiscating her phone.

One of our Learning Kampung volunteers, Paul, was also named as a key pillar of support for the child and was invited to speak at the forum theatre as well. He shared his belief that every child is special and there can be late bloomers. He acknowledged parents' worries about the school results, but felt that there is an overall improvement in English due **to more English language communication at home**. He also shared **some tips on using accessible digital resources** e.g. Science/medical Youtube videos.

In Henderson, Indah shared that "Friends in school are important. I have a classmate who helps me with my school work and questions on topics I don't understand. It is very helpful for me. I also help my friends with their school work if they need help too." Another community member, Fatimah added that "I make sure that my kids go to tuition every single day. Without fail."

C. Conversations on 'Success Ingredients'

Following the forum theatre, parents, youths, community partners and external stakeholders came together in groups to discuss the “success ingredients” that were crystallized from the qualitative interviews with parents and children, facilitated by SCC staff and other members of the community like Farhana and Joanne.

The “success ingredients” that were highlighted in the cards are as follows:

Individual/Family

1. I AM CLOSE TO MY CHILD
2. HOMEWORK HELP
3. GO TO SCHOOL REGULARLY
4. SCHOOL – PLAY ROUTINE
5. REMOVE DISTRACTIONS
6. DISCIPLINE AND GOOD VALUES

School

1. TALKING TO CHILD’S TEACHERS
2. GOOD TEACHERS IN SCHOOL
3. GOOD FRIENDS IN SCHOOL

To facilitate these discussions, SCC created cards labelled with the different “success ingredients” along with a “progress report card” with pockets for cards. Parents were then asked to put their identified “success ingredients” into different pockets, to indicate either an ingredient that they already practice (to affirm their efforts) or an ingredient they do not have yet (to encourage them to pick it up).

They were then encouraged to share their own personal experiences in supporting their children in school by practising their “success ingredients”. Our community partners and external stakeholders were also engaged in the discussion and gained insights from the parents’ discussion.

The care and concern that parents had towards their children’s education were tremendous. A few parents stepped up at the end to share their personal experiences, which ensued in a lively discussion in the big group:

a) Relationship between parents and teachers

A mother from Bukit Ho Swee shared that it is **important for parents to keep in touch with all the teachers** (not just the form teacher) to ensure that the child becomes successful in school.

Another mother from Beo Crescent responded by saying that it is sometimes quite difficult to engage the teachers or talk to them about the home situation, because they are often too busy to return the parent’s calls or do not have enough time during the Parents-Teachers Meetings. Also, since her child often talks to his friends in the community, the mother **relies on her child’s friends in the neighbourhood** to let her know about her child’s issues and behaviour in school.

b) Importance of parental/community support and sharing

A father from Beo Crescent concurred and said that his **neighbours are important** as they help to look out for his family and children. In terms of education, he remarked that if the child can catch up in Primary 2, he or she will have no problem in school work from Primary 3 to Primary 6. Similarly in Secondary School, if the child is able to “cross the bridge” in Secondary 2, then he or she can also cross Secondary 3.

A mother from Henderson also suggested that parents should come together and attend lessons or workshops to better help their children with their school work.

c) Discipline methods

A father from Indus shared his “tough love” method of **disciplining his children** – when he uses the cane (usually as a last resort), he always explains the circumstances and reasons for his actions so as to ensure his child understands why. He would alternate between being firm and nice where he “gives ice cream” after he is firm with his child. Another father shared his technique of **“bargaining” with the child to ensure they get both play and study time** e.g. Get the child to promise 1 hour of study for 1 hour of play.

d) Use of digital media

A parent commented that movies and videos are not necessarily negative influences on the children. While some violent movies may not be suitable, **there are many educational movies/videos that teach values or new words**, and those are “good distractions”.

e) Challenges that the children face

Some parents highlighted several concerns, such as some **dangerous influences** within the community, or **schoolmates bullying** or looking down on their children.

At the end of the group discussion, the children came back into the room, and were asked to share their own identified “success ingredients” (based on their own discussion) with their parents, for both parent and child to better understand each other’s views.

D. Positive Observations

The community conversations held this year also saw community members taking a more active role in the conversations. Inspired by the first conversation on these ‘success tips’ at Henderson, one of the Super-Mummy members (Farhana) volunteered to co-facilitate the discussion in the second conversation at our centre for both the Lengkok Bahru and Bukit Ho Swee communities.

There were also mothers in the community who took charge of the child-minding section and were able to engage the children well. Even children volunteered to chip in their knowledge and skills by preparing the Powerpoint slides required for these conversations. During the conversations, some parents gave feedback about how to improve analysis about the results trend. These point to a great ownership on the part of community members towards children's education.

Our external stakeholders and community partners also contributed and showed their support in our conversations. Since our conversations are held mainly in English and Malay, some of our community partners, volunteers, and other participants took the initiative to translate the discussion into Chinese and/or Malay.

Concluding Remarks

This year saw many community members stepping up to contribute to these conversations in their own special ways and experiences – from facilitating a conversation to helping out in the child-minding during these conversations. However, what matters from now is the subsequent actions taken by the community to continue supporting our children's education.

We plan to engage parents in various bumping spaces through conversations on these 'success tips' for all three communities. Follow-ups are also going to be done on the progress of the parents in practicing their 'success ingredients' during the Super-Mummy's Club monthly meet-up. As of now, we have also engaged Mendaki tutors at WeLL Centre, Henderson, to go through and revisit these 'success tips' and review them with the children. We have also had a follow-up with the Super-Mummies during their monthly session and they have expressed interest to go for a workshop and tuition for parents on how to support their children better in school. We are currently in the midst of linking the parents to teachers in the community who might be interested to work with the parents on this. Hopefully, through these sustained and consistent conversations, community members and parents are empowered to step up and co-organise next year's conversation on education.

Limitations

As this study was conducted only with the children of SCC members, there are limitations in terms of comparison with the larger Singapore community, especially when trying to understand neighbourhood effects.⁷ While this limitation was addressed by comparing SCC children's results with national statistics, such comparison was limited to secondary school streaming and PSLE results, and did not provide a breakdown by neighbourhood across Singapore. Although comparing across the three neighbourhoods under SCC revealed no significant differences in attendance or academic performance, this could be due to the neighbourhoods being similar to each other, rather than the lack of neighbourhood effects. Future studies could consider partnerships with schools (both within and outside of SCC boundaries) and the Ministry of Education in order to get a more diverse sample and allow for further comparison.

Another limitation was that the qualitative study did not take into account the outcome mapping prognosis of the interviewees. The interviews mainly focused on psychological and social factors, looking at an individual's own beliefs and motivations, as well as their relationship to their family, school and the community. However, there are other environmental factors to consider as well, such as the family's per capita income, their housing situation and the duration of poverty. These measures are taken into account during an outcome mapping exercise that SCC does with its members, but due to the nature of the interview, it is not clear how these factors could also play a part in influencing the child's school results. This presents an opportunity for future research that studies possible links between the factors captured by outcome mapping and school results.

In addition, the interview questions focused mainly on the factors that helped well performing students do well, rather than challenges that hinder academic performance of students with poorer performance. While this approach is in line with SCC's strengths based approach, it limits the amount of comparison that can be done between top performing students and poor performing students. This in turn makes it difficult to determine the extent to which self-motivation and social

⁷ There were 4 students in the sample living in other areas; however, this sample size is too small to draw any significant conclusions.

factors play a part since one does not know if these factors may also be common to poorer performing students. Future research can take a more holistic approach and interview students with poor performance as well, in addition to asking questions about challenges they faced and how they overcame or did not overcome them.

Finally, as this study is still in its early years, we do not know if the top scorers and most improved students will be able to maintain or further improve their results over time. Hence, we cannot tell if the factors that the interviewees mentioned will have sustained effects, or whether this is a once-off occurrence. For example, if students benefited greatly from a teacher's help, will their results still hold when they progress to the next level and possibly switch teachers? Therefore, it would be worth following up with these particular individuals in future years in order to understand the complexities and nuances of helping students in their academic performance.

Future Research

Based on the findings of this study, there are a few potential areas to explore further to improve our understanding.

Firstly, future research could explore critical moments where intervention can occur for the child, and who are potential partners able to spot such moments. During the interview, Izzah's teacher, Mr Wu, cited a time when she did not turn up in school, which was a turning point that allowed him to understand more about her situation and therefore be better able to partner with her and help her. By identifying such critical points, they will allow quick identification and early intervention before grades drop, which could prove very important during the transition years.

In addition, future research can also look at the impact of additional activities on school results. A number of interviewees cited certain programs that they took part in, whether tuition, extra academic help or co-curricular activities. However, it is unclear to what extent these may help or constitute an additional burden. For example, while Rajesh felt inspired by his co-curricular activity teacher in charge, Izzah requested to be taken out of tuition as the people there were not serious about studying. Hence, it would be beneficial to look into how much children gain from these activities in terms of equipping them with skills to help them in their

performance, as well as any links between co-curricular and academic performance.

Finally, future research can consider the effects of streaming at both the primary and secondary level. According to the cohort study, a third of students went over to the foundation stream from 2015 to 2016. From 2015's Primary 6 (Foundation) stream, none of them made it to the Express stream, suggesting that academic prospects are limited for these students. On the one hand, such a drop could affect a child's self-esteem negatively; on the other hand, it may also allow the child to learn at a more comfortable pace for themselves and hence improve their results. This change in pace has also been conjectured as a reason for students' better performance in secondary school. Thus, it would be good to look into both the quantitative and qualitative effects of getting restreamed into Foundation, and better understand the implications of streaming.

Conclusion

This project aimed to capture a profile of the academic performance of school-going children in SCC as indicated by school attendance and school results, track any trends as students progressed from one year to the next as indicated by the comparison between 2015 and 2016 performance, as well as explore the factors that contribute to good academic performance through qualitative interviews. These results were then shared with the community to spark conversations on how the results can help guide community efforts to improve child's results.

From quantitative analysis, we observe that SCC students generally have good attendance (at least 4 out of 5 days), and yet do not perform particularly well academically, especially in the area of Mathematics. In that subject, all cohorts mostly have a failing subject average, and the proportion of students from SCC who pass PSLE Mathematics is less than half the proportion for national statistics. Furthermore, performance tended to drop most significantly during the transition years of Primary 3, Primary 5 and Secondary 3. These findings highlight the particular subject and years of study that more focus should be placed on, in order to help students improve their academic performance.

The issue of streaming was also highlighted by the results. According to the cohort study, a third of students transitioning from Primary 5 to Primary 6 dropped from the Standard to Foundation stream, and out of the Primary 6 (Foundation) students in 2015, none of them made it to the Express stream in 2016.

Furthermore, for secondary school streaming, the SCC profile shows an inverted triangle of distribution, with the majority of students in the Normal (Technical) stream in contrast with majority of students in the Express stream for the national population. As the Normal (Technical) stream has a more vocational slant, this has implications for our students' future academic and career prospects. On the other hand, students also perform better at secondary school and it has been conjectured that streaming actually allows for better performance through learning at a more comfortable pace and level. As such, this should be an issue to be explored further to understand its nuances.

In the qualitative interviews, top scoring/most improved interviewees and their families shared the various characteristics on the individual, family, school and community level that helped them to succeed. Although the students came from varied backgrounds, some common elements were identified. These included having a concrete goal and a positive mindset, the support of caregivers in encouraging the child and enforcing a study routine and the presence of positive role models in the form of teachers, tutors and even classmates. With that in mind, these were presented as 'success ingredients' to the community through a series of conversations, in some cases having the interviewees themselves to share their experiences.

The response to these conversations was highly encouraging, indicating a willingness by the community to take ownership of their children's learning and education. These conversations allowed members to contribute their assets, whether in translation or producing slides etc., and also helped gather the opinions and experiences of the community in applying these success ingredients or even sharing their own, such as unique styles of discipline or use of digital media. In doing so, these conversations empower the community to recognise their own assets and abilities to help their children succeed in education, while also identifying networks and partners they can work with. Through such community engagement and partnerships, it is the hope that children in the community as a whole will be better able to perform academically, and in doing so, to embrace education as a transformational tool to get the younger generation out of the poverty cycle and prevent its reproduction down the line.

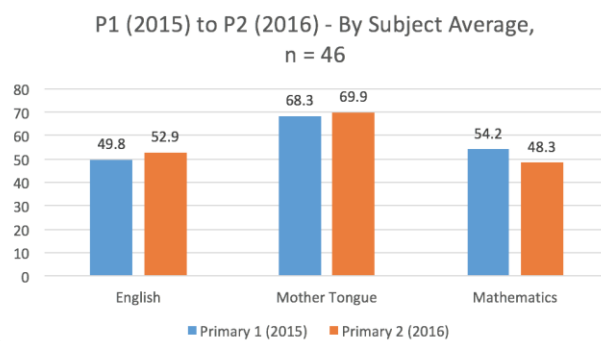
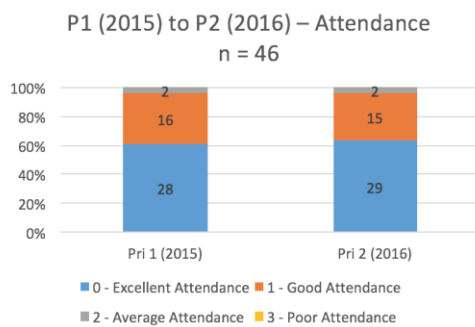
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Appendix 1: Results from Cohort Studies

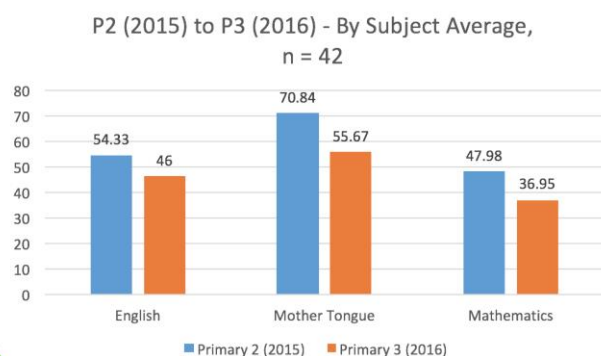
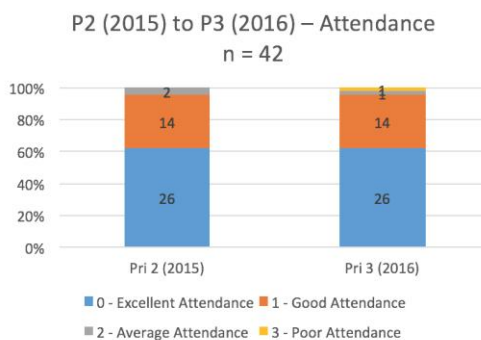
P1 (2015) to P2 (2016)



Insights:

- Attendance fairly constant
- Slight increases in subject averages from 2015 to 2016 for English and MT, but decrease for Mathematics

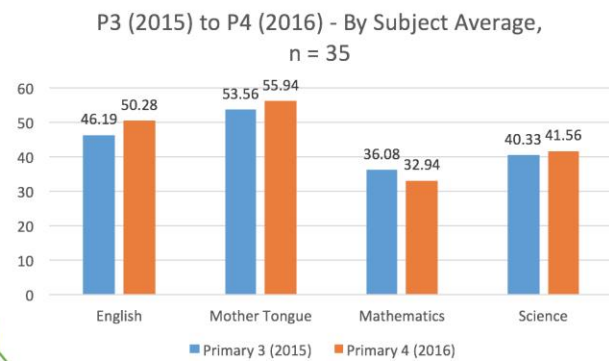
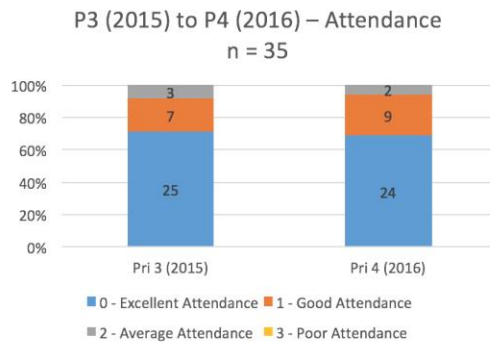
P2 (2015) to P3 (2016)



Insights:

- Attendance fairly constant, 1 dropped to Poor Attendance in 2016
- General decrease in subject averages from 2015 to 2016 for all three subjects.

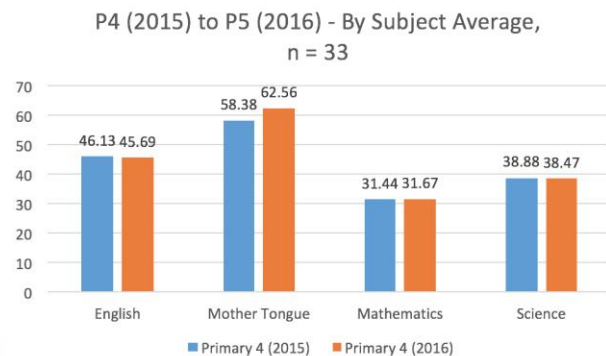
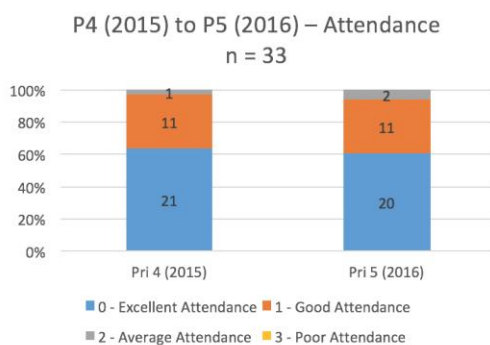
P3 (2015) to P4 (2016)



Insights:

- Attendance fairly constant
- General slight increase in all subject averages except for Maths from 2015 to 2016, small range of change (within +/- 5 range)

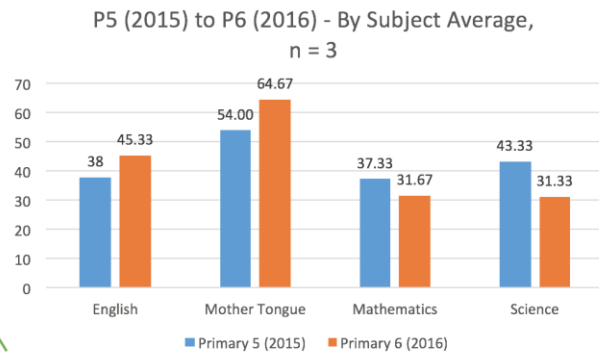
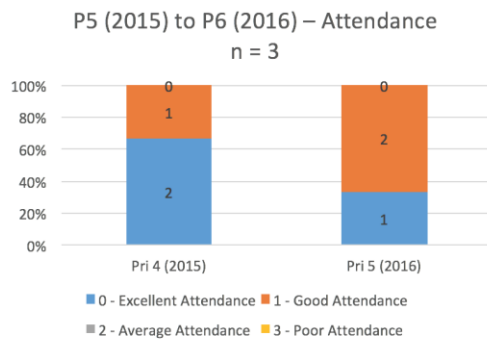
P4 (2015) to P5 (2016)



Insights:

- Attendance fairly constant
- Subject averages are fairly consistent from 2015 to 2016; slight increase in subject average for MT

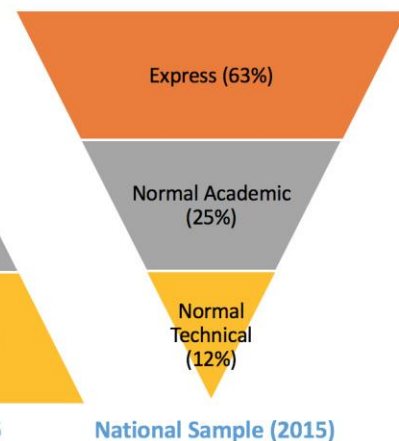
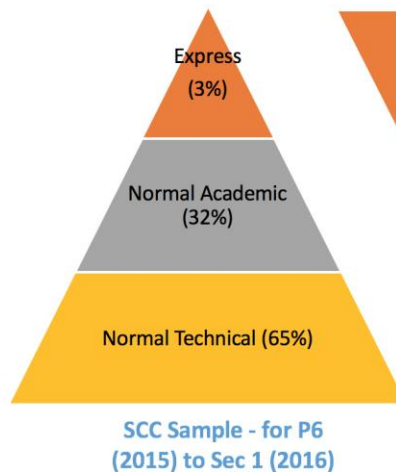
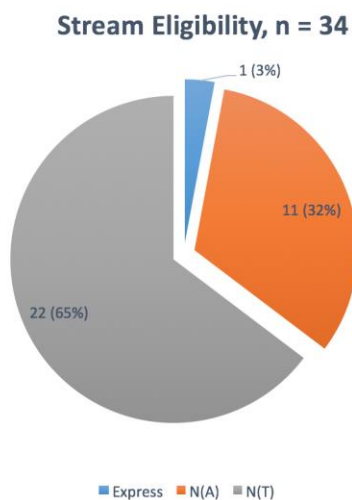
P5 (2015) to P6 (2016)



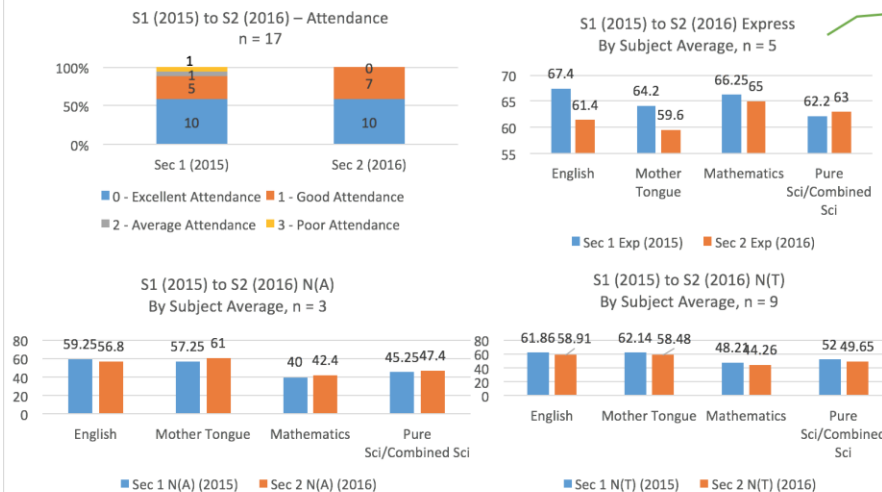
Insights:

- Attendance fairly constant among excellent and good attendance range – 1 dropped to Good Attendance from 2015 to 2016
- Increases in subject averages for English and MT from 2015 to 2016
- Decreases in subject average for Mathematics and Science

P6 (2015) to Sec 1 (2016)



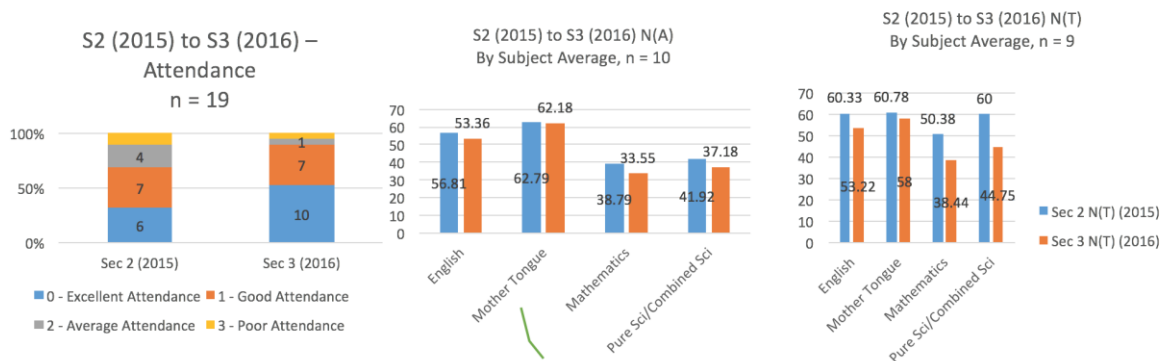
Sec 1 (2015) to Sec 2 (2016) – All Streams



Insights:

- General improvement of attendance: 1 jumped from poor to good attendance and 1 jumped from average to good attendance
- General decreases in subject averages (from 2015 to 2016) for Sec 1 – Sec 2 Express except for Science
- Slight increases in subject averages from 2015 to 2016 for all subjects for N(A) except for English
- Slight general decreases in subject averages for N(T) for all subjects

Sec 2 (2015) to Sec 3 (2016) – N(A) & N(T)



Insights:

- Attendance improved in general – decrease from 6 to 2 for the average and poor attendance group and increase from 13 to 17 for excellent and good attendance
- Decrease in subject averages from 2015 to 2016 for all subjects for both streams

Appendix 2: Qualitative Interview Questionnaire

FOR PARENT

Guiding Questions	Objective/Purpose
Family Background and Demographics	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many family members do you have? Tell me more about yourself and your family? (Prompt: What do you usually do? Job? Background of children?) 	<p>Warm-up</p> <p>Establish rapport</p>
Parent-Child Relationship	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell us more about your daily routine Use 3 words to describe your child and/or give 3 words to describe each of your child (Prompt: If you were to think of an animal to describe your child, which animal would it be? Why?) On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not close; 5 = very close), how close would you say you are with your child and/or children (if there are 3 kids in the family, get interviewee to rank relationship of all 3 kids) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do the numbers mean? What are some things you do with your child? What do you do to support your children in their studies? (Prompt: Do you do homework with your child? Do you send your child to school? How involved are you with your child and his/her schoolwork?) What are some things you do with child A that you do not do with child B? (and vice versa) Suppose (child's name) is sitting here, and we ask him/her what is his/her parent's expectations of you. What do you think your child would say? 	<p>Give interviewer an insight on the closeness of the parent-child relationship through the parent's routine</p> <p>3 words - give interviewer an insight to how the parent view his/her child</p> <p>Measure parent's expectation of child</p>

Child's Progress in School + Parent's Involvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do you think your child did in last year's school examinations? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a difference between last year's results and the year before? (Prompt: Was his/her performance in P4 better than in P3?) How do you feel towards your child's school results? In the past year, what do you think was the main reason that the child has done well in school? (Prompt: Eg. do homework together, go for tuition etc) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why do you do that? How do you feel about education? Why? 	<p>Starting off with thinking question</p> <p>Moving on to feeling question</p> <p>Behavioural question</p> <p>Ascertain motivation</p>
Family's Financial Background	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have to seek additional support for your child to do well in school? (Prompt: Tuition, homework help) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you send your child for these additional classes? How much do they cost? Do you need to get any additional resources for your child to do his/her work? (Prompt: Computer) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have a computer at home? If No, do you know how your child does his/her work? Does your child need any other resources to do well in school? (Prompt: encourage interviewee to elaborate) 	<p>Behavioural question</p> <p>Behavioural question</p>
Family's View on Community/Neighbourhood	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you think of your child's school? Is it a good school to you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you know how the teachers are like? 	<p>Starting off with thinking question</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Do you know about your child's friends? How are they like? (Prompt: do you think they are good company etc.)• If you feel that the school can do something additionally or better, what do you think that will be?• What do you think the school can stop doing so that your child can perform better in school?• Besides school, is there anyone or anything in the neighbourhood that helped your child do well in school last year/helped your child improve in school results last year?• Do you have good friends or neighbours in the neighbourhood that you can count on? Why or why not?• Suppose you moved out and live in another neighbourhood. Do you think that there will be a difference in your child's school results? Why or why not?	<p>Feeling question</p> <p>Visual question</p>
Moving Forward	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any other factors that result in your child's achievement/good progress that was not mentioned in this conversation? • Suppose we fast forward 20 years. Your child is successful. What is she doing? What is your family doing? Where is your family staying at? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ What are some dreams and aspirations you have for your child and your family? • Do you have any tips to share with other families? • If you could record a message for your child now, what would you say? 	<p>Checking question</p> <p>Visual question</p>
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FOR CHILD

Guiding Questions	Objective/Purpose
Family Background and Demographics	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me more about yourself and your family? (Prompt: how many siblings do you have? What are your parent's occupation?) • Do you enjoy school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ What makes you want to/don't want to go to school? • Use 3 words to describe yourself (Prompt: If you were to describe yourself to be an animal, what animal would you be? Why?) • Could you share with me more about your daily routine? Describe what you do each day – from the moment you wake up until the moment you sleep 	<p>Warm-up</p> <p>Establish rapport</p> <p>To tally with parent's 3 words</p> <p>To understand the child's day – find out whether there are significant influences in the child's life</p>
Progress in School	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do you think you fared in last year's school examinations? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Is there a difference between last year's results and the year before? (Prompt: Eg. P4 did better than P3) • How do you feel towards your school results? 	<p>Starting off with thinking question</p> <p>Feeling question</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific to doing homework and revision, do you have a routine for studying? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ If yes, could you describe your routine (Prompt: Like how you described your day to day a few minutes earlier) ◦ Did you implement any changes to your study methods/revision habits this year? ◦ What are your motivations for studying? ◦ What do you do when you don't feel like studying? 	<p>Behavioural question</p> <p>Behavioural question</p> <p>Ascertain motivation</p>
<p>Support Environment - Parent-Child Relationship</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use 3 words to describe your parent (Prompt: If you were to think of an animal to describe your parent, which animal would it be? Why?) • On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not close; 5 = very close), how close would you say you are with your mum/dad? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ What do the numbers mean? ◦ What are some things you do with your mum/dad? (Prompt: Does your parent do homework with you? Family outing?) • Does your mum/dad give you any pressure to do well in school? How? (Prompt: Give 'story' of how I had a friend who needed to get good results if not will get beaten when got home) • How does your mum/dad support you or motivated you to do well in school? Any stories/examples? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ How do you feel about your parent's support? (or lack thereof) 	<p>Give interviewer an insight to parent-child relationship</p> <p>Measure closeness of parent-child</p> <p>*Prone to social desirability bias – need to ask follow-up questions to get further insights</p> <p>Thinking question</p>

Support Environment - School/Neighbourhood	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think your school is a good school? Why or why not? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ How are the teachers? ◦ Do you have close friends in school? • Do you think going to school helps you to do well in exams? Why or why not? • If you feel that the school can do something better, what do you think that will be? • What do you think the school can stop doing so that you can perform better in school? • Is there anyone in the neighbourhood, or is there a specific friend that makes you like school more? • Do you have good friends or neighbours in the neighbourhood that you can count on? Why or why not? • Suppose you don't go to (insert school name). You have moved and go to another school. Do you think that there will be a difference in your school results? Why or why not? • Suppose you don't live in (insert neighbourhood name). You have moved house and lived in another neighbourhood. Do you think that there will be a difference in your school results? Why or why not? • Do you have anyone you admire/look up to in school or in your neighbourhood? 	<p>Starting off with thinking question</p> <p>Thinking question</p> <p>Feeling question</p> <p>Visual question</p> <p>Visual question</p> <p>Cross-checking question</p>
Moving Forward	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any other factors that result in your achievement/good progress that was not mentioned in this conversation? • Suppose we fast forward 20 years. You are successful. What are you doing? What is your family doing? Where is your family staying at? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ What are some dreams and aspirations you have? 	<p>Checking question</p> <p>Visual question</p>



- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you have any tips to share with other students?• If you could record a message for anyone in your life who has helped you to do well, what would you say? | |
|---|--|

Appendix 3: Informed Consent for Interviewees (Qualitative Section)

School Results Analysis Study - Qualitative Interview

Consent to Participate in Interview Sessions with Video and/or Audio-Recording

Dear _____,

South Central Community (SCC) would like to invite you to participate in a research study regarding school results of you/your children in the year 2016. SCC would like to learn more about your/your child's academic achievements and/or good progress so as to better support you/your family in your journey of aspiration to come out of poverty. You are our resource of knowledge and so with your full consent, we would like to have an interview chat with you to gather your story. Do support us by completing this acknowledgement form of your willingness to participate and of your awareness that the interview will be video and/or audio-recorded for purpose of information sharing with the community as well as to ensure accuracy in analysis. We greatly value your time and contribution to our study.

Thank you.

I/ We (the person(s) name(s) below), confirm that _____ (Name of Interviewer) has explained to me/ us the purpose of video/audio recording with me/us.

I/ We understand that:

1. This recording is strictly for the purposes of community sharing as well as to aid in understanding and analysing my/our situation which is an

important part of the research study to understand academic achievement/progress in school.

2. I/ We can review this recording after the session if we desire by informing the staff of our intention;
3. The Management and staff of this agency have undertaken to maintain strict confidentiality about my/our situation and this recording
4. This recording belongs to the Agency solely and I/ we have no right to demand that this recording be given to me/ us
5. My/ our written consent will be sought if the recording is to be used for purposes other than for internal analysis and presentation

On the basis of the above, I am/ we are therefore appending my/ our signature(s) below as endorsement of my/ our consent to video and/or audio recording.

Name of Member(s)/ Parent/ Guardian*	Signature	Date

*Parent/ Guardian is to provide consent to the recording if the client is below 18 years of age

AGENCY'S UNDERTAKING

I confirm that I have explained to the person(s) above of the purpose(s) of the informed consent for video and/or audio recording of the interview session(s). I undertake to observe the strict confidentiality required of me in accordance to my professional code of ethics and I shall observe all the above representations made to the client(s).



Name of Interviewer(s)	Signature(s)	Date

Appendix 4: Posters and Cards used during Community Conversations

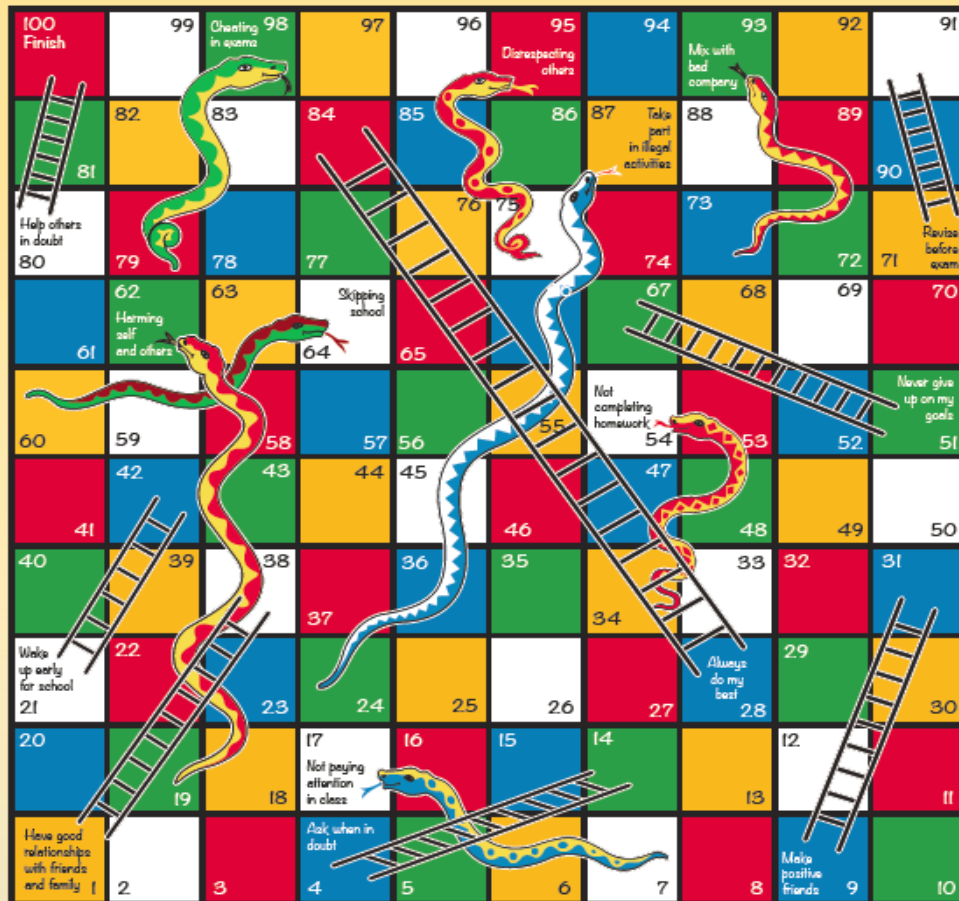


4.1 POSTER FOR AS A TOOL FOR CONVERSATION





SNAKES AND LADDERS



LEGEND

BUKIT HO SWEE

Learning Kampung @ SCCFSC
Date/Time: Flexible
Aim: Provide learning and homework support in various school subjects.
Contact: 6461 9200 (Irene)

PLAH (Project-Lend-A-Hand) @ SCCFSC
Date/Time: Upcoming run in June
Aim: Intensive tuition for PSLE subjects in English, Math and Science, provided by JBS International College.
One-time \$25 registration fee.
Contact: 6461 9200 (Pat)

Homework Cafe
Date/Time: Mon and Thurs, 5-6.30pm
Where: Kampong Delta Masjid
Aim: Provide learning support through homework guidance.
Contact: 6272 1750

HENDERSON

Nurture Reading Club @ Blk 91 Henderson
Date/Time: Saturdays, 12-1.30pm
Aim: Enhance English fluency
Contact: hendersonwellprog@gmail.com

Nurture Maths
Date/Time: Saturdays, 2-3pm
Where: Henderson Care Centre
Aim: Enhance numeracy knowledge
Contact: hendersonwellprog@gmail.com

LENGKOK BAHRU

Tuition Programme by Teacher Seok Bee
Date/Time: Tue and Thurs (7.30-9pm),
Sat (1.30-4.30pm)
Venue: Leng Kee CC, Level 3 Strathmore
Aim: Help participants with homework.
Contact: 6461 9200 (Lay Hoon)










GENERAL

Mendaki Collaborative Tuition Programme
Date/Time: Various dates & timings
(For details, check <http://mta.mendaki.org.sg>)
Aim: Offer quality and affordable tuition to primary school students of all races and religion.
Contact: 6245 5555



















4.2 CARDS USED BY PARENTS DURING THE CONVERSATIONS

<p>F1</p>  <p>I AM CLOSE TO MY CHILD.</p> <p>SAYA RAPAT DENGAN ANAK SAYA.</p>	<p>F2</p>  <p>HOMEWORK HELP</p> <p>BANTUAN KERJA SEKOLAH</p>	<p>F3</p>  <p>GO TO SCHOOL EVERYDAY</p> <p>HADIR KE SEKOLAH SETIAP HARI</p>
<p>F4</p>  <p>SCHOOL-PLAY ROUTINE</p> <p>JADUAL TETAP TAPI SEIMBANG</p>	<p>F5</p>  <p>REMOVE DISTRACTIONS</p> <p>JAUHKAN GANGGUAN</p>	<p>F6</p>  <p>DISCIPLINE AND GOOD VALUES</p> <p>DISIPLIN DAN AJAR NILAI-NILAI BAIK</p>
<p>F7</p>  <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>S1</p>  <p>TALKING TO CHILD'S TEACHERS</p> <p>BERBUAL DENGAN GURU ANAK</p>	<p>S2</p>  <p>GOOD TEACHERS IN SCHOOL</p> <p>GURU YANG BERKEBOLEHAN</p>



<p style="text-align: right;">S3</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>FRIENDS IN SCHOOL</p> <p>KAWAN-KAWAN DI SEKOLAH</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">S4</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p style="text-align: right;">S5</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p style="text-align: right;">N1</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>PROTECT FROM NEGATIVE INFLUENCE</p> <p>JAUHKAN DARI PENGARUH NEGATIF</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">N2</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>CONCERNED NEIGHBOURS</p> <p>JIRAN YANG PRIHATIN</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">N3</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>TUITION</p> <p>TUISYEN</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">F8</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p style="text-align: right;">N4</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p style="text-align: right;">N5</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

4.3 CARDS USED IN THE CHILDREN'S SECTION

<p>F1</p>  <p><input type="checkbox"/> I AM CLOSE TO MY PARENT(S)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MY PARENT(S) ALWAYS MAKE SURE I AM SAFE</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I ALWAYS TALK TO MY PARENTS</p>	<p>F2</p>  <p>I WANT TO BE A _____</p> <p>WHEN I GROW UP</p>	<p>F3</p>  <p><input type="checkbox"/> I GO TO SCHOOL DAILY</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I ALWAYS TRY MY BEST IN SCHOOL</p>
<p>F4</p>  <p><input type="checkbox"/> I COMPLETE MY HOMEWORK EVERY DAY</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I GET HELP FOR MY HOMEWORK</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MY PARENTS HELP ME WITH MY HOMEWORK</p>	<p>F5</p>  <p><input type="checkbox"/> MY PARENTS MAKE SURE I HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO EAT, SLEEP, PLAY AND STUDY</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MY PARENTS TEACH ME GOOD VALUES</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MY PARENTS KEEP ME AWAY FROM DISTRACTIONS</p>	<p>S1</p>  <p>MY FAVOURITE TEACHER IN SCHOOL IS _____.</p>
<p>S2</p>  <p><input type="checkbox"/> MY TEACHERS AND PARENTS TALK TO EACH OTHER</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MY TEACHER IS CONCERNED AND ALWAYS ENCOURAGE ME</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MY TEACHER HELP ME UNDERSTAND MY SUBJECTS BETTERBETTER</p>	<p>S3</p>  <p>I HAVE GOOD FRIENDS IN SCHOOL. WE ALWAYS HELP EACH OTHER OUT. THEY ARE,</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>N1</p>  <p><input type="checkbox"/> I DON'T TALK TO STRANGERS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I KNOW THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT ME IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I GO FOR TUITION IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD</p>