

Chapter 8

Improving student outcomes



“Widening access to quality and affordable education is the priority of this Government and my Ministry. We must raise our standards to be internationally comparable while ensuring the achievement gap between the educated and less-educated is closed. The importance of the education system cannot be overemphasised given its role in strengthening the competitiveness of our nation and in building *1Malaysia*. For example, to contribute towards *1Malaysia*, the status of national schools must be elevated such that they become the school of choice for a broader segment of Malaysians. This chapter lays out our initial plans for what will become broader reforms to the National Education System over time. I am personally committed to ensure that the ambitious targets summarised at the end of this chapter are achieved, and seek the support and assistance of all parents, teachers and administrators to work with me and my team to make this happen”

Tan Sri Dato’ Haji Muhyiddin bin Mohd Yassin, Minister of Education



Malaysia has made enormous strides in its education system over the past 50 years. Our adult literacy rate is now above 92%.²⁵ We have also achieved universal primary enrolment, and among developing countries we have one of the fastest growth rates in secondary school enrolment.²⁶

But we cannot be complacent. Malaysia’s student outcomes have deteriorated compared to countries like Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea, as discussed in Chapter 2. The gap within Malaysian student outcomes is also widening, e.g., about 20% of Malaysian students failed to meet the minimum TIMSS benchmarks for Maths and Science in 2007, compared to about 5–7% in 2003. This situation is cause for concern, as higher education levels correlate consistently with long-term economic growth. Unless we push ourselves to raise the bar, Malaysia risks being left behind in education today and in competitiveness tomorrow.

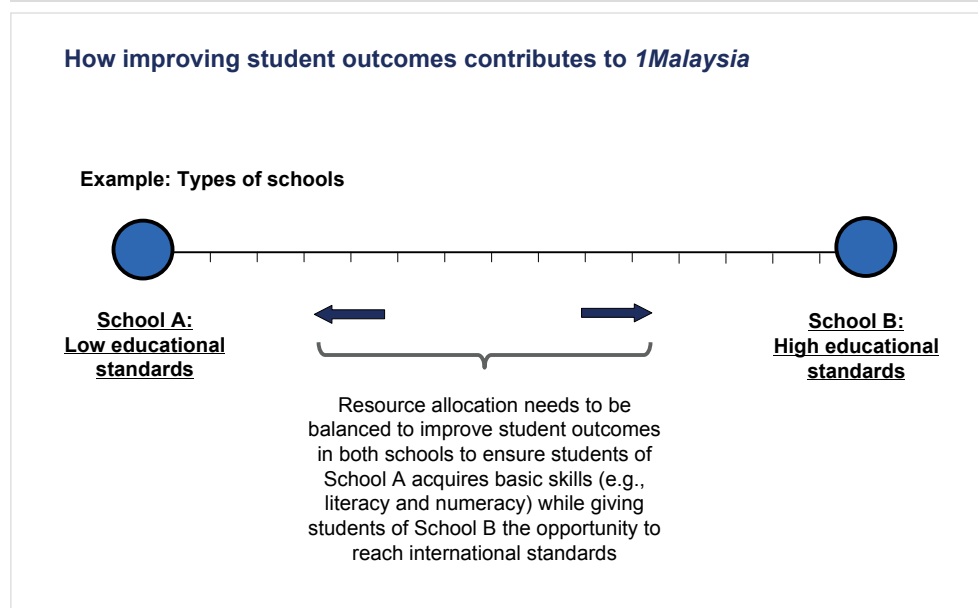
25 UNDP Human Development Index, Malaysia, 2008

26 UNESCO, 2005. Education Trends in Perspective

The aspiration of the Education NKRA, therefore, is to improve student outcomes across Malaysia's school system and to enable access to quality education for all students. Improving student outcomes is crucial to developing a more competitive workforce as Malaysia pushes towards becoming a developed nation by 2020. And making quality education more accessible will ensure more Malaysians gain the chance to improve their standard of living. Achieving universally high outcomes in our educational system is only possible by ensuring that schools deliver high-quality instruction to each and every child.

Improving student outcomes with limited resources necessarily involves making trade-offs between competing interests or polarities. Therefore, it is crucial that we manage these polarities in an equitable manner while trying to maximise the benefit to the overall student population. For example, in the polarity diagram in Figure 8.1, resources should be used effectively to deliver improved outcomes and divided equitably between schools of different educational standards to benefit all students irrespective of their starting point. This equitable division would allow all students to gain the basic skills required to be a productive member of society while also providing the opportunity for exceptional students to realise their full potential.

Figure 8.1



Based on the experiences of the world's top performing school systems, there are four imperatives to improving student outcomes:

- Ensure every child succeeds: Set the same high expectations for all students (regardless of background) and provide systematic help and support to children who fall behind
- Hold schools accountable for changes in student outcomes: Provide autonomy to schools (e.g., in personnel management) in exchange for significantly improved student outcomes
- Invest in great leaders for every school: Invest heavily in principals and head teachers as the primary drivers of change via rigorous selection, extensive training and robust performance management based on student outcomes
- Attract and develop top teachers: Increase attractiveness of the profession to recruit the most talented people, enhance quality of practical training and put in place rigorous performance management and continuous professional development

Initiatives undertaken by some of the top-performing educational systems

Ensuring every child succeeds

Great educational systems are those that ensure that every child succeeds. They do so first by setting the same high expectations for all students regardless of their background, and secondly, by recognising that some students – for instance, those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds – require more support to reach common benchmarks.

In Finland, schools provide additional one-on-one or small group tuition to support those who fall behind for whatever reason (special education). Special education teachers receive an additional year of training and work with a support team – psychologists, nurses and special needs advisors – to provide comprehensive support to students.

In the USA, the Knowledge is Power Programme (KIPP) charter schools are privately-managed, publicly-funded schools, which are delivering significant changes in student outcomes amongst low-income students. These schools deliberately over-invest, with students spending 60% more time in school through longer school days, Saturday classes and summer school. In a country where less than 20% of low-income students go on to college, 80% of students from KIPP schools have done so.

Holding schools accountable for changes in student outcomes

The best performing systems are those that set high expectations for each school in terms of changes to student outcomes, monitor performance against those expectations and provide appropriate support whenever those expectations are not met.

Examples are systems like those in New York City and Alberta, Canada. New York City's schools department assesses schools by changes in student outcomes, with additional weight accorded to gains made by students from hard-to-teach sub-segments. Alberta's schools department uses a sophisticated accountability system that looks at a wide range of factors (e.g., student and parental satisfaction) in addition to changes in student performance in province-wide assessment tests. Crucially, neither system simply measures performance, they both actively manage it. These systems require struggling schools to take clear measures to turn around performance within a defined time frame and provide appropriate support to increase the school's chances of success.

Investing in great leaders for every school

The best systems leverage their principals as drivers of change by implementing a rigorous selection and training process and focusing each principal's time on instructional leadership.

In Boston, candidates for principal go through a fellowship programme that includes an apprenticeship component and training courses focused on management techniques and instructional leadership. Promotion is not guaranteed, but dependent on candidates demonstrating the required competencies to succeed. Once promoted, Boston's new principals are further supported by a series of programmes such as an induction workshop aimed at preparing them for their first two to three weeks in the school, on-going mentoring by an experienced principal with a complementary set of skills and just-in-time seminars to cover specific problem areas as requested.

Attracting and developing top teachers

Top systems attract and admit only the best candidates into teaching, continuously develop them in school-based settings and develop a strong performance-based culture. Examples include

- Attracting and admitting only the best: Many provide attractive salaries to draw their best and brightest citizens to teaching. South Korea is an extreme case – salaries start high and rise to a maximum that is two-and-a-half times higher than the average maximum teacher salary in the OECD. Higher salaries appear to have drawn higher quality people to become teachers. In top systems like Hong Kong and Singapore, only the top third of each cohort are accepted to be candidates for the teaching profession.
- Developing teachers in school-based setting: Japan leverages an intense training programme for first-year teachers, during which trainees develop practical teaching skills. Trainee teachers work full-time in schools and during their first year are provided with up to two days of one-on-one coaching and support every week from guidance teachers.
- Developing a performance culture: To receive a teaching license in New Zealand, teachers must receive satisfactory reviews from their principals during their first two years of teaching.

Our aspiration to transform the education system consists of a broader set of plans and initiatives which is described in section 8.7. However as entry points to this overall programme, we will initially focus on these imperatives:

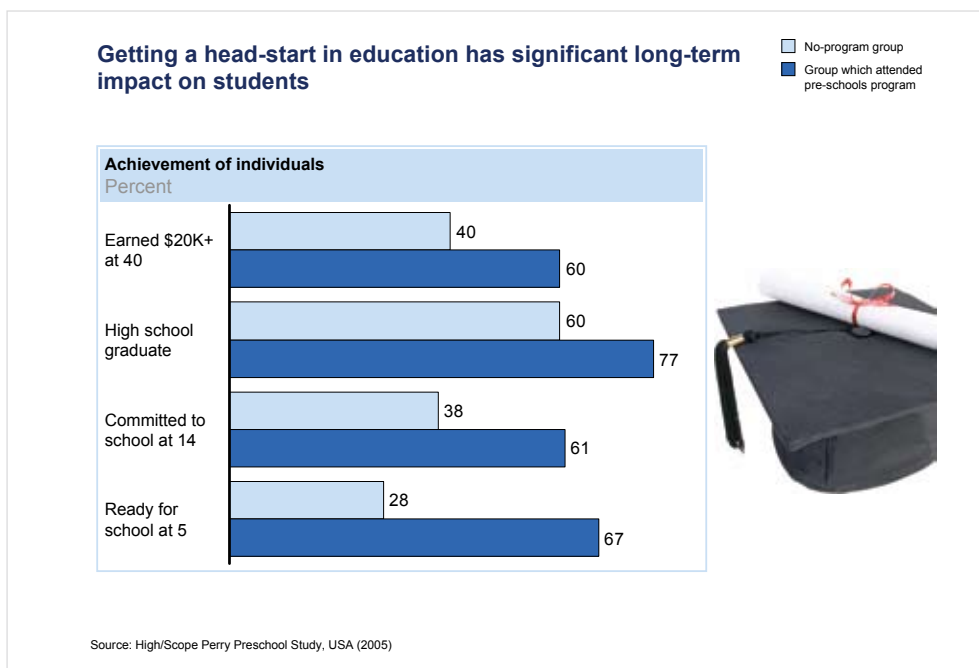
- Ensure every child succeeds:
 - Increase the pre-school enrolment rate to 87% (of both 4+ and 5+ year-olds) by 2012, while ensuring the education provided is of the highest quality
 - Ensure all children have basic literacy and numeracy skills after three years of primary school education by 2012
- Hold schools accountable: Develop 100 High Performing Schools (HPS) by 2012
- Invest in great leaders: Put in place performance based management by offering head teachers and principals a new deal

8.1 Pre-schools: Increase the enrolment rate of both 4+ and 5+ year-olds and improve the quality of the system

The importance of pre-school education in giving children a head start once in primary school is well documented. According to UNESCO, early childhood education plays a vital role in developing a child's mind and helps reduce existing and future disadvantages.²⁷ Research in the USA found that children who attended a pre-school programme were more committed to education and earned higher incomes in later years (Figure 8.2).

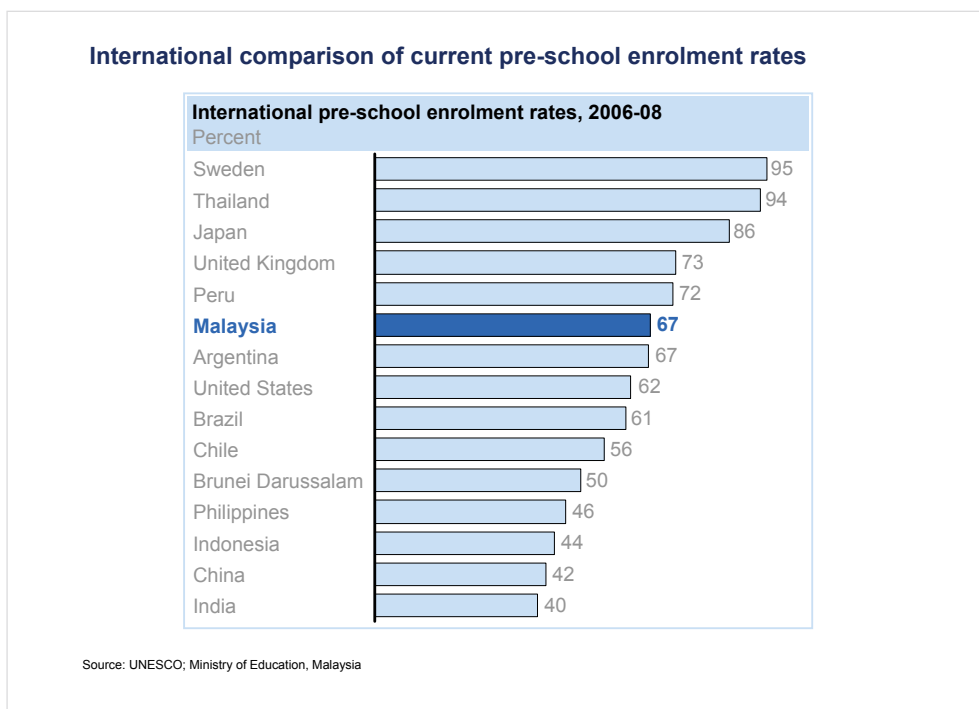
27 UNESCO's Education For All Monitoring Report, 2008

Figure 8.2



Given the importance of pre-school education and the scope for Malaysia to further increase its rate of enrolment, which currently stands at 67% for children aged four and five (Figure 8.3), we designated pre-school education a focus area under the Education NKRA.

Figure 8.3



To achieve higher enrolment rates and a better quality of pre-school education, we identified seven areas to strengthen the governance and delivery of high-quality pre-school education.

1. **Establish a National Committee on Pre-School Education with a Pre-School Division to govern all pre-school providers.** Its role would be to develop pre-school education policies for government and registered private pre-school providers (including curriculum, qualification requirements, training and evaluation), coordinate between all preschool providers and /or agencies and evaluate preschool educational outcomes to determine future policy direction. Chaired by the Ministry of Education (MOE), permanent committee members will comprise the Director General of Education, the heads of other major government pre-school providers, which are Jabatan Kemajuan Masyarakat (KEMAS) and JPNIN as well as the head of the Private Education Division of the MOE.
2. **Roll-out in January 2010 the National Pre-School curriculum standard (NPCS),** which was developed in collaboration with the private sector. Highlights of the NPCS include the following
 - Incorporates principles of holistic education and is oriented towards learning outcomes
 - Ensures that teaching and learning takes into account the different backgrounds of students
 - Defines the use of Malay, English, Tamil and Mandarin as instructional languages
 - Includes activities to foster understanding of different races and cultural activities

The standardised pre-school curriculum standard was an initiative which was particularly well received by visitors to the Education booth during the Open Days.

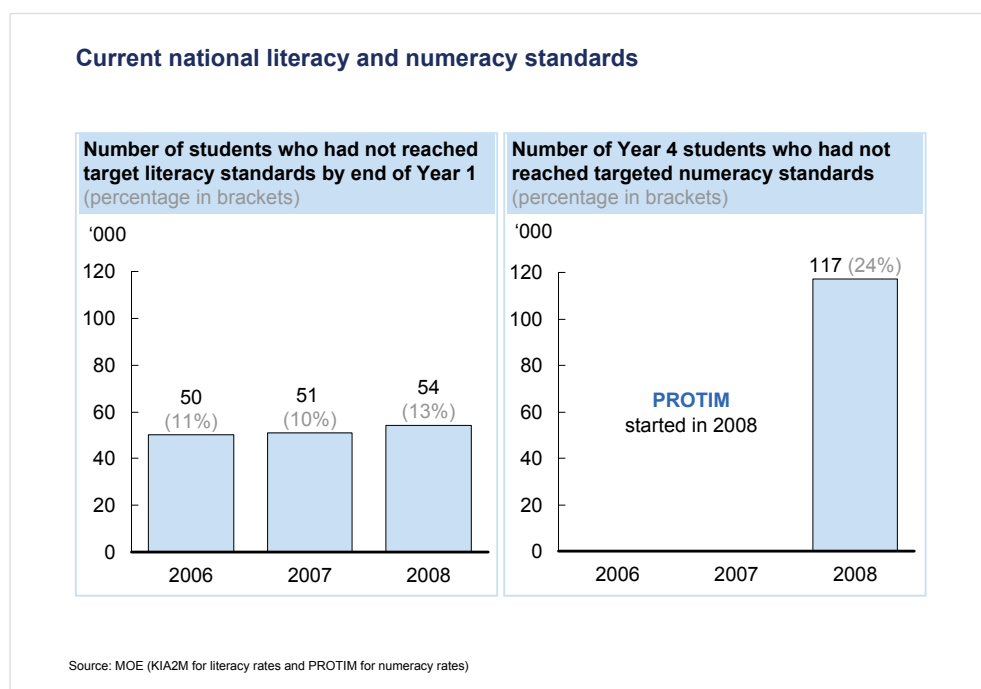
3. **Harmonise the support of students attending government pre-schools.** This would include equalising per capita grants across the pre-schools provided by KEMAS, JPNIN and MOE and increasing meal grants to compensate for price inflation in recent years.
4. **Improve the quality of pre-school teachers and teacher assistants.** Targeted training programmes will be offered to both teacher and teacher assistants to improve the skills of approximately 30,000 existing and new staff over the next three years. For newly hired teachers and teacher assistants, the minimum qualification requirements will be elevated to graduate and Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia level, respectively. In addition, we will develop a new framework for pre-school excellence, detailing the outcome based targets we expect pre-schools to achieve.
5. **Increase the number of pre-school classes,** in particular for children aged 4+. Based on targeted enrolment rates and current capacity, the number of additional classes required is approximately 10,000. We will work together with the private sector to achieve this additional capacity.
6. **Increase public-private partnerships in pre-school education.** New incentives and subsidies will be offered to private pre-school providers, in particular in urban poor and rural areas. In exchange, private pre-schools will adhere to the standards set by the National Committee on Pre-School Education, including outcome-based quality targets.

7. **Develop a national pre-school information system** to collate both administrative information, such as location of the school and particulars of student and personnel, as well as performance related data. The availability of such information is pivotal to the work of the National Committee on Pre-School Education, so that it can monitor and evaluate pre-school education and develop new policies built on a transparent fact base.

8.2 Literacy and numeracy: All children²⁸ should have acquired basic literacy and numeracy skills after three years of education

This is an ambitious target as even for adults, fewer than 30 countries have a literacy rate of 100%. However improving literacy and numeracy rates is very important. In 2008, there were more than 54,000 students in Year-1 (about 13% of total Year-1 population) who did not meet targeted literacy skills (Figure 8.4) and an estimated 117,000 (24%) students in Year-4 who did not meet targeted numeracy skills.

Figure 8.4

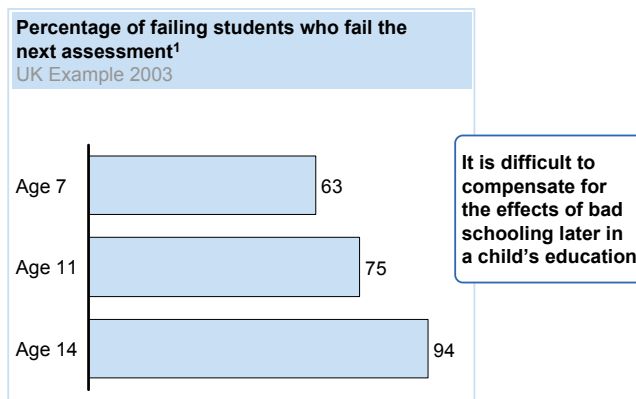


Second, research by the MOE reveals that one factor that contributes to drop-out rates is the inability of students to cope with the syllabus being taught. In 2008, almost 32,000 students dropped out of school at various stages. We expect that if we can give children a good grasp of basic literacy and numeracy skills early in life they will be less likely to drop out of school. Starting early is crucial as it becomes harder to compensate for deficiencies in literacy and numeracy skills as a child grows up (Figure 8.5). Failure is in fact cumulative.

28 Children with learning disabilities will be placed in a special education programme with separate targets

Figure 8.5

Failure is cumulative, quality of education is particularly critical early in a student's career



¹ Students not meeting target assessment standards

Source: Department for Education and Skills (UK)

Finally, being literate and numerate will enable our children to be more productive and participate fully in their community and wider society.

Defining basic literacy and numeracy

Literacy is defined as the ability to read, write and understand words and simple and complex sentences in Bahasa Malaysia and to apply that knowledge in daily learning and communication.²⁹

Numeracy is defined as the ability to read, write, count and arrange numbers up to 1,000, be competent in mathematical operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, and be able to apply these in money, time and length operations.³⁰

8.2.1 Strategy to achieve literacy and numeracy targets

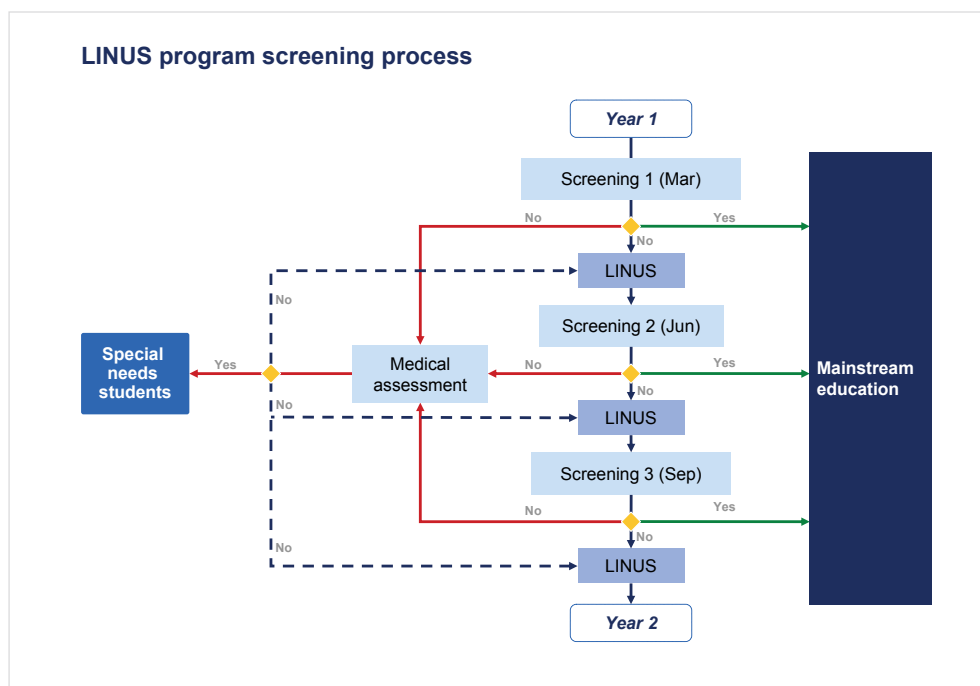
To achieve this ambitious target, we have developed a Literacy and Numeracy programme (LINUS) to ensure students acquire basic literacy (in Bahasa Malaysia) and numeracy skills. It focuses on all the main levers to improve a child's literacy and numeracy skills and is described as follows:

- **Screening process:** Student screening will be done three times a year in March, June and September to help identify those who do not meet the relevant standards. Students will then be placed either into the LINUS programme or into a Special Education programme if they have a learning disability. Details of the screening process are shown in Figure 8.6.

²⁹ Based on UNESCO's definition

³⁰ Based on benchmarks from USA and Canada

Figure 8.6



- **Teaching and learning modules:** New literacy and numeracy modules for Year-1 to Year-3 students are being developed. These are different from previous remedial modules that either focused only on literacy skills or only on students in Year-4 to Year-6. In addition, the modules will be improved by sequencing easier-to-grasp concepts earlier while emphasising the application of the concepts being learned.
- **Teachers' training:** Given the shortage of teachers with expertise in teaching basic literacy and numeracy, intensive training of teachers will take place so that they can effectively deliver the learning modules. Between November 2009 and February 2010, close to 17,000 teachers will be trained.
- **Building commitment of all stakeholders:** Awareness programmes and activities will be organised for state education departments, district education departments, head teachers, Parent-teacher associations and members of the public. This will help them understand their respective roles in the LINUS programme and gain their support. These sessions were kicked-off in December 2009 and January 2010.
- **Monitoring and oversight:** Intensive monitoring and supervision will be conducted on roughly the bottom 10% of schools by the officers in the state and district education departments and the MOE's Jemaah Nazir dan Jaminan Kualiti division. Reports on the results of the monitoring will then be produced twice in 2010 to track the progress of children in the programme.
- **Expert facilitators at the district level:** Facilitators will be hired to support the literacy and numeracy teachers in schools and be attached to the district education departments. Apart from coaching and mentoring the LINUS programme teachers, they will help the schools develop tailored strategies based on results of the screening test to address specific literacy and numeracy issues. In addition, they will also act as a link between the schools and the district education departments and the MOE.

8.3 High performing schools: Develop HPS and lift the performance of all schools


High Performing Schools (HPS) are defined as schools with ethos, character and a unique identity that enable students to excel in all aspects of education. These schools have strong work cultures which strive for continuous development in addition to being able to compete in the international arena.

We decided to include HPS as part of the Education NKRA to raise their quality, create places for the very brightest students and develop a model for other schools to emulate. We will raise the quality of the best performing education institutions by increasing their level of autonomy in running the school and requiring an increased degree of accountability for student outcomes in return. These world-class schools will then become a place for the brightest students, those who meet the highest international standards and who will move on to the best institutions of higher learning and graduate to lead their professions. Moreover, these schools will act as role models for other schools and provide them with support to make this journey through a coaching and mentoring network between schools.

8.3.1 Criteria for HPS

Before a school is awarded HPS status, it will need to meet stringent criteria that take into account its academic achievement, strength of its alumni, international recognition, network and linkages with external entities. Details of these criteria are listed in Figure 8.7.

Figure 8.7

HPS are Malaysia's best schools that are designated upon meeting stringent requirements		
Excellent academic achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum average score of 80% based on<ul style="list-style-type: none">GPS score (70% of weight)Verified SQEM score (30% of weight)	
Towering personalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Track record of developing influential and successful individuals (e.g., ministers, sportsmen, activists)For newer schools, clear aspiration to nurture leaders	
National and international awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Participation in and achievements at national and international competitions	
Linkages with institutions of higher learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Linkages with universities for programs like credit transfer, joint action research, sharing of facilities and amenities	
Strong network	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Strong networks with local and international schools (e.g. staff, student exchange programmes), community, public and private organisations	
Nationally and internationally benchmarked	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Used as a national benchmark and has been benchmarked against international standards (e.g., PISA, TIMSS)	

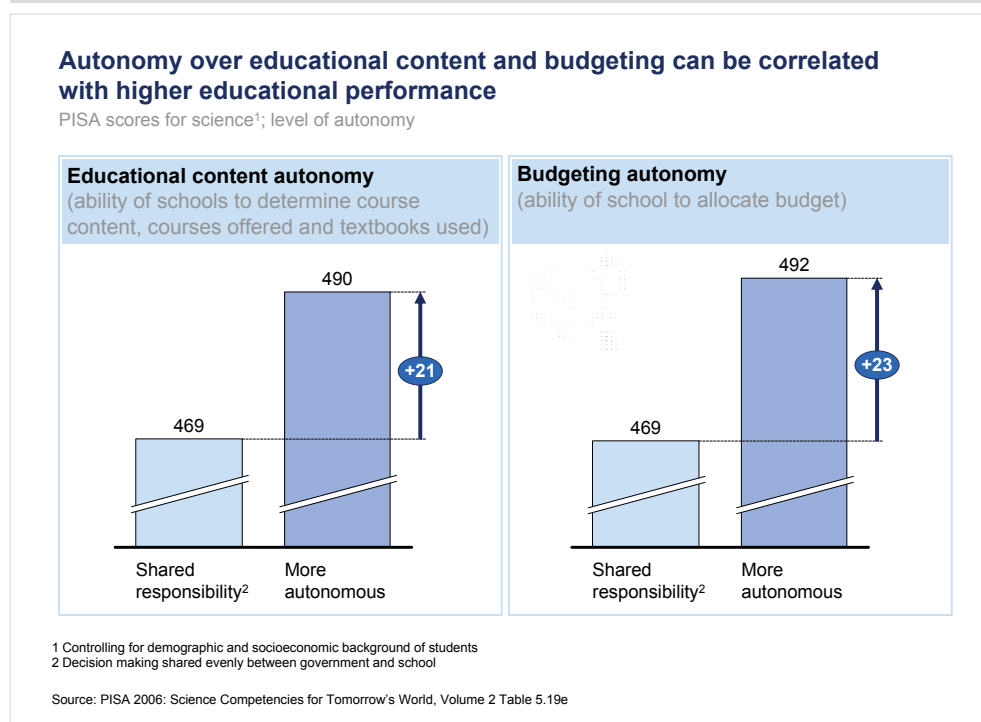
8.3.2 Incentives and responsibilities of HPS

HPS will be rewarded with benefits aimed at allowing them to excel further and reach even higher performance levels. However, status also comes with a responsibility to share knowledge and expertise with other schools to lift their performance through mentoring networks, teacher attachment and student exchange programmes.

Increased autonomy in decision-making: HPS will be given flexibility in adapting curriculum and instruction methods as well as over selection and redeployment of teachers (if performance is unsatisfactory) and allocation of funds. Studies have found that an increased level of autonomy is associated with an increased level of school performance (Figure 8.8).

Concerns over imprudent spending will be addressed by ensuring that fiscal autonomy is tightly linked to outcomes. The measures include putting in place financial guidelines to prevent imprudent use of funds (e.g., arms-length transactions with service providers), clearly defining performance targets, making the schools accountable for the use of resources and implementing strict remedial measures if HPS fail to meet performance targets.

Figure 8.8



Financial incentives for schools, school leaders, teachers and non-academic staff: These incentives consist of an annual allocation of RM 700,000 per school and RM 1,000 per person in secondary schools and RM 700 per person in primary schools, spanning school leaders, teachers and non-academic staff.

Greater range of options for human capital development: These options include sabbaticals for head teachers or principals and a wider range of professional development programmes tailored to individual needs.

Allowance for high achieving students to advance faster through the education system: Parents of top-performing students will be given the option of allowing their child to complete the relevant syllabus in a shorter time period. These students could bypass Year-2 by covering 50% of its syllabus in Year-1 and 50% in Year-3.

8.3.3 The inaugural batch of HPS for 2010

Based on the criteria described in Section 8.3.1, the inaugural batch of 20 HPS has been identified as shown in Figure 8.9.

Figure 8.9

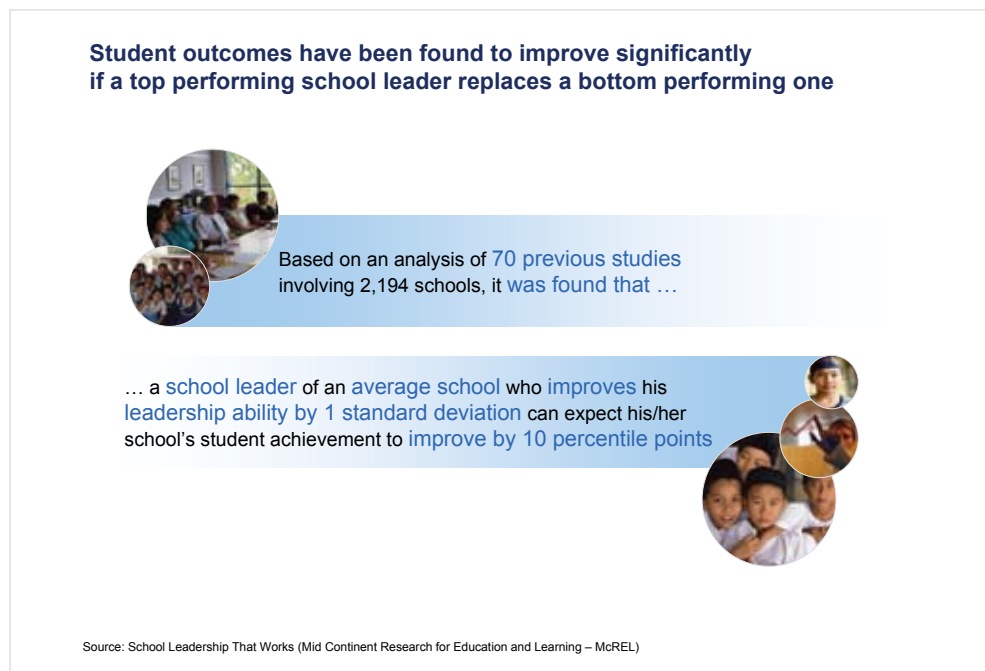
The inaugural batch of 20 HPS has been carefully selected

SECONDARY SCHOOLS			PRIMARY SCHOOLS		
Bil	Name of school	State	Bil	Name of school	State
1	Kolej Melayu Kuala Kangsar	Perak	1	SK Seri Bintang Utara	WP Kuala Lumpur
2	Sekolah Seri Puteri, Cyberjaya	Selangor	2	SK Zainab 2	Kelantan
3	Sekolah Sultan Alam Shah	Putrajaya	3	SK Bandar Uda 2	Johor
4	Kolej Tengku Khurshiah	Negeri Sembilan	4	SK Bukit Damansara	WP Kuala Lumpur
5	SMK (P) St. George	Pulau Pinang	5	SK Convent Kota	Perak
6	Kolej Islam Sultan Alam Shah	Selangor	6	SK Taman Tun Dr. Ismail 1	WP Kuala Lumpur
7	Sekolah Dato Abdul Razak	Negeri Sembilan			
8	SMK Aminuddin Baki	WP Kuala Lumpur			
9	Sekolah Tun Fatimah	Johor			
10	SM Sultan Abdul Halim	Kedah			
11	SMK (P) Sri Aman	Selangor			
12	SMK Sultanah Asma	Kedah			
13	SMS Tuanku Syed Putra	Perlis			
14	SMS Muzaffar Shah	Melaka			

8.4 New deal for head teachers and principals: Significantly improve the performance of head teachers and principals via performance management

To upgrade our school system significantly, we must invest heavily in head teachers and principals as the primary drivers of change. Research has found that an improvement in the performance of head teachers and principals has a significant positive impact on student outcomes (Figure 8.10). Head teachers and principals play an active role in developing their teachers and planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and learning activities in their schools. They also ensure that the school environment is conducive for learning by reducing external pressures and interruptions and establishing an orderly, supportive environment both inside and outside of classrooms.

Figure 8.10




The new performance management approach (new deal) for head teachers and principals that will commence in academic year 2010 will have the following characteristics:

- **Applicability:** This new deal will apply to head teachers and principals of all government schools in Malaysia. This includes the following types of primary and secondary schools – Sekolah Kebangsaan, Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan, Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan, Mission schools, Model Khas, Cluster schools, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan, Sekolah Berasrama Penuh, Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan and Sekolah Teknik dan Vokasional.
- **Performance measurement:** Performance of the schools will be based on a composite score consisting of 70% of the Grade Point Average and 30% of the Standard for Quality Education in Malaysia (SQEM). The Grade Point Average in turn is based on the school's performance in public examinations – UPSR, PMR, SPM and STPM. SQEM is a self-evaluation tool measuring four performance dimensions – vision and mission, organisational management, educational programme management and student accomplishment.
- **Transparency in school performance:** Performance of all 9,900 government schools will be ranked on a yearly basis and published from 2010 onwards (Figure 8.11). By publishing this information we hope to encourage engagement with the public and ensure that parents know how schools actually perform. Transparency will also motivate the schools to raise their level of performance.

Figure 8.11

School rankings will be published after 2009 academic year results have been released

ILLUSTRATIVE



School Name	GPS	SKPM	2008	
	2008	2008	Composite	Rank
SK A	1.21	94%	94%	
SK B	1.25	89%	92%	2
SJK C	1.33	94%	92%	3
SK D	1.35	93%	92%	4
SK E	1.39	95%	92%	5
SK F	1.43	97%	92%	6
SK G	1.44	80%	92%	7
SK H	1.44	96%	91%	8
SK I	1.44	96%	91%	9
SK J	1.49	99%	91%	10
SK K	1.44	96%	91%	11
SK L	1.50	98%	91%	12
SJK M	1.50	98%	91%	13
SK N	1.20	81%	91%	14
SJK O	1.00	68%	90%	15
SK P	1.47	95%	90%	16
SK Q	1.52	97%	90%	17
SK R	1.50	96%	90%	18
SK S	1.54	98%	90%	19
SK T	1.25	81%	90%	20

- **Eligibility for reward:** Based on a simulation of past performance, it is estimated that approximately 2% of head teachers and principals will be eligible for the reward under this programme. The eligibility criteria is:
 - A specified target composite score or target improvement in their performance rankings. This would give head teachers and principals a chance to receive the reward regardless of their starting point; even those with lower starting positions will be able to receive the reward if they show significant improvement in their rankings.
 - Annual Appraisal Report (LNPT) score higher than 90
 - Unqualified financial audit report from the state's education department
 - Free from disciplinary actions
 - Achieves school literacy and numeracy targets (for primary schools)
- **Rewards for head teachers and principals:** Both financial and non-financial rewards will be given to those who exceed targets. These consist of a payment of RM 7,500, accelerated promotion and a Certificate of Recognition. For those who significantly exceed targets for three consecutive years, an attachment programme with a reputable institution locally or abroad will be offered.
- **Rewards for teachers:** Teachers in schools with a head teacher or principal who qualifies for the reward will also be eligible for a financial reward. The top 5% of teachers in the school will receive RM 1,800, the next 90% receives RM 900 while the bottom 5% will not be eligible for the reward. Head teachers or principals will categorise teachers into these performance bands.
- **Remedial and development programme:** Approximately 10% of the bottom performing head teachers and principals will be identified based on the lowest composite score. They will be provided with training in an effort to help them improve their performance. In the first year, these head teachers and principals

will undergo Institut Aminuddin Baki's Performance Management Programme, where specific plans will be drawn up to improve the performance of their school. If the situation continues for a second year, these head teachers and principals will be given dedicated coaching and mentoring support by qualified officers from the institute to help them improve. However if these measures are ineffective and performance continues to be poor, actions such as transfers and voluntary separation will be taken as detailed in Figure 8.12.

Figure 8.12

Head teachers and principals who constantly underperform will be subject to a remedial programme		
	Consequence	Details
Year 1 below target (BT)	▪ Undergoes Institut Aminuddin Baki (IAB)'s performance management program	▪ Consultation and school profiling with IAB to draw specific plans to improve performance, with specific KPIs
Year 2 BT	▪ Undergoes IAB's performance management program	▪ Coaching and mentoring from IAB
Year 3 BT	▪ Transfer	▪ Transfer to another function (probation for 2 years)
Year 5 BT	▪ Pooling	▪ Administrative attachment at PPD/JPN/KPM for 2 years
Year 7 BT	▪ VSS ▪ Permanently in pool post	

8.5 We commit to the following NKPI targets

The outcomes we are working towards in 2010 are described in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1: NKPIs and targets for Education			
Focus area	KPI	Baseline	2010
Pre-school education	• Enrolment rate (4+ and 5+)	• 67%	• 72%
Literacy and numeracy	• Literacy Rate • Numeracy rate	• Year-1: 87% • Year-1: 76%	• Year-1: 90% • Year-1: 90%
High performing schools	• Number	• -	• 20
New deal for head teachers and principals	• % of head teachers and principals who exceed target • % of head teachers and principals who perform below target	• - • -	• 2% • Not more than 10%

8.6 Early signs of progress seen on education

To ensure that some of the new programmes will be ready for the 2010 school year, we have begun to execute some of the plans already. Amongst the progress already achieved are:

- Completed Year-1 teaching and learning modules for LINUS teachers to use in classes from academic year 2010 onwards. In addition, the Year-1 literacy and numeracy screening instruments to identify students who should be placed into the LINUS programme are also complete
- Completed ranking of almost 10,000 primary and secondary schools based on the results of the 2008 academic year as well as the schools' SQEM scores. This is the first time in the history of the Malaysian education system that such a ranking has been undertaken. This ranking was used as a basis to design the rewards and remedial programmes under the new deal for head teachers and principals
- Selected and announced the first batch of High Performing Schools
- The trust school initiative is also well underway. Trust schools are public schools under the umbrella of the MOE that are managed jointly by private sector partners and MOE school leaders. Trust schools and HPS are innovations that aim to raise standards and transform schools. For both types of schools, the MOE will provide school leaders, teachers and the private operating partners of trust schools with certain autonomies and in return require accountability in the form of improved student outcomes. However, unlike HPS status, which is awarded to the top performing schools, trust schools will encompass schools at all levels of performance with the goal of enabling these schools to close their achievement gap with the top performing schools in the system. Following the syndication efforts undertaken in late 2009, there is positive and growing support for trust schools. The process to select sponsors will be overseen by a sector recently set up within the MOE to oversee the implementation and operation of trust schools. The first batch of trust schools is expected to be in operation by January 2011.

8.7 The Education NKRA's will form the starting point for a broader and more comprehensive transformation of education

As mentioned previously, progress in achieving the NKRA targets will help to build a foundation for improving student outcomes and widening access to quality education. While the programmes above are important to reform the education system, they are just the start of our journey to transform education across our schools, the ministry and across the system. Much more needs to be done in order to raise Malaysia's educational system to be among the best in the world.

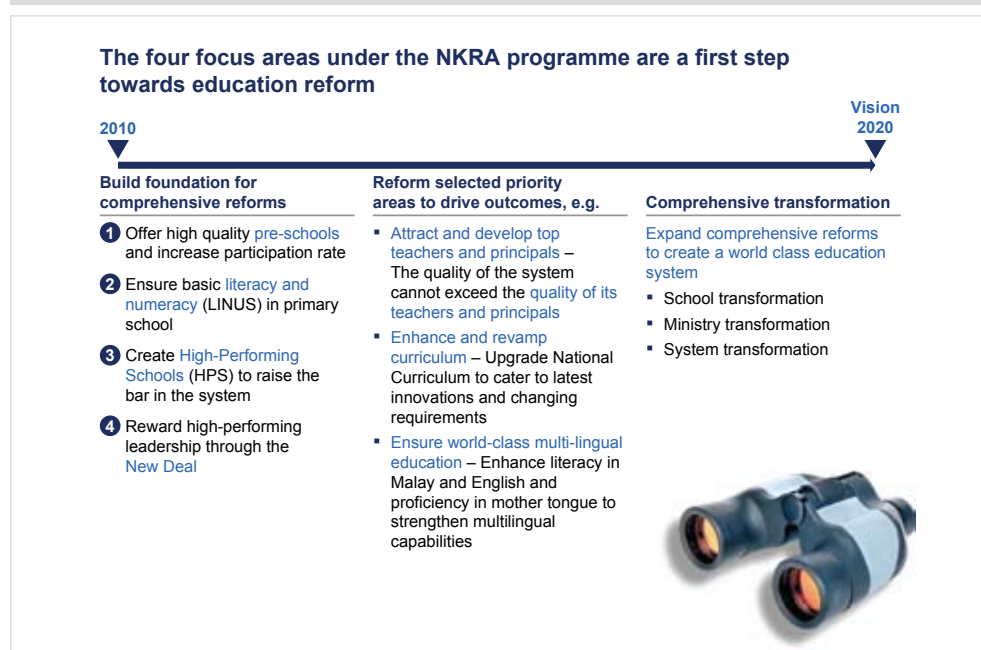
Other countries have demonstrated that delivering substantial improvements in both educational outcomes and the factors that drive them is challenging but achievable. To further the progress of education transformation in Malaysia, we will also focus on the following critical enablers (Figure 8.13).

- **Attract and develop the best teachers and school leaders:** This was a strong feedback delivered by many visitors to the Education booth during the Open Days. The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. The Government is committed to ensuring that we transform our educational system to be more effective in encouraging the most talented people to become teachers, developing these teachers into better instructors and ensuring that these instructors deliver consistently for every child in the system.

- **Enhance and revamp curriculum:** All top performing schools and rapidly improving school systems have curriculum standards that set clear and high expectations for what students should achieve. Going forward, we will intensify our efforts to align our education standards globally and to match our teaching to our country's future requirements.
- **Focus on enhancing multilingual instruction:** Malaysian schools can do more to improve the delivery of multilingual instruction, which would be anchored on having exceptional language teachers. We will focus on ensuring excellent instruction in English across the school system (another strong request by the rakyat during the Open Days), as well as strong Tamil and Mandarin instruction essential for initial learning and literacy.

Putting these enablers in place will require more broad transformation and reform to the school system. In order for that reform to succeed, we need effective, sustained and committed leadership at the system and school levels.

Figure 8.13



8.8 The rakyat's role as parents is critical in improving student outcomes

Achieving many of the Education NKRA targets will depend on coordinated efforts by the Government, schools administrators, teachers and parents. As parents, the rakyat play a very important role when they take an active interest in their children's educational development. For example, they can help to improve their children's basic literacy and numeracy skills by reading to them using different voices, emotions, tones and invented sound effects and by infusing daily conversations with the elements of time, shape and measurement.

We also recommend that the rakyat enrol their children in pre-school at four years of age, when these classes become available in 2012. This would give their children a head start, as attending pre-school has a positive impact on their long-term development.



