

# Stakeholders in singapore education education essay



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Education is an area of great importance in Singapore. Thus, most parents have very high expectations of educators. In this essay, I will talk about what are some of these expectations and how I can harness them as a force to enhance students' learning.

The traditional expectation of an educator is that he must be responsible for the academic welfare and/or excellence of the child. Do parents also expect teachers to play a part in developing the whole person, in areas such as character development? Discipline, must then be part of character development. How much do parents agree to the whole person development? To what extent do parents want teachers and schools to discipline their children? What methods are acceptable and which are not?

Recent events shed some light to the amount of expectation there is of schools and teachers and raises some interesting questions too. The Nan Chiau fiasco for example shows the expectation of the public of school discipline and in particular corporal punishment. It is difficult to bridge the gap between those who agree to what the principal did and those who did not. They did however agree to the basic tenet of discipline but not the style. This highlights to us the changes in societal views' on methods of discipline. Do these changes in expectation restrict us in achieving our goal in developing the whole child? How do we work with these changed expectations"

Increasingly, parents are expecting to play a more active role in schools in the form of Parents' Support Groups (PSG). In these committees, they may take on different projects and be in charge of their organisation. These

projects can be in the form of enrichment programmes for students which may help in the disciplining if appropriate programmes are organised.

The issues related to increased parental involvement are legion. What are parents' motivations? Will parents expect something in return for their services? What kind of incentives can school offer to encourage parents to participate? Will it lead to inequity? Parents might feel that if they do not contribute as much, their children will be disadvantaged. Will they then see the PSG as an added workload to themselves? Will it disadvantage those students who come from a poor family background"

### **Methods to harness them as a force**

There are some possible solutions in the bid to harness parental support as a force. Schools can 'package' the services that parents can offer. Since parents have different strengths and resources, they can contribute to schools in various ways, such as financial aid, time or talent. When seen in this way, parental support can be of great value to schools.

In order to encourage greater participation in the PSG among parents, schools will need to market them. Schools need to be careful not to promote elitism by valuing certain skills above others. They need to ensure that parents do not feel that their contribution is insignificant. How can these be done? One proposal is that schools first identify the school's and parents' needs and then communicate and match these needs. On a volunteer basis, parents who feel they can help may come forward to contribute.

Schools can also explore the possibility of forming parent-parent groups instead of parent-teacher groups. This is to give greater autonomy to parents

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and to allow for self-regulation and organisation. It also saves teachers from extra responsibilities.

As for questions pertaining to the organisation of the PSG, it has been suggested that cluster superintendents run them, so that they can come up with a model for the cluster of schools, instead of individual schools coming up with their own models. However, the drawback is that cluster superintendents are not at ground level, they do not really understand the actual situation of each of the individual schools. Different schools might have different needs, strengths and weaknesses with regards to parental support, willingness to be involved and resources that they can contribute. Cluster superintendents may then not be a good person to deal with the PSG.

Principals have also been identified as a possible person to do the organisation. However, constant changes of principals make it difficult to establish a strong PSG. Also, there is the perennial problem of principals being overloaded with work.

Beyond all these issues, we can see that it is important to harness parents' expectation as a force to enhance student learning. In involving parents in school in various enrichment and discipline committees, parents will have some degree of control to meet their own expectations

### **Teachers are a bridge between students and parents.**

We must find a way in which we can harness the negative energy of these parents and use it for beneficent purposes. The challenge for us teachers is to harness them in the correct manner. There are two possibilities to help remedy this. As the world changes, so do the families that make up the

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smaller blocks of society. Consequently, the second remedy is to heighten the awareness of these parents that the responsibility of their child's development does not fall solely on the shoulders of the teachers' and the education system. We thus agreed that as teachers and educators, we must be acutely aware of these societal changes and react to them accordingly and hence the teacher group decided that teachers should be the bridge between students and parents. This is a relatively new trend in humanity's history. It is a reflection of the system's desire to acknowledge and incorporate parents as stakeholders in the education system, and allow these parents some say in how the school is being run. However, it must be cautioned that parental-teacher-school relationships should form a symbiosis for the benefit of students. Hopefully this will motivate them to create a more conducive environment for their children to develop and excel in. Most often this is due to the fact that parents now are better qualified and thus expect a lot more from teachers the education system and their children themselves. This highlights the issues of single parent families. All these factors play an important part in any child's educational process. The consequence of this is that the children of these dual income families spend less time with parents. In addition, the teacher group took into consideration the ubiquity of Singaporean households, where both parents work at their respective careers to provide for a decent standard of living in an increasingly costly city-state.

Research has shown that parental involvement makes a differences in the future of the child.

*“ On the other hand, students whose parents are not involved are more likely to drop out of school.*

*In conclusion, research has shown that the most accurate predictor of a student’s achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which the student’s parents are able to:*

- *create a home environment that encourages learning;*
- *communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations of their child’s achievement and future career; and*
- *become involved in their child’s education at school and in the community.”*