



Newsletter Vol. 1. No. 8

26 Jun 2020

75 Years of Protecting & Promoting Teachers & Teaching

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STU Survey on Reopening of Schools

- Schools reopened on 2 June 2020 on a weekly rotational basis for non-graduating cohorts while graduating cohorts attend lessons every week.
- How has returning to work been for you?

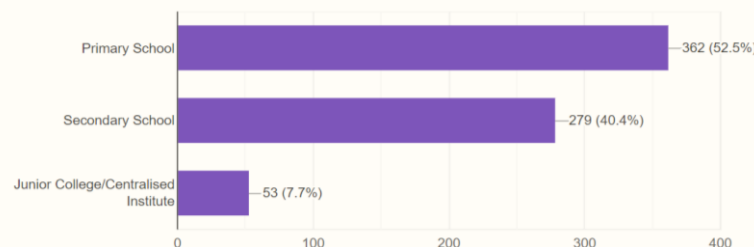
Rationale

- The MOE issued standard guidelines for the Reopening of schools.
- These guidelines were meant to ensure the health and safety of students and staff.
- In response, the STU conducted a survey to better understand teachers' thoughts about the reopening of schools.
- Also, the STU was keen to find out if there have been changes to teacher well-being and performance appraisal.
- *Note: This survey was opened for responses on 12 June 2020. The MOE announced on 17 June 2020 that all levels of students will return to school on 29 June 2020. Regardless, the STU will still share our survey findings with the MOE for future planning.*

Survey Details

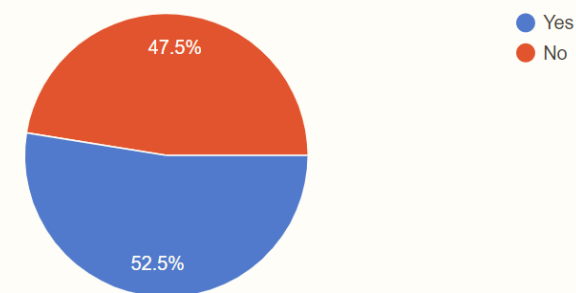
- A resounding total of 697 respondents took part in the survey.

- The breakdown by school type is as follows:

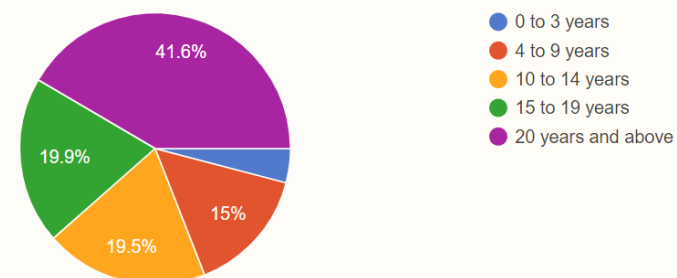


- The following subjects were most represented:
 - English Language and Literature (34.3%)
 - Mathematics (31%)
 - CCE/CME (22.1%)
 - Science (16%)

- 52.5% of respondents are teaching graduating cohorts whereas 47.5% are not.



- 61.5 % of respondents are teachers who have been in service for 15 years or longer.





Survey on Reopening of Schools

In a press release dated 19 May 2020, MOE issued guidelines for the arrangements of schools post circuit-breaker. We asked you which of these guidelines you thought your schools were implementing well, and which could be implemented better.

Section 1: MOE Guidelines

The top three guidelines schools were implementing **well**.

Rank	Guidelines	% of Respondents
1	Students and staff are required to wear their masks or face shields.	97.8%
2	Daily temperature-taking with additional visual and question screening will continue to be carried out for all students and staff.	96.9%
3	There will be fixed exam-style seating in classrooms and spaced seating in canteens or alternative venues.	95.3%

You said...

Pri School Teachers

"Staggered dismissal timings are adhered to with the P giving the announcements at the respective times for the respective levels"

"As I teach P1, to reduce intermingling of pupils, I collect books or assignments one by one from pupils. I also ensure that they wash their hands with soap and water after temp taking, before and after recess as well as snack time. They will also wipe down their tables before moving on to their MT classes."

Sec School Teachers

"Implementation of recess in class with Bento system from canteen."

"The teachers are the ones that are at the frontline and enforcing it."

"We have Odd and Even Week Schedules for Personnel to be deployed at entrances and gates to screen students as well as designated routes to ensure that students wash hands with soap before they proceed further in."

"Dining in the canteen is no longer allowed for all staff and students."

"For business continuity plan, we separated Teachers and heads of different subjects and teaching levels to various venues as temporary staffrooms."

JC/CI Teachers

The top three guidelines schools could be implementing **better**.

Rank	Guidelines	% of Respondents
1	e-CCA	30.9%
2	Intermingling across classes and levels will be minimized.	25.9%
3	Schools will clean high-touch surfaces more frequently and disinfect the premises daily.	24.2%

Pri School Teachers

"Children are not able to really determine if any members of their household is sick and it is very hard not to let them intermingle especially during change of class."

"Dismissal time is quite hard to control in the sense that there is often a crowd at the pick up point and safe distancing measures are difficult to adhere to."

"e-CCAs are notoriously tough to manage due to connectivity issues and the fact that attendance is optional. Teacher ICs are worried about injuries that may be sustained while the student is at home but online carrying out the e-CCA."

Sec School Teachers

"There is no way for us to know if kids are hiding situations at home. We have had a few cases of students who come to school although they have runny nose/cough because assumption by parents is that it is not 'that bad' /'normal'."

"I'm not sure how this could be done better. It's grey how to do wipe down in the science lab. Wiping items like electrical components and plasticine can be difficult."

"[C]oncerted arrangements could have been made for classes using air-con venues to be moved to another well-ventilated venue instead of dismissing students welfare by insisting

1. air-con cannot be switched on
2. no extra standing fans available [...]"

JC/CI Teachers

We heard you...

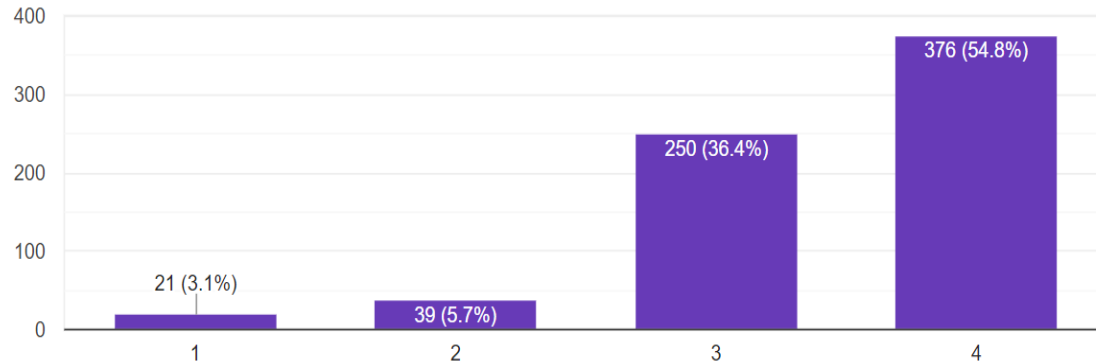


Survey on Reopening of Schools

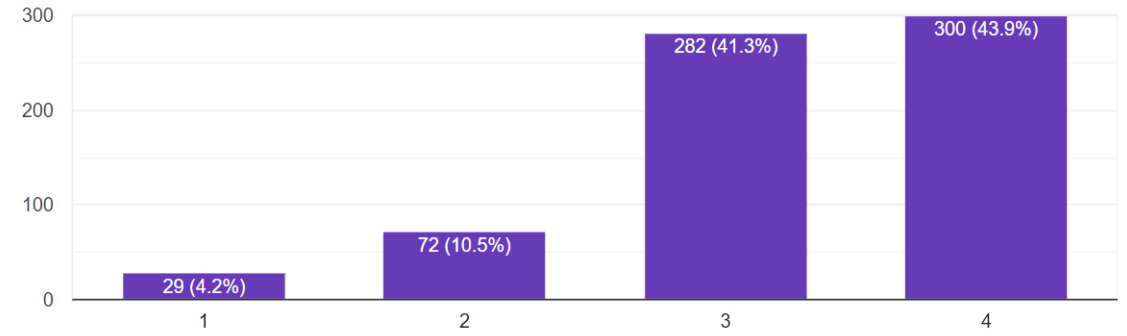
MOE announced a phased approach to the resumption of classes. We asked you how far you agreed with the intent, and the design, of this phased approach to the resumption of classes.

Section 2: Phased Approach

Teachers generally agreed with the *intent* ...



... and the *design* of the phased approach.



We also asked you *what are some ideas you have for MOE to better manage the phased approach...*

You said...

Pri School Teachers

"Have a consistent guideline for schools to follow regarding how to minimise contact of trs to trs/ children. Some schools have very good flexible working arrangements while some schools require ALL or most teachers to come back to school daily without a good staggered dismissal and arrival plan for teachers."

"Further minimise teacher movement. Only in school when necessary, otherwise conduct online meetings if needed."

"When graduating cohort is having preliminary exams other levels should also be at home doing HBL so that we have more space and rooms to contain our candidates."

Sec School Teachers

"Modified 2 session school day. Pro: curriculum not compromised with HBL. Con: teachers who straddle upper sec/pri and lower sec/pri will be teaching the entire day. [So] session 1 can end earlier, session 2 can start later. safe dist ambassador teams can be assigned to schs to assist in facilitating traffic."

"Appreciate teachers more as with HBL their working hrs seem to be beyond school hrs."

"Suspend CCA entirely - there are already many changes and CCA, as HBL has shown, is not considered an essential. A good to have, but let's go back to bread and butter, to focus on survival and beating this virus first."

JC/CI Teachers

"[W]ith full reopening on 29/6, MOE should continue [to] explore HBL + physical classroom learning options especially since no vaccines are available yet. Graduating students are most at risk of disruptions if there are widespread cases in schools."

"Continue with this phased approach in Phase 2 and only allow full strength in Phase 3."

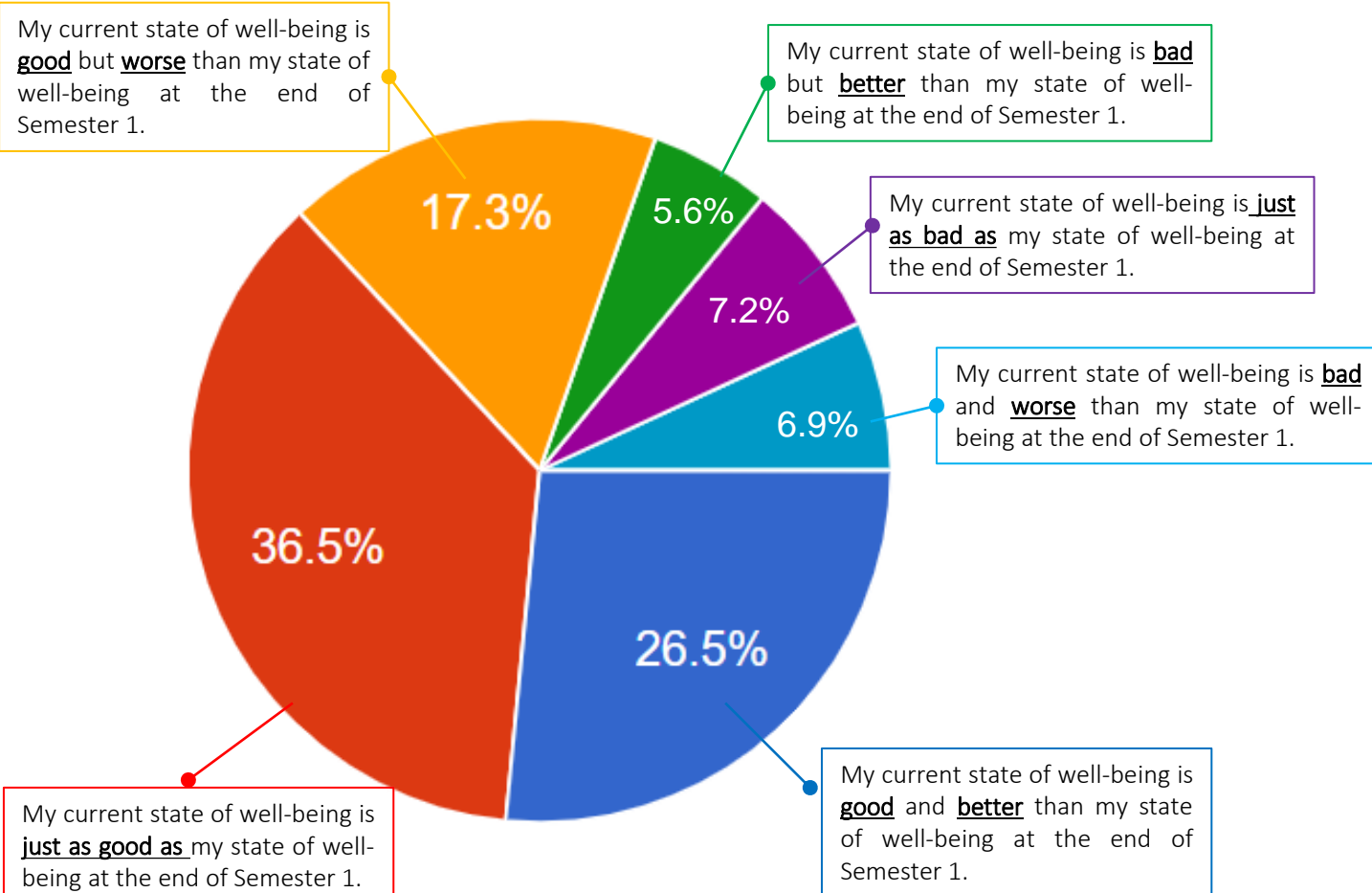
We heard you...



Survey on Reopening of Schools

We asked you how has the reopening of schools impacted your well-being. In particular, we were keen to find out if your well-being has improved since the end of Semester 1.

Section 3: Teacher Well-being



You said...

A teacher who has been in service between 0 to 3 shared...

"KPIs still have to be met. The pressure to ensure the children know the bare minimum is too much. The syllabus and workload must be reduced greatly in view of the pandemic."

A teacher who has been in service between 4 to 9 years shared...

"Lesson observation had been modified to reduce the stress by teachers to conduct a traditional lesson observation."

A teacher who has been in service between 10 to 14 years shared...

"As a PE teacher who is only teaching P3, P4, P5 & P6, I'm still expected to come back everyday, every week, normal full school hours. Just the same as teachers of the graduating cohort."

A teacher who has been in service between 15 to 19 years shared...

"Can leave school after last lesson on school. It gives flexibility for teachers to manage the workload which includes HBL."

A teacher who has been in service for 20 or more years shared...

'Working in one school can much more stressful than another due to different expectations.'

We heard you...



Survey on Reopening of Schools

We asked you how has the reopening of schools impacted your well-being. In particular, we were keen to find out if your well-being has improved since the end of Semester 1.

Section 3: Teacher Well-being

We also asked you *what are some school-based policies/practices since the reopening of schools that have...*

You said...

1..helped to **ENSURE** teacher well-being.

Pri School Teachers

"Opportunity to work from home."

"E-meetings and E-PD sessions, work from home, late reporting days."

"Removal of testing of common last topics reduces the stress [...] after HBL there is a lot of catching up to do, and for primary school pupils, this is quite extensive."

"School leaders advising teachers not to focus too much on academic achievements. Instead, focus on getting the safe distancing measures and routines in place first. Look after the students' well being first."

"Revised expectations of the EPMS, shortened meeting hours and reporting/end work time according to each teacher timetable."

Sec School Teachers

"Every teacher is assigned a portable speaker to assist in voice projection during frontal teaching."

"Alternative assessments implemented."

"Some schools are mindful of the well being of the teachers and greatly reduce the contact hours in sch."

"Videoconferencing rather than F2F meetings; no need to wait for common time to leave school."

"Regular communications from school leaders."

JC/CI Teachers

"[...]changes to assessment (No Mid Year) has helped ease the anxiety for both staff and students."

"Adjusting expectations of staff duties eg CT ship."

2 **COMPROMISED** teacher well-being.

Pri School Teachers

"Having to report to school even if there are no lessons for the day."

"We have a lot of catching up to do after we go back and yet we are expected to hand in files for checking and lesson observation [...] Can we strongly do away with book checks and all the stuff?"

"School sets unrealistic time frame for work Eg, Submission of SA2 paper for vetting on June 19 when we barely finished vetting the weighted assessment that replace the mid-year exam. On top of this to conduct eCCA which is new and we have to grapple with."

"The meetings go on and on when it is on e platform. And there are more e- meetings than previously. [...] This is very straining on our eyes and health."

Sec School Teachers

"The inclusion of WA3 for non-MYE cohorts & increased weightage of WA3 and EOY indicates no change in academic expectations."

"Working from home is only optional provided RO approved rather than generally across the board for levels not having face to face lessons. No revised expectations on EPMS, even staff recreation is still continued online which really doesn't meet the objectives. "

"There has been an increase in expectations of EPMS."

"ECCA translates to longer working hours."

"Teachers have to report to more heads."

JC/CI Teachers

"The need for e-CCAs... [...] should be the least of our concern and this should be taken into consideration when students are applying for Uni next year."

We heard you...



Survey on Reopening of Schools

We asked you how has the reopening of schools impacted your well-being. In particular, we were keen to find out if your well-being has improved since the end of Semester 1.

Section 3: Teacher Well-being

We also asked you *if MOE should standardise policies/practices across schools...*

You said...

"Because all programmes are geared to be executed in Term 3 [...] that means more meetings to iron out planning for such inaugural virtual events. I feel this has taxed the teachers more.."

"We really need to remember that teachers are at the frontline too. We are professionals and we understand what we are protecting and we care for our students. We really need to care a lot for our teachers."

"Teachers are humans and we have family. Our health and our family's health matters too. Work life balanced is missing when we're working 10-11 hours daily..."

70.7% said 'YES'
to Shorter Meeting Durations /
Lower Frequency of Meeting

59.5% said 'YES'
to Work From Home Arrangements

48.1% said 'YES'
to Deployment of Teachers,
including workload distribution

62.4% said 'YES'
to Expectations for Performance
Appraisal, including lesson delivery

49.6% said 'YES'
to Morning Assembly Proceedings, including
pledge-taking and singing of national anthem

40.3% said 'YES'
to Reporting Hours

40.2% said 'YES'
to e-CCA

"I find that the expectations of performance should be standardised as we are all trying to make the best of a bad situation."

"Morning assembly policy could be standardised by MOE as it affects all staff and students in the same way and it is important that the same message about its importance is sent across."

'Too many things to complete, too little 'space' to execute.'

'I think they shouldn't mandate reporting times but they could put in place rules like only reporting half an hour before your scheduled lesson (especially if you're a flexi) in order to truly minimise teachers' time in school.'

"E-CCAs requirement is hazy. Teachers-in-charge do not have the same expertise as coaches to conduct CCA, but are required to conduct e-CCA should the coaches not be able to..."

We heard you...



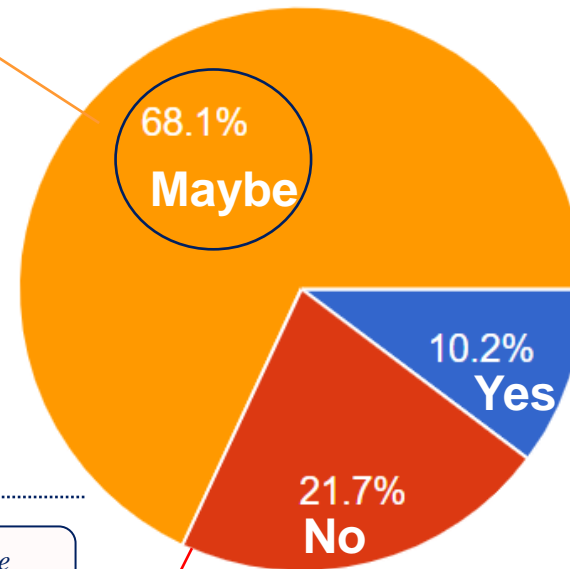
Survey on Reopening of Schools

We asked you if you knew whether your school had made any changes to performance appraisal this year, and what your response was to these changes.

Section 4: Performance Appraisal

You said...

Has your school made any changes to performance appraisal this year?



"Take away Performance Appraisal this year."

"Fair assessment of teachers not based on how much they contribute to HBL and the ICT tools they used for HBL."

"I don't know the precise changes made, but I trust my SLS' reassurances that we will be appraised fairly relative to the context of the changes that the school had to make because of COVID-19."

"Lower expectations as teachers are struggling to catch up."

"My opinion is there should be changes to performance appraisal this year. Some teachers who depend on running programmes/events will not be able to do so and this will be a great disadvantage. I can't really propose as this should be a "team" proposal but my opinion is probably a generic grade C for most teachers unless it is very clear that they have done pretty much more than the rest during this period then maybe they should deserve a grade better than C."

If yes, tell us what these changes are. Do you agree with them?

"Modified lesson observation. 20 min instead of full duration."

"SLS lesson packages will be a new KPI. However, it has not been explained how & in what manner, nor what are the expectations."

"Different checkpoints to assess T n L to include lesson observations during 'live' lessons and HBL Prep work, quality of work etc."

"Performance will be based on contribution during HBL. This is totally unfair. The learning curve for some are agreeably steeper than others and this is not fair in all ways."

"Apparently, we will be observed on one area of the lesson rather than three areas."

"Remove the 7% compulsory C-/D."

"For this year, there should not be a compulsory percentage of D graders. It's not fair to assess an officer on his or her teaching performance as the platform for teaching is uncharted waters for many."

"Have empathy for the teachers. No need for lesson observations and file checks as teachers are trying to finish the syllabus and work on hand."

"Yes, make these changes please!"

If no, do you think there should be changes this year? Why?

"Pupils are not able to work in groups, hence lesson observation should take on a different form."

"No, do not make any changes please!"

"Should not change. Whether I work from home or work from school, my commitment and contribution should be justifiably appraised."

"No performance appraisal equals pb (performance bonus) for all."

We heard you...



HR Lessons:

How did Mr Keith appeal against an adverse performance grade?

- The following account was carefully adapted from a member's experience.
- The member's personal details have been masked to protect him/her.

Adapted from a true account...

- Mr Keith is an English and Mathematics teacher.
- He **does not work well** with his Reporting Officer, who is the **HOD for English Language**.
- During the Mid-Year Work Review Meeting, Mr Keith was informed by his RO that he was likely to be **ranked lowly** because of the following reasons:
 - a. **Contributions** to English Language Department were **not as impactful** as his peers in the **same substantive grade**.
 - b. **Failure to 'follow up' with a parent** who had lodged a complaint against him.
 - c. Impact as Chess Club CCA IC amounted to just **'marking attendance'**.
- His RO even said that Mr Keith should be mentally ready for an **adverse performance grade**. Even though Mr Keith disagreed with his RO's feedback, he was **at a loss for words** because his RO had caught him off guard.
- **Before he could clarify his doubts**, his RO ended the Work Review Meeting.
- After returning to his cubicle, Mr Keith sought advice from his school's STU Delegate, who advised him to write to the STU for guidance...

What do you think happened subsequently?

- Mr Keith decided to write to the STU. The STU helped him to apply for a new school during Open Posting.
- Mr Keith decided to write to the STU after he had received his performance grade. The STU could offer little assistance, and there was no change to his performance grade.
- Mr Keith decided to immediately write to the STU. The STU sought to understand the totality of Mr Keith's grievances, and guided him to appeal successfully against his performance grade, and to transfer to a new school.



Keep reading to find out
what happened to Mr Keith ...



HR Lessons:

How did Mr Keith appeal against an adverse performance grade?

- The following account was carefully adapted from a member's experience.
- The member's personal details have been masked to protect him/her.

What happened next?

- Mr Keith wrote to the STU immediately.
- A meeting with the STU revealed the following:
 - a. Mr Keith's contributions to the **Mathematics Department** had not been accounted for during the Work Review Meeting. Mr Keith had **documentation** to show that he had performed reasonably well for his Formal Lesson Observations for both departments, and that he had cleared his file and book check.
 - b. His RO **had not instructed him** to follow up with any parent's complaint prior to the Work Review Meeting. In fact, there was **no such correspondence** from his RO. On the contrary, Mr Keith had received a few appreciative SMS-es and emails from parents, expressing their gratitude for his good work.
 - c. As Chess Club IC, Mr Keith had designed a **training programme** to develop his club members' analytical thinking. He had also invited external experts to conduct workshops, and to share experiences with the chess club members.
- The STU then guided Mr Keith to do the following:
 - a. document **the notes** of his Mid-Year Work Review Meeting;
 - b. compose an **email** to express his concerns to the **School Leaders**, with the STU in the cc-loop;
 - c. **rehearse** how he could position his views in a professional way and justify his outcomes to the School Leaders before Ranking officially started in the school;
 - d. **apply** for a school **transfer**.

In the end...

Mr Keith emailed his School Leaders with STU in the cc-loop. He had the opportunity to meet with his School Leaders to express his concerns. **He eventually received a C performance grade, and transferred successfully to a new school in the next year.**

Did you know?

- The STU helps members to successfully appeal against an adverse performance grade; but members must be **forthcoming and prompt** when seeking our assistance.
- The **longer** you delay, the **lower** your chances of a successful appeal.
- The **STU** has prepared a series of **webinars** on Decoding the Language of EPMS, and How to Manage the Work Review Conversation. **Have you signed up for them yet?**
 - If you require any guidance on such matters, please contact us at stu@stu.org.sg
 - Are there any HR lessons you will like to share with us? Contact Mr. Kai Low at kai_low@stu.org.sg



Members' Calendar and News

- Career Care Saturdays
- STU Platinum Jubilee: Logo Design Competition
- Mid-Year Annual Variable Component

1 Career Care Saturdays

STU will resume Career Care Saturdays in July.

- Have you ever **taken issue with management decisions** but did not know how to seek recourse or action?
- Are there **'sensitive' work-related issues** which no one talks about at work (e.g. leave applications, transfer appeals, performance appraisal matters and disputes with management)?
- Is there no one at work who can **explore career options** with you?

Click here to make an appointment right away for one-on-one career consultation either live or on Zoom or MS Teams. You can click [here](#) to register for a session through this link. Our caring team of professionals is here for you.

2 STU Platinum Jubilee: Logo Design Competition

- The STU turns 75 in 2021! As we forge ahead, our vision is for the STU family to become bigger, better and stronger.
- Are you a budding artist? Do you have creative flair? The STU invites you to submit a logo design to celebrate this momentous occasion.
- Interested members may submit their entries to Kai at kai_low@stu.org.sg. All entries should be in pdf format, and must comply with copyright rules.
- Selected entries will be notified by email. Attractive prizes await.
- The closing date is 13 July 2020.

3 Mid-Year Annual Variable Component

- The Public Service Division recently announced that:
 - a. there will not be any mid-year Annual Variable Component (AVC) payment to civil servants this year;
 - b. public officers in superscale grades will take either a one-time 0.5-month or 1-month pay cut, in accordance with their seniority.
- STU officials, together with other civil service unions, were involved in the mid-year AVC discussions. We all concurred, given the economic climate, it is going to be a tough year.
- We also reiterated that teachers must be recognised and appreciated for their extraordinary work, during these challenging times, when appropriate.
- The decision was also to show solidarity with all Singaporeans, some of whom who have lost their jobs or suffered loss of income. More retrenchments are expected in the near future.
- We must continue to support each other and take care of each other. **Together, we can overcome these tough times and emerge stronger.**

STU Members' Calendar and News

- Upcoming Webinars
- NTUC Care Fund (COVID-19)

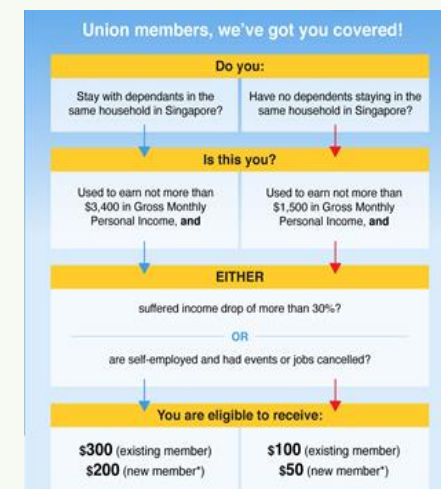
4 Upcoming Webinars

- Due to popular demand, the STU will conduct a third run of its highly successful 'Decoding the Language of EPMS' webinar in July 2020.
- You can also look forward to our **new webinars** on 'How to manage the Work Review Conversation' and 'How best to represent your JHs at ranking'.
- Please click [here](#) for registration and administrative details.

	Webinar Title	Objectives	Audience
1	Decoding the Language of EPMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the Performance Appraisal Processes • Interpreting your role in the Reporting Process 	• Teachers
2	What makes you a KP: culture builder and change leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing upwards and downwards by creating your ideal culture type • Managing and developing average and poor performers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Personnel • Aspiring Key Personnel
3	[NEW!] How to manage the Work Review Conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating your development and performance to your RO • Negotiating viewpoints and managing feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Personnel • Teachers
4	[NEW! For KPs only] How best to represent your JHs at ranking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating the growth and contributions of your JHs • Negotiating and managing feedback 	• Key Personnel
5	Parenting Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological and practical preparation for parenthood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectant Parents • Parents of infants and toddlers

5 NTUC Care Fund (COVID-19)

In view of the economic uncertainties that was brought about by the COVID-19 outbreak, U Care Fund will be rolling out the NTUC Care Fund (COVID-19) for union members who face financial distress during this challenging period. To find out more, please contact us at 6299 3936.



6 Mature NTUC Union Members to Get Enhanced Support for Training.

- From 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2022, NTUC union members aged 40 and above will get an increased funding support from \$250 to \$500, under Enhanced UTAP.
- Union members aged 40 years and above will get double the funding support under the NTUC Enhanced Union Training Assistance Programme (UTAP).

PROTECTING & PROMOTING TEACHERS & TEACHING

Since 1946



Save over **\$2,100*** a year with Union Membership

<p>Up to \$240 cash rebate on grocery shopping</p> <p>FairPrice</p>	<p>4 FREE Wild Wild Wet passes worth \$384 with a 3D2N stay</p> <p>Wild Wild Wet</p>	<p>Save up to \$102 on childcare services</p> <p>my first skool</p>
<p>Get up to \$250 in NTUC training benefits with UTAP</p> <p>UTAP</p>	<p>NTUC Gift Insurance Coverage</p> <p>income</p>	<p>Save up to \$60 with corporate rates at Aranda and Orchid Country Club</p>

Plus, earn and redeem Linkpoints at
selected retail and online merchants!

* Terms and conditions apply. Visit plus.com.sg for more information



FREE OTO PURE (worth \$68.00)
when you sign up with STU
Promotion valid from January 2020
(while stock lasts)

<http://bit.ly/STUMembership>

or Scan QR Code to sign up for STU
Membership



STU Members' Benefits

- New members will receive a free OTO Pure (worth \$68)
- Also, look out for our STU MEMBER-GET-MEMBER Benefits!

STU MEMBER-GET-MEMBER (MGM) PROMOTION 2020

For every 3 successfully referred new
members, the referring member will
receive an **OTO PURE Humidifier**
(worth \$68.00)* from STU.



Terms and Conditions

- This promotion is open to existing STU members only.
- The successfully referred member must be a person who is eligible to join STU and not an existing STU member.
- Referring member should ensure that his/her name is indicated in the membership forms of referred member.
- STU will issue a Letter of Redemption to the referring member upon the submission of the 3rd completed form.
- STU reserves the right to revise these terms and modify or withdraw this promotion at any time without prior notice or reason.

* OTO Pure Humidifier can be redeemed at STU Office (583 Serangoon Road, Singapore 218197).



Get your colleagues
and friends to scan
here to sign up now!

- If you have any queries about Membership matters, please contact Ms. Carine Yip at carine_yip@stu.org.sg



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26 Jun 2020

Protecting & Promoting Teachers and Teaching

Get in touch with us!

Please write to Mr. Kai Low at kai_low@stu.org.sg if you will like to ...

- a. Update your email address or other personal details with the STU.
- b. Share your views about the STU Newsletter with us.
- c. Recommend STU membership to a colleague.

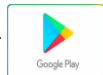


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