

Special Education Teacher Workforce Growth, Attrition Rates and Reasons, and Measures to Improve Workload Sustainability and Retention

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Name and Constituency of Member of Parliament
Dr Charlene Chen, Tampines GRC

Question

To ask the Minister for Education in view of the planned expansion in special education (SPED) school capacity (a) how has the SPED teacher workforce grown relative to student enrolment over the past five years; (b) what have been the annual teacher attrition rates over this period and the main reasons for attrition; and (c) what measures are being taken to improve workload sustainability and retention.

Response

1. Over the past five years (2021 to 2025), the SPED teacher workforce has grown from about 1,600 to 1,900, alongside student enrolment growth from about 7,000 to 9,000 with the addition of 5 more SPED schools. The average resignation rate over this five-year period is 10%, with the most commonly cited reasons being a desire to change job type, personal reasons, and family commitments.

SPED schools grew to 1,900 teachers and 9,000 students by 2025, with one in 10 teachers resigning a year

Description

Singapore’s special education (SPED) schools grew from 1,600 teachers to 1,900 between 2021 and 2025, while enrolment rose from 7,000 to 9,000 students and five more SPED schools opened. The figures come from a [Ministry of Education written parliamentary reply](#) on 6 October.

The reply answered Tampines GRC MP Dr Charlene Chen, who asked how the SPED teaching force has kept pace with the planned expansion in SPED school places, how many teachers leave, and why.

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The SPED teacher figures cover 2021 to 2025. Photo: Ministry of Education

Students grew faster than teachers

The workforce added 300 teachers over the five years, a rise of 19 per cent. Enrolment added 2,000 students, a rise of 29 per cent.

That moves the ratio from 4.4 students per teacher in 2021 to 4.7 in 2025.

One in 10 resigns each year

The average resignation rate across 2021 to 2025 is 10 per cent.

The reasons cited most often are a wish to change job type, personal reasons and family commitments.

Pay guidelines and a relief pool

MOE works with the social service agencies that run SPED schools on pay, recruitment and training.

- Salary guidelines for SPED teachers were updated in 2024, four years after MOE introduced career and competency frameworks and role profiles for the sector in 2020. SPED schools are adopting the recommended salary ranges and stronger performance-based pay.
- A shared pool of relief teachers covers SPED teachers who are away on training or leave.
- MOE coordinates a SPED Teachers' Career Fair and helps SPED schools take part in university career fairs.

Training, leadership and admin

SPED schools have had a School Staff Developer role since 2024, to lead staff learning and well-being. Untrained and serving SPED teachers can train through the National Institute of Education (NIE) and MOE-appointed trainers.

Communities of Practice set up with SPED schools cover multiple disabilities, autism and intellectual disability. Teachers with leadership potential go on the Management and Leadership in Schools programme and the Teacher Leader Programme, and a Leadership Development Programme for the sector started in 2025.

To cut paperwork, SPED schools are moving onto Parents Gateway, MOE's messaging platform for parents. Half of them are due to be on it by the third quarter of 2027.

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