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WhyItMatters

More pathways in education



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The latest change in the education sector here has been the introduction of two new ministers, who took on their posts at the start of this month.

Last week, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong announced that Mr Ng Chee Meng and Mr Ong Ye Kung would take on different portfolios at the Ministry of Education (MOE).

Mr Ng, 47, the former defence chief, oversees pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, and junior colleges. Mr Ong, 45, a former top civil servant, takes charge of matters related to higher education and skills training.

Both men had pledged in a joint message to educators on Monday that they will build more and better pathways for Singaporeans to meet their aspirations, as the system expands in “scale and complexity”.

Having two ministers signals the Government’s continued investment in education as it diversifies.

In the past decade, more specialised schools, such as the School of the Arts and School of Science and Technology, have opened.

Academically weaker students have also been given more support at schools such as Crest Secondary and Spectra Secondary, which provide them with some job skills.

The Integrated Programme, for the top 10 per cent of each cohort, has expanded to more schools in the past few years.

In higher education, students now have a wider range of degrees to choose from in six public universities, beyond courses that fall into traditional academic disciplines. Institutions such as the Singapore Institute of Technology and SIM University offer more practice-oriented degrees.

These changes have given more leeway for young people to learn according to their interests, skills and abilities.

There is more to come, as Mr Ng and Mr Ong said in their message. Their work will continue in this direction, building on what MOE has done across schools and levels, and pushing every person to discover and develop his talents, so that he is fit for work and the world.

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