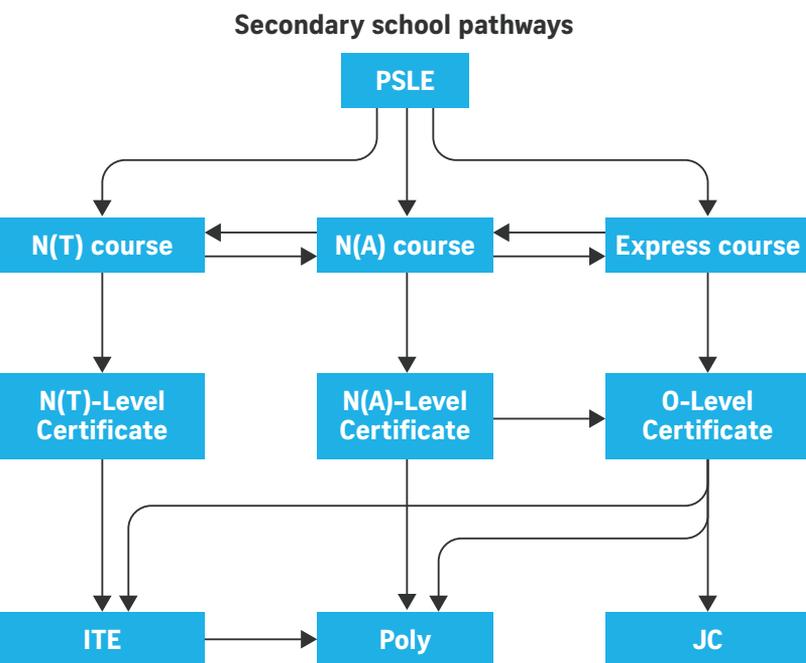


The changes

What happens now



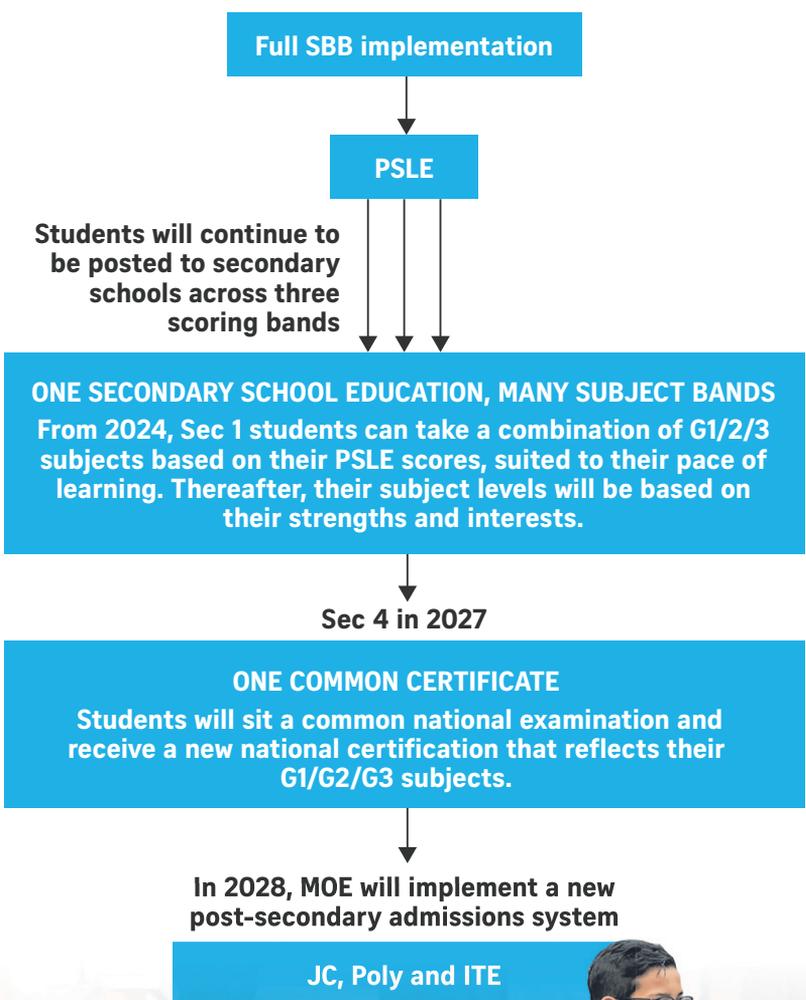
What happens from 2020

25 schools will implement full subject-based banding (SBB)

- Lower secondary students will get to study more subjects at a higher level – not just English, Mother Tongue, Maths and Science as today. Subjects will also include Geography, History and Literature
- Students can take a subject from a less demanding stream. Express students, for instance, may take subjects offered in the Normal stream, such as Mobile Robotics.
- Pilot schools can reshape how they divide students across classrooms. Instead of focusing on academic ability, Boon Lay Secondary, for instance, organises form classes according to co-curricular activities.
- More schools will join in the following years, with the roll-out of full SBB to all schools completed by 2024.

What happens from 2024

- Subject bands will be marked G1, G2 or G3. G stands for General. G1 will roughly correspond to today's N(T) standard, G2 to N(A) standard, and G3 to Express standard. O-level, N(A) and N(T) certificates will be combined into one common certificate, listing the subjects completed and the band of each subject. Singapore and Cambridge will co-brand this new certificate.



Streaming, over the years

In 1978, then Deputy Prime Minister Goh Keng Swee led a team to overhaul education.

As part of the team's report recommendations, streaming was introduced in Singapore from the 1980s to sort students into different tracks according to their abilities.

It marked a shift away from a one-size-fits-all approach to learning in the early years of independence in the 1960s and 1970s. Then, many students had trouble staying in school.

Here's a look at how streaming has evolved over the years.

1980s: Pupils are streamed at the end of Primary 3, into either the Normal Bilingual, Extended Bilingual or Monolingual courses. These tracks are later replaced by EM1, EM2 and EM3 streams.

Courses at secondary school level are divided into three: Special (English and Mother Tongue at first-language level), Express and Normal.

1994: The Normal course is split into Normal (Academic) and Normal (Technical) streams. The Normal (Technical) track allows the 15 per cent to 20 per cent of the cohort, who had previously dropped out of formal education after primary school, to progress to secondary school and have 10 years of schooling.

1995: Express students could take Higher Mother Tongue language as a subject; Special stream is merged with Express.

2002: Upper secondary students are allowed to take higher-level subjects if they are deemed suitable – that is, a Normal (Academic) student can take an O-level subject.

2004: EM1 and EM2 streams are merged.

2008: EM3 system is scrapped. Subject-based banding is introduced in primary schools, through which schools provide a differentiated curriculum for Primary 5. Pupils take a combination of subjects at two different difficulty levels of either Standard or Foundation level.

2014: Subject-based banding is extended to lower secondary students; pilot scheme starts in 12 schools. Under the scheme, students from the N(A) and N(T) streams who score at least an "A" for English, Mathematics, Science or Mother Tongue at the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) can study the corresponding subjects at the Express level.

2018: Selective subject-based banding is rolled out to all secondary schools.

2020-2023: Full subject-based banding to be offered in 25 pilot schools where students will be able to study the humanities subjects at a higher level from Secondary 2. The schools will also try out new form class arrangements instead of the traditional sorting by Express, Normal (Academic) and Normal (Technical) streams

Source: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN
STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

