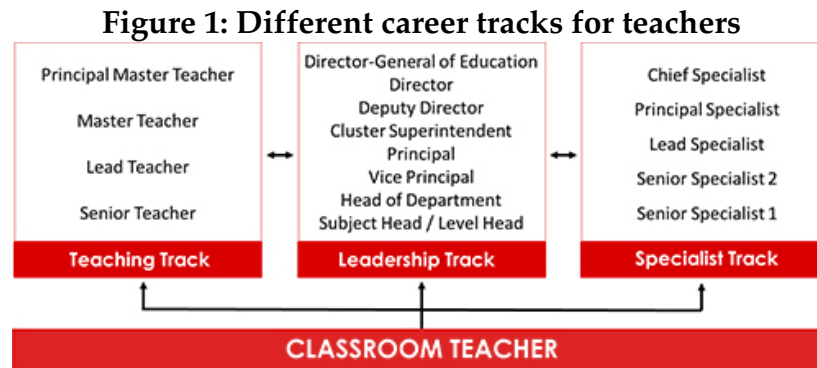


SINGAPORE'S TEACHER CAREER LADDER

There are three tracks on Singapore's career ladder: a teaching track, a leadership track, and a senior specialist track. (See Figure 1.) All teachers begin at the same rung on the ladder and then choose one of these tracks. The teaching track is designed for teachers who aspire to become expert teachers, largely remain within classrooms, mentor their colleagues, and continue to be experts in pedagogy. The leadership track is for those who seek school leadership positions or leadership roles in the Ministry of Education. The specialist track is for those who develop knowledge in specific disciplines.



Source: (Singapore Ministry of Education)

Advancement Up the Ladder

Teachers are regularly assessed, and advancement from one level to the next requires a teacher to demonstrate competency at that level and potential for the next. During summative evaluations, teachers meet with their school leader to discuss whether they met their annual goals. Teacher performance is measured by the Enhanced Performance Management System (EPMS), and teachers are not automatically promoted to the next level on the career track. EPMS is a tool used by the government to support teachers, and helps teachers chart their development along the different tracks.

Levels and Tracks on the Career Ladder

Classroom Teachers

Classroom teachers occupy the lowest rung of the ladder; they remain within the classroom and teach fulltime. Classroom teachers may be younger teachers who have are not yet ready to take on additional roles or opportunities. Or they may be experienced teachers who, for whatever reason, have decided that they do not wish to

take on new mentorship, curriculum development or leadership roles. Roughly 60% of teachers within Singapore's schools are at this rung of the ladder.

Teaching Track

The teaching track is designed to cultivate experts in pedagogy who remain in the classroom and mentor younger teachers and teachers who are looking for additional help.

- *Senior Teachers* serve as mentors for all first- and second-year teachers (all of whom participate in induction programs), supervise teachers-in-training in practicums, and occasionally lead workshops and professional development for their colleagues.
- *Lead Teachers* build capacity of Senior Teachers and Teachers in content, pedagogy, and assessment, and develop their schools into strong Professional Learning Communities; they also share their subject expertise with teachers in other schools within their cluster to strengthen the teaching profession.
- *Master Teachers* are “teachers of teachers” who mentor other teachers so they reach professional excellence and are highly effective. They are primary staff of the professional development hub the Academy of Singapore Teachers.
- *Principal Master Teachers* are the chief pedagogical experts for their subjects—at the national level—and lead the drive toward teaching excellence across the education system.

Leadership Track

The Leadership Track provides another pathway forward for teachers with leadership potential, who are identified early and groomed for leadership positions.

- *Subject Head and Level Heads* observe and coach new teachers and participate in their formal evaluations.
- *Heads of Department* coach and develop teachers in subject areas, implement comprehensive instructional programs, help principals and vice principals on administrative matters and collaborate as part of the school's management team.
- There are two *Vice Principals* in every school: a Vice Principal for Education and a Vice Principal for Administration. Vice Principals for Education oversee all curriculum-related areas of the school. Vice Principals for Administration oversee all non-curriculum areas and lead a team of administrative staff.
- *Principals* lead and inspire teachers, in addition to working with parents and the community. Principals are systematically appointed and rotated so schools are infused with fresh perspectives.
- After many years of successfully leading diverse schools, principals may be promoted to leadership roles in the Ministry such as *Cluster Superintendents*, *Deputy Directors*, and the *Director-General of Education*.

Specialist Track

Teachers who wish to become researchers contributing to the creation of new subject matter knowledge within the teaching profession may elect to join the Specialist Track. Unlike other tracks, members of this track do not teach within schools, but instead serve in the Ministry of Education and at the National Institute of Education (the nation's sole teacher preparation provider). Specialists are developed to be experts in their fields, and are expected to produce scholarship in their fields much as professors would.