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Secondary Education Regional Information Base: Country Profile

Malaysia





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Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



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Reader's Guide

The following symbols are used in the statistical tables:

- ... No data available
- na Not applicable
- * National estimation
- ** UIS estimation
- Magnitude nil or negligible
- ⁺ⁿ Data refers to the school or financial year (or period) after the reference year (or period).
- ⁻ⁿ Data refers to the school or financial year (or period) before the reference year (or period).

General Notes:

The Secondary Education Information Base: Country Profile uses statistics from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and national sources. Although in principle, UIS statistics are used as the primary data source to facilitate comparison with other countries, nationally available statistics are used extensively where specific data is not available from UIS.

All data indicated as UIS data was retrieved from UIS Education Database (www.uis.unesco.org) on February 9, 2010. Statistics from national sources were collected through questionnaires, and the original sources are indicated under each table/figure.

All tables and figures have been compiled by UNESCO Bangkok.

Definitions:

A comprehensive list of education indicators, including their definition, purpose, calculation method and formulas used in UIS statistics is available from UIS Glossary of Education Indicators (www.uis.unesco.org).

The year cited in tables and figures refers to the year in which the academic or financial year ends. Therefore, wherever the given year is spread across two calendar years, the year is cited according to the later year (e.g. academic year 2003/04 is presented as 2004). As for the statistics retrieved from national sources, the reference year is reserved as presented in the original source.

Levels of education in UIS statistics are defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED97 www.uis.unesco.org/ev.php?ID=3813_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC). According to ISCED97, secondary education is divided into two levels: *lower secondary* (Grade 6-8) and *upper secondary* (Grade 9-12). In Malaysia, *Form* is used to describe a distinct grade of secondary education. However, to ensure consistency with terms used in international statistics, *Grade* is used in this report. For example, Grade 7 is equivalent to Form 1, or the first year of lower secondary education. Similarly, Grade 10 is equivalent to Form 4, the first year of upper secondary education.

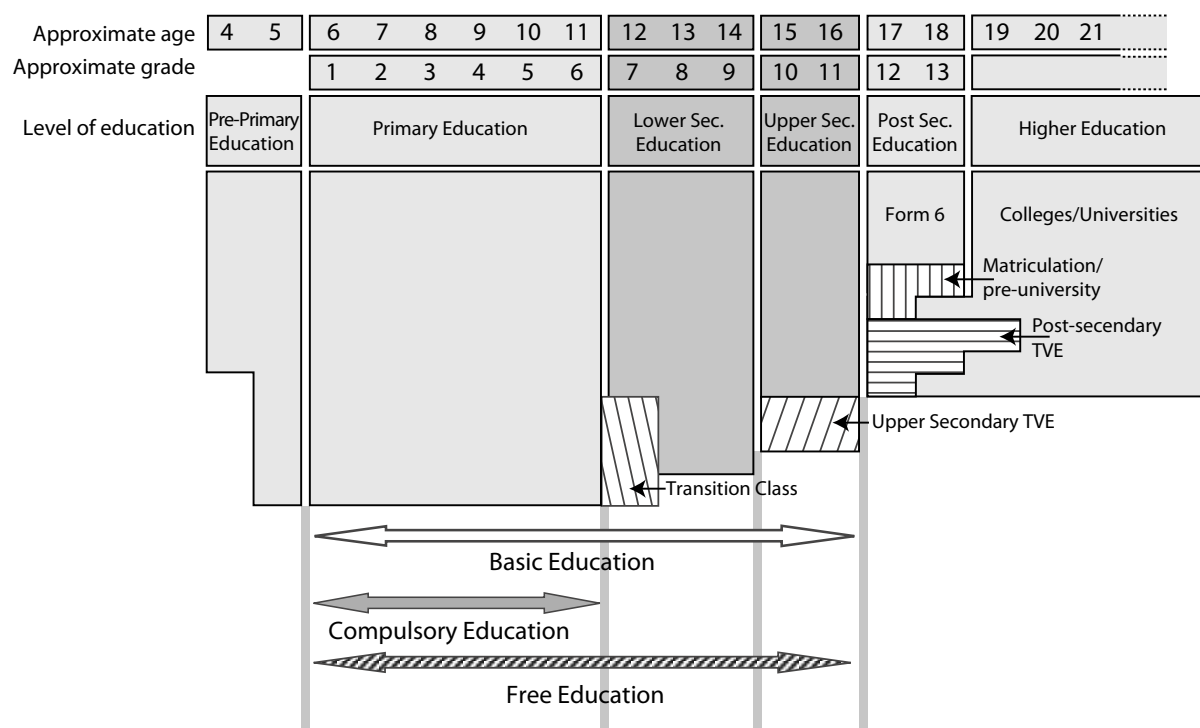
Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
DEO	District Education Office
EFA	Education for All
EPPRD	Education Policy Planning and Research Division
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
ETeMS	Teaching of Science and Mathematics in English
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IAB	<i>Aminuddin Baki</i> Institute
IBE	International Bureau of Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
MARA	<i>Majlis Amanah Rakyat</i> (Council of Trust for the Bumiputera of Malaysia)
MCE	Malaysian Certificate of Education
MCEV	Malaysian Certificate of Education - Vocational
MECD	Ministry of Entrepreneurial and Co-operative Development
MOE	Ministry of Education
MPV	Vocational Subjects for Academic Schools
MYR	Malaysian Ringgit
PIPP	<i>Pelan Induk Pembangunan Pendidikan</i> (Education Development Master Plan)
PMR	<i>Penilaian Menengah Rendah</i> (Lower Secondary Assessment)
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PSAT	Primary School Assessment Test
PTR	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
RMK9	<i>Rancangan Malaysia Kesembilan</i> (Ninth Malaysian Plan)
RRJP3	<i>Rangka Rancangan Jangka Panjang Ketiga</i> (Third Long Term Perspective Plan)
SED	State Education Department
SJKC	<i>Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Cina</i> (Chinese National Type Schools)
SJKT	<i>Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Tamil</i> (Tamil National Type Schools)
STS	Secondary Technical school
TA	Technical Assistance
TED	Teacher Education Division
TTI	Teacher Training Institution
TVE	Technical and Vocational Education
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USD	United States Dollar

1. Secondary Education at a Glance

1.1 Education System

Figure 1. Education Structure: Approximate Starting Age and Duration



1.2 Size of Schooling Sector

Table 1. School-aged Population, 2009

	School-aged population	Avg. Annual Growth Rate, 2001-2009
Primary	3,238,606	0.39%
Secondary	3,715,547	0.92%
Lower Secondary	1,588,750	0.72%
Upper Secondary	2,126,797	1.08%

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2010.

Table 2. Enrolment, 2006

	Enrolment	Avg. Annual Growth Rate, 2001-2005
Primary	3,133,399	1.36%
Secondary	2,489,117 ⁻¹	2.56%
Lower secondary	1,478,860	1.32%
Upper secondary	1,065,830 ⁻¹	4.32%

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2010.

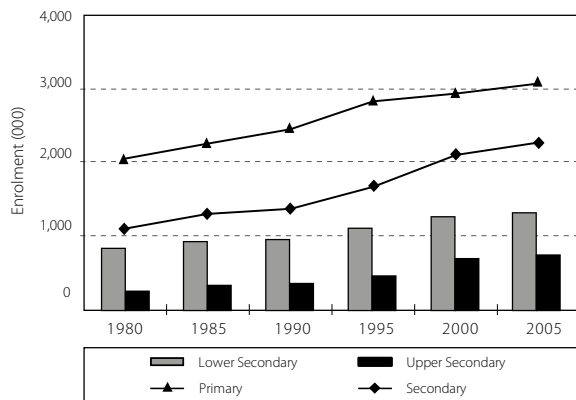
Table 3. Number of Teaching Staff (full and part-time), 2006

	Number of teaching staff	Avg. Annual Growth Rate, 2001-2004
Primary	198,988	5.28%
Secondary	146,503 ⁻¹	5.66%
Lower secondary	86,906 ^{-2**}	4.63%
Upper secondary	61,918 ^{-2**}	7.17%

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2010.

Note: Average annual growth rate was calculated by UNESCO Bangkok on the basis of UIS statistics.

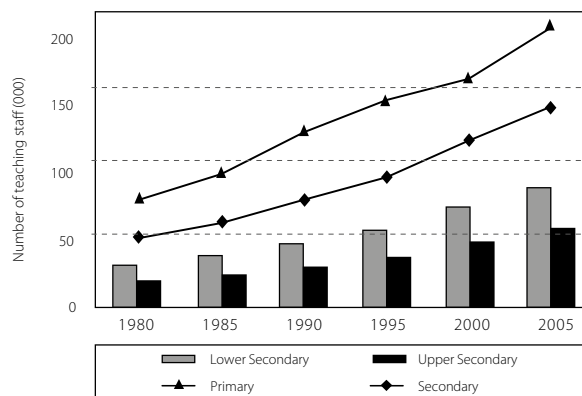
Figure 2. Change in Number of Enrolment, 1980-2005



Source: MOE. 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2005.

Note: 2000 and 2005 data did not include state religious schools.

Figure 3. Change in Number of Teaching Staff, 1980-2005

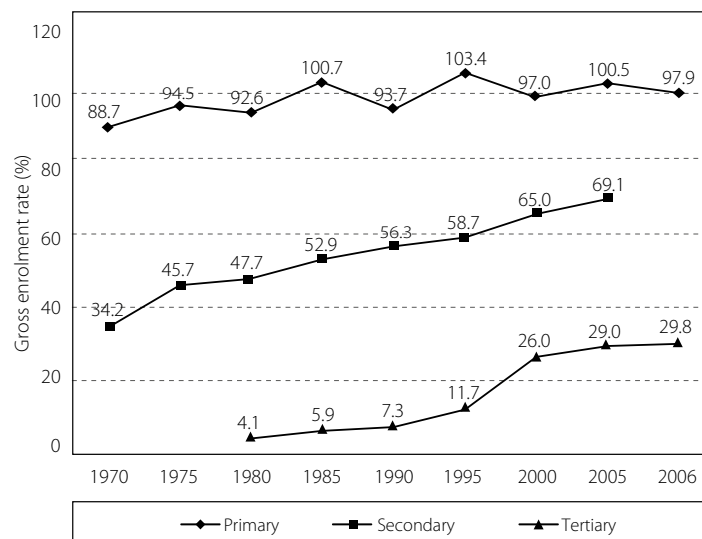


Source: MOE. 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2005.

Note: Figure includes MOE schools only. The numbers of teachers teaching Form 6 (post-secondary) are included.

1.3 Access and Participation

Figure 4. Change in GER by Level, 1970-2006



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2010.

Table 4. GER in Secondary Education, 2006

	Total	Male	Female	GPI
Secondary	69.1% ⁻¹	66.0% ⁻¹	72.3% ⁻¹	1.10 ⁻¹
Lower secondary	93.1%	92.7%	93.5%	1.01
Upper secondary	52.7% ⁻¹	47.7% ⁻¹	57.9% ⁻¹	1.22 ⁻¹

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2010.

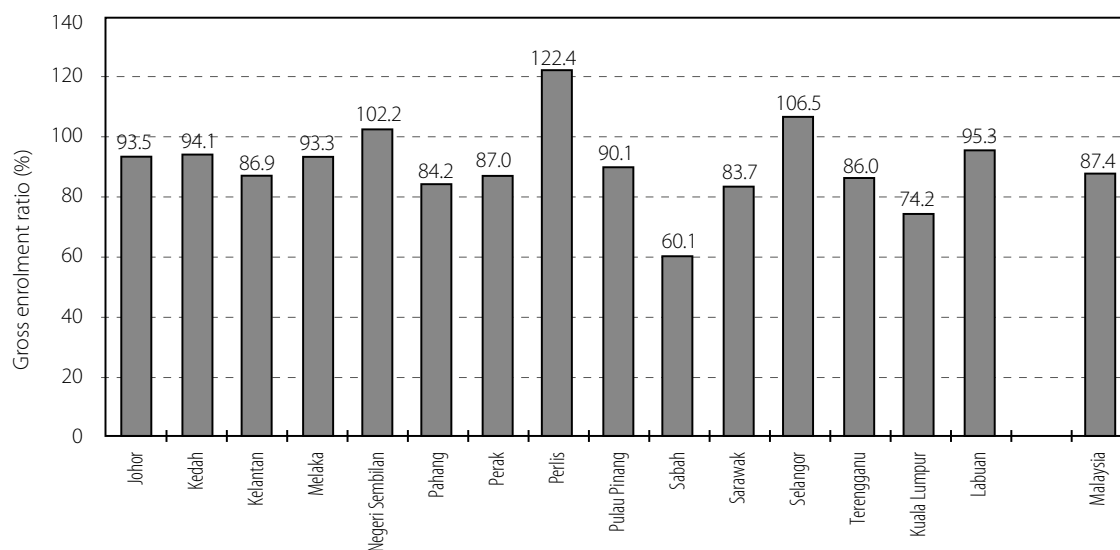
Table 5. NER in Secondary Education, 2005

	Total	Male	Female	GPI
Secondary	68.7%	65.6%	72.0%	1.10

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2008.

1.4 Geographical Distribution of Access¹

Figure 5. GER by State, 2005



Source: MOE. 2007.

Table 6. GER by State and Sex, 2005

	Total Secondary		
	Male	Female	GPI
Johor	93.5%	99.3%	96.3
Kedah	94.1%	102.2%	98.0
Kelantan	86.9%	94.9%	90.8
Melaka	93.3%	97.4%	95.3
Negeri Sembilan	102.2%	106.4%	104.2
Pahang	84.2%	89.7%	86.9
Perak	87.0%	90.1%	88.5
Perlis	122.4%	125.0%	123.7
Pulau Pinang	90.1%	94.9%	92.4
Sabah	60.1%	65.5%	62.7
Sarawak	83.7%	91.9%	87.6
Selangor	106.5%	111.5%	108.9
Terengganu	86.0%	93.2%	89.5
Kuala Lumpur	74.2%	80.0%	77.0
Labuan	95.3%	78.7%	87.8
Malaysia	87.4%	93.0%	90.0

Source: MOE. 2007.

Note: Gender Parity Index (GPI) was calculated by UNESCO Bangkok on the basis of sources.

¹ Migration between states had caused the enrolment rates in certain states become lower while in some other states exceeding 100%.

1.5 Student Progression

Table 7. Progression Indicators, 2008

Gross Primary Graduation Ratio	99.1%
Transition Rate from Primary to Secondary (General)	87.0%
Gross Enrolment Ratio in Total Secondary	81.9%
Percentage of Repeaters in Total Secondary	0.0%
Upper Secondary Gross Graduation Ratio (General)	78.8%
Upper Secondary Gross Graduation Ratio (TVE)	97.2%

Source: MOE. 2008.

Note: Students who left MOE schools and continued their education in non-MOE schools are not captured in the computation.

1.6 PTR and Average Class Size

Table 8. Pupil-Teacher Ratio, 2008

Secondary	14.5
Lower secondary	...
Upper secondary	...

Source: MOE. 2009.

Table 9. Average Class Size, 2008

Secondary	31.0
Lower secondary	...
Upper secondary	...

Source: MOE. 2009

2. Institutional Context of Secondary Education

2.1 Education System

The formal education system in Malaysia consists of five levels: (a) pre-primary education, (b) primary education, (c) secondary education, (d) post-secondary education and (e) tertiary education. Among these, primary (six years) and secondary (five years) are categorized as basic education.

Secondary education caters to children and adolescents between the ages of 12+ and 16+ years. It is divided into two levels: three years of lower secondary education for 12+ to 14+ year olds (Form 1-3) and two years of upper secondary education for 15+ to 16+ year olds (Forms 4-5). Both general and vocational programmes are offered in the upper secondary level, whereas only general programmes are available at the lower secondary level. After completing upper secondary education, students can either continue to post-secondary education (Form 6), or enrol in the matriculation programmes, pre-university programmes, polytechnics, community colleges, teacher training institutions, vocational training institutions or join the labour market.

Primary education was made compulsory in 2003 in line with the stipulation in the Education Act of 1996. Although secondary education is not compulsory, the government provides eleven years of basic education free of charge, i.e. primary education, lower secondary education and upper secondary education, in accordance with Section 30 of the Education Act of 1996.

(See Figure 1. Education Structure: Approximate Starting Age and Duration on Page 1.)

2.2 Legislative Framework and Key Policy Documents

A number of reports regarding the logical framework of the education system and policy suggestions have been prepared by different commissions at different times. The policy documents and reports that are currently in effect are presented below.

The Education Act (1996) and Education (National Curriculum) Regulations (1997)

The Education Act, passed by Parliament in 1996, states the fundamental rules and regulations for the national education system in Malaysia. It stipulates that there shall be no discrimination against any citizen in the education system and that every religious group has the right to establish and maintain institutions for education in its own religion. The Act also stipulates that the Government shall provide eleven years of basic education covering primary up to upper secondary free of charge and that the Minister assumes the duty of providing secondary education in national secondary schools. The Education (National Curriculum) Regulations (1997) followed soon after the Education Act of 1996, which laid out the core, elective and compulsory subjects students must undertake in the Malaysia education system. Detailed information regarding the Education (National Curriculum) Regulations (1997) will be given in Section 3.5: Curriculum.

According to the amendment that took effect in 2003 (*Education Amendment Act 2002*), primary education is compulsory for all children aged six and there is a legal penalty for parents who fail to enrol their children. Compulsory education does not yet extend to the secondary level.

Third Long Term Perspective Plan (RRJP3) 2001–2010 (2001)

The Third Long Term Perspective Plan (RRJP3) spells out strategies to enhance the quality of education through curriculum reform, integration of ICT and improved teaching and learning. The plan focuses on improvements in the areas of language, both Malay and English, science and mathematics.

Education Development Plan 2001-2010 (2001)

The Education Development Plan 2001-2010, often referred to as the *Education Blueprint*, was developed to serve as a guideline for education development in the designated period. The plan clearly outlines the implementation strategies and plan of action for each component in the education sub-sectors. Planning and implementation are formulated around the following four thrusts: (a) access, (b) equity, (c) quality and (d) efficiency and effectiveness of education. Specific strategies provided in the plan regarding secondary education include the integration of ICT in teaching and learning, the training of teachers to ensure knowledge and skills, upgrading of facilities in all secondary schools and improved use of Malay and English among students. Through these strategies, the plan aims to nurture well-rounded students who are able to communicate well, think critically and creatively and uphold good values. In addition, students are expected to have acquired strong foundations for further education and training in addition to possessing employable skills and knowledge.

Ninth Malaysia Plan 2006 -2010 (RMK9) (2006)

The Ninth Malaysia Plan, issued by the Economic Planning Unit in 2006, outlines several strategies to further improve the education system in terms of curriculum, teacher training and school facilities with an emphasis on upgrading of rural schools. In addition, the plan spells out the implementation strategies for reducing drop-out rates to ensure that students receive eleven years of basic education.

Education Development Master Plan 2006-2010 (PIPP) (2006)

The Education Development Master Plan (PIPP) 2006-2010 was developed by the MOE as a comprehensive implementation guideline for education development under the Ninth Malaysia Plan (RMK9). The PIPP outlines the focus, objectives, plan of action, main strategies and achievement indicators for each of the following six thrusts: (a) nation building, (b) developing human capital, (c) strengthening national schools, (d) bridging the education gaps, (e) enhancing the teaching profession and (f) accelerating excellence of educational institutions.

Some of the strategies—such as curriculum reform, strengthening of the assessment system for measuring students' achievements, strengthening of national schools, promoting greater unity and national integration and establishing clusters of excellent schools—are targeted at both primary and secondary levels. The cluster of excellence schools will include fully residential schools, religious secondary schools and premier schools. (Premier schools are schools that have been selected by the Government as cluster schools due to their academic and co-curricular achievements). The expansion of vocational programmes and the choices of vocational education available to students are the main targets at the secondary level.

2.3 Administrative Structure

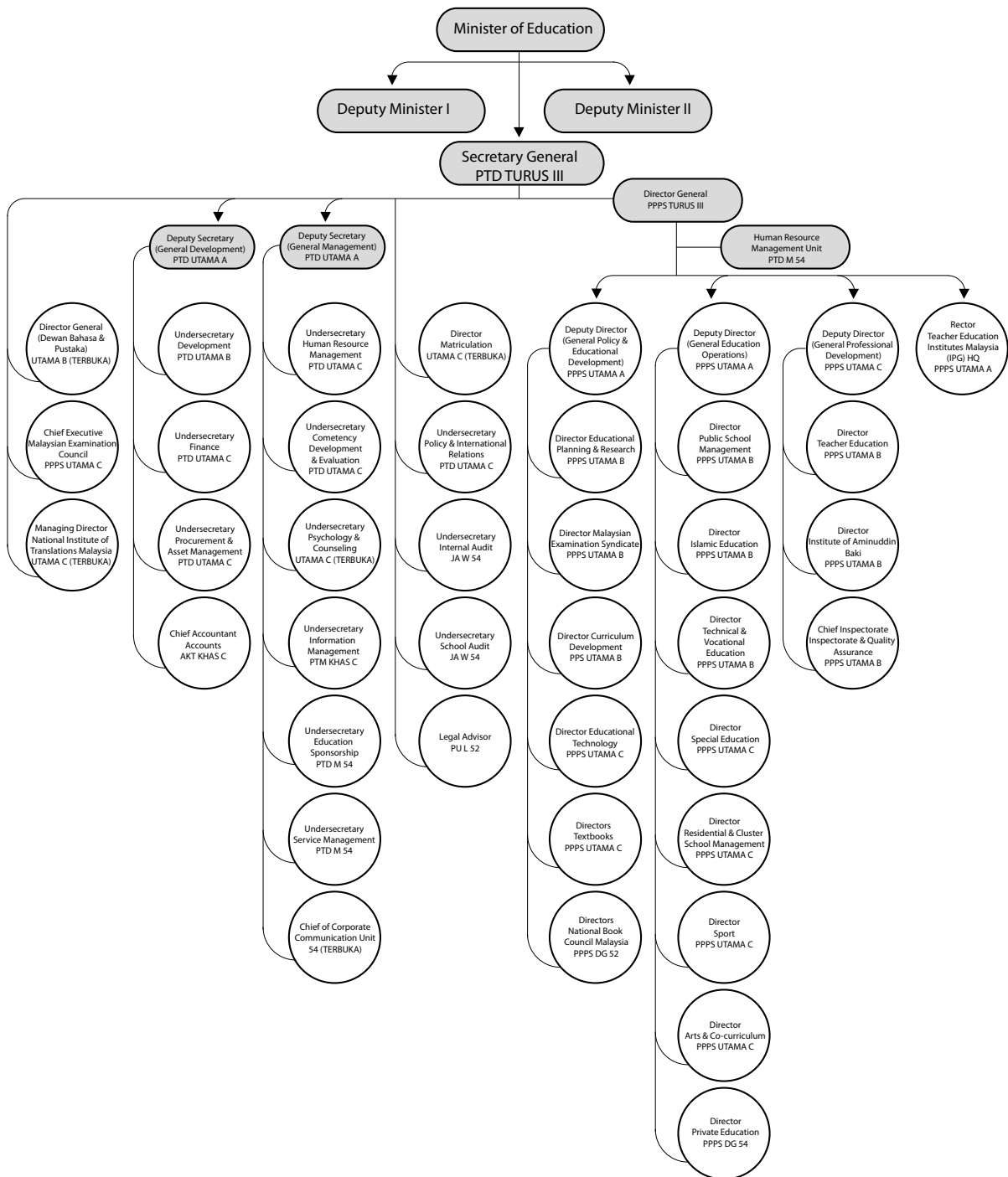
The education system in Malaysia is managed by four distinct levels of authority: federal, state, district and school. At the federal level, the MOE takes overall responsibility for developing policies and regulations concerning education. In terms of secondary education, the (a) Departments of Preschool, Primary and Secondary Schools, (b) Religious and Moral Education, (c) Technical Education, (d) Special Education and (e) Physical Education and Sports, with the leadership of the Director General of Education, take responsibility for the management of schools and the implementation of education policies. Different divisions within the departments—for example, school division, teacher education division and curriculum development division—assume roles in different areas.

At the state level, the State Education Department (SED) coordinates and monitors the implementation of national education programmes, projects and activities, as well as providing feedback to the MOE on overall planning. The administration of education at the state level is the responsibility of the State Director of Education.

In most states, there are additional administrative units at the district level called District Education Offices (DEO). The DEOs serve as effective links between the schools and the SEDs by coordinating and monitoring implementation of programmes, projects and activities a grass-roots level (IBE, 2007).

At the secondary school level, principals are responsible for providing professional and administrative leadership. The School Boards, together with Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA), provide assistance in school management and help to foster cooperation between schools and communities.

Figure 6. MOE's Organizational Chart, 2010



Source: MOE. 2010.

The following governmental offices/departments are responsible for different functions of secondary education management:

Table 10. Secondary Education Management by Office/Department

Functions	Responsible body
General secondary education	School Division, Department of Preschool, Primary and Secondary Schools, MOE
Secondary level TVE	Technical Education Department, MOE
Private education	Private Education Division, Department of Preschool, Primary and Secondary Schools, MOE
Curriculum development and research	Curriculum Development Center, Department of Preschool, Primary and Secondary Schools, MOE; Technical Education Department, MOE; Islamic and Moral Education Department, MOE; Malaysian Examination Council, MOE; Special Education Department, MOE; Education Policy Planning and Research Division, MOE
Personal management and development	Human Resource Division, MOE; Teacher Education Division, MOE; Aminuddin Baki Institute
Teacher training	Teacher Education Division, Department of Preschool, Primary and Secondary Schools, MOE; Local public/private universities
Learning assessment	Examination Syndicate, MOE; Malaysian Examination Council, MOE
Budgeting	Ministry of Finance; Economic Planning Unit, Office of the Prime Minister; Finance Division, MOE; Education Policy Planning and Research Division, MOE Division of Procurement and Asset Management, MOE
Planning	Education Policy Planning and Research Division, MOE; State Education Department (SED); Economic Planning Unit, Office of the Prime Minister
EMIS	Education Policy Planning and Research Division, MOE
Technology in education	Technical Education Department, MOE; Information Management Division
Special education	Special Education Department, MOE

2.4 Financing

In Malaysia, all education funds come from the central government, including for religious schools. Budget allocation for physical development, such as buildings and infrastructure, is under the Five-Year Malaysia Development Plan (RMK), while allocation for recurrent expenditure is under the annual budget allocation. Capital expenditure is allocated to schools depending on the projects approved and managed by the Development and Procurement Division of MOE together with the State Education Departments (SEDs). The recurrent budget is allocated to schools under several categories, including wages and per-capita grant for school subjects and non-subjects as well as utility, school resource centre, hostel and guidance and counseling. Most schools receive their allocation directly from the Finance Division, MOE except for remote rural schools whose allocation is managed by their respective District Education Offices (DEO).

The fiscal year is 1 January – 31 December.

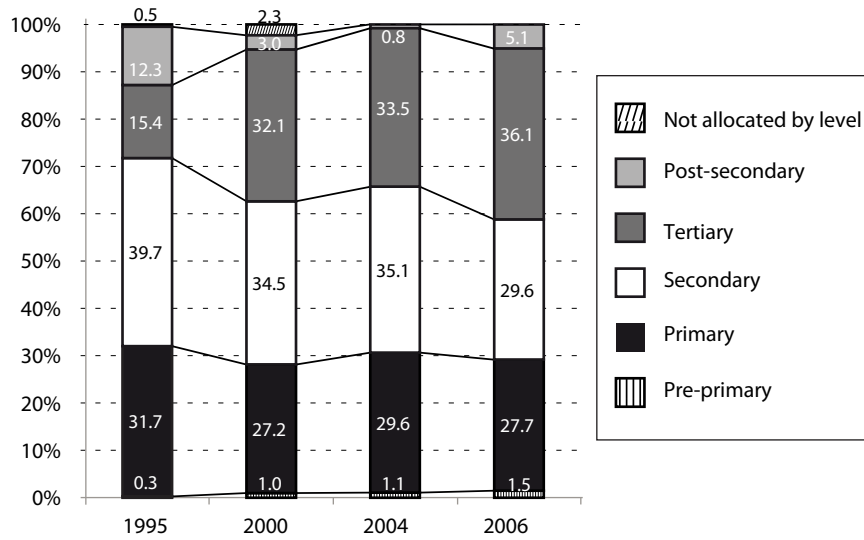
The school year is 1 January – 6 November.

Table 11. Public Expenditure on Education, 2006

As % of GDP	4.67%
As % of total gov. expenditure	25.21% ²
Per pupil as % of GDP per capita	22.61% ²
Primary education	10.77%
Secondary education	20.27% ²
Tertiary education	59.72%

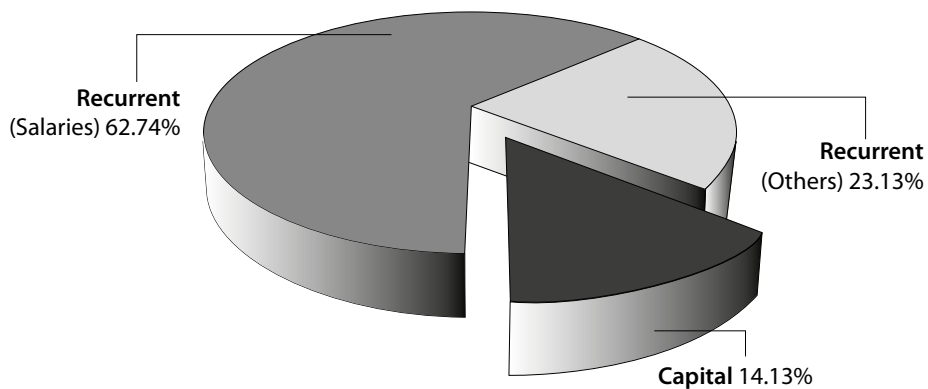
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2010.

Figure 7. Resource Allocation by Level as Percentage of Total Education Expenditure, 1995-2006



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2010.

Figure 8. Educational Expenditure by Nature of Spending, 2004



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2009.

Note: Figures are in percentages of total education expenditure on public institutions at the primary, secondary and post-secondary level.

3. General Secondary Education

3.1 Types of Schools

Several types of institutions provide general secondary level education which differs in both format and length of their programmes. In general, most secondary education institutions offer the complete secondary cycle, i.e. three years of lower secondary and two years of upper secondary education (Grades 7-11).

Among the institutions listed in Table 12, regular secondary schools, under the authority of the MOE, also offer a transition class before the first year of lower secondary education. The transition class enrolls primary school graduates whose medium of instruction is either Mandarin or Tamil and who fail to demonstrate a minimum competency level in Malay, which is the medium of instruction in all secondary education institutions.² (Religious schools offer six years of secondary education). Special model schools are established to allow primary students in Grades 4-6 to study together with secondary school students in the same school premises. Fully residential schools offer quality education primarily to talented students and high achievers from rural areas or to students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

All types of general secondary education institutions are under the administration of the MOE except for private schools which are under the administration of private organizations, religious schools under the State Governments or NGOs, military colleges under the Ministry of Defense and MARA Junior Colleges (MRSM) under the Council of Trust for the Bumiputera of Malaysia (MARA).³ There has been no change in the administrative authorities up to 2009 except for in some state-owned religious schools where the Federal Government has taken over administration. They are known as *Sekolah Agama Bantuan Penuh Kerajaan* (government-aided religious schools).

Table 12. Types of Secondary Schools: Number of Institutions, Enrolment and Administrative Authority, 2008

	Grade							Number of Institutions	Secondary Enrolment	Administrative Authority
	≤6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
Regular secondary schools ¹								1,845	2,112,935	MOE
Regular secondary schools (private)								135 ⁻³	69,437 ⁻³	MOE and Private organizations
Religious schools (MOE)								55 ⁻³	38,865	MOE
Religious schools (Other)								315 ⁻³		State Govt.; Private org.
Fully residential schools								54	33,289	MOE
MARA junior science colleges								32 ⁻³	20,900 ⁻³	MARA, MECD
Military colleges								1	518 ⁻³	Ministry of Defense
Special model secondary schools ²								11	11,948	MOE
Sports schools								2	921	MOE
Performing arts secondary schools								2	343	MOE

Source: MOE. 2005.

Note: ¹ Regular secondary schools also offer a transition class. ² Special model schools offer education from Grade 4 of primary education.

2 The medium of instruction in the national primary schools (75% of primary schools) is the Malay language, which is the national language, while the vernacular national type primary schools use either Mandarin or Tamil.

3 MARA is a semi-government body under the Ministry of Entrepreneurial and Co-operative Development (MECD). Its main function is to encourage, train and assist Bumiputera, or ethnic Malays, Javanese, Bugis, Minang (particularly in rural areas) to be actively involved in trade and industry. MARA also provides study loans/scholarships and operates educational institutions such as *Maktab Rendah Mara* (MRSM) and *Universiti Teknologi MARA* (UiTM).

Table 13. Number of Institutions and Enrolment by Type of Secondary Schools, 2005

	Number of institutions	Enrolment			
		Lower Sec. (G7-9)		Upper Sec. (G10-11)	
Regular secondary schools ¹	1,812	1,322,212	89.8%	751,473	86.4%
Regular secondary schools (private)	135	41,662	2.8%	27,775	3.2%
Religious schools (MOE/private)	370	82,021	5.6%	50,796	5.8%
Fully residential schools	54	17,354	1.2%	15,413	1.8%
MARA junior science colleges	32	8,341	0.6%	23,559	2.7%
Military colleges	1	284	0.0%	234	0.0%
Special model secondary schools ²	8	... ¹	... ¹	... ¹	... ¹
Sports schools	11	... ¹	... ¹	... ¹	... ¹
Performing arts secondary schools	2	... ¹	... ¹	... ¹	... ¹
Total	2,427	1,472,044	100.0%	869,679	100.0%

Source: MOE, 2005.

Note: ¹ Data included in regular secondary schools.

3.2 Admission Requirements

Primary education institutions are categorized into three different types based on the language of instruction: (a) National Primary Schools, (b) Chinese National Type Schools (SJKC) and (c) Tamil National Type Schools (SJKT). While graduates from national primary schools are automatically promoted to lower secondary institutions, the admission of students from the latter two schools depends on the level of student competency in the Malay language, which is the medium of instruction in all secondary schools. Student competency in Malay language is tested by the Primary School Assessment Test (PSAT). Those who do not perform well enough need to attend a one-year transition class offered at the regular MOE secondary schools. The class aims are "(a) to enable students to master the Malay language, so that they will be adequately equipped to follow secondary school education; (b) to enable students to communicate effectively in Malay language; (c) to nurture the spirit of citizenship among students; and (d) to inculcate the values of the Malaysian society" (IBE, 2007).

While admission into regular secondary schools is the responsibility of the DEO, the MOE directly oversees the admission into other types of public secondary institutions. For regular upper secondary schools, individual schools also play a role in the admission process in addition to the DEOs.

3.3 Student Assessment and Promotion

Although students sit for the Lower Secondary Assessment (PMR) examination (previously called Lower Certificate of Education Examination) at the end of the three-year lower secondary programme, they are automatically promoted to the upper secondary level regardless of the results. Hence, in principle, there is no system of repetition throughout the basic education cycle in Malaysia, both primary and secondary. The automatic promotion from lower to upper secondary education was introduced in 1992 to ensure equal opportunity for all students to receive eleven years of basic education. The results of the examinations are, however, used for selecting students to enrol into several programme packages at the upper secondary level within the general programme such as arts, sciences and humanities. Results are also used as entrance criteria to special types of upper secondary institutions such as fully residential schools, religious schools, sports schools, performing arts schools and technical schools.

Similarly, students take a national examination called the Malaysian Certificate of Education (MCE) after completing the two-year upper secondary programme. The students' eligibility to graduate is determined by both periodic school-based assessments and the results of the MCE, which also requires students to pass the Malay Language. The MCE also serves as an entrance criterion to post-secondary and tertiary education. Results are also used for job applications if students wish to work after graduation.

Both the PMR and the MCE are administered at the national level by the Examination Syndicate, MOE.

There are actually no repeaters in the Malaysian Educational System. Since 1992, the Ministry of Education Malaysia has been practicing an automatic promotion to the next level until Grade 11 (Form 5).

3.4 Tuition

According to the Education Act of 1996, lower and upper secondary education is provided free of charge in public institutions. Textbooks are also provided by the Government under the Textbooks Loan Scheme (for students from low income families only until 2007 and later expanded to cover all students); and per capita grants are provided to schools for curricular and extra-curricular activities under several sub-categories, such as school subjects, resource centres, guidance and counseling and utility. However, parents still need to pay for school uniforms and school trips.

Support Programmes

In order to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds, the MOE and the State Governments provide various kinds of scholarships and monetary support including (a) federal scholarships, (b) the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) tuition scheme, especially targeting students in Grades 9 (the last year of lower secondary) and 11 (the last year of upper secondary) in rural and settler communities, (c) textbooks loan scheme, (d) sports scholarships, (e) state government scholarships and (f) scholarships from government statutory organizations. Some private organizations provide scholarships as well.

3.5 Curriculum

All education institutions, including private and religious schools, are required to follow the national curriculum. Localization of the curriculum is not widely implemented in Malaysia. However, officials from the SED and the DEO as well as teachers and other stakeholders participate in the process of curriculum development. Teachers are allowed to plan and select the most appropriate method and material for students within the framework of the curriculum.

In terms of its characteristics, the lower secondary curriculum emphasizes general education, consolidation of skills acquired at the primary level and the development of positive attitudes, values, personality and interests. The core subjects are Malay (the national language), English, science, mathematics, Islamic religious/moral education and history.

At the upper secondary level, the national curriculum puts emphasis on developing and strengthening knowledge, skills and values acquired at the lower secondary level. The curriculum focuses on the development of interests, personality, attitudes and values, with specialization in some fields to cater to the needs of higher education and future careers. According to the Education (National Curriculum) Regulations of 1997, the national curriculum is composed of core, elective and additional subjects. The core subjects are the same as lower secondary level, but upper secondary students have the option of selecting elective subjects from the following packages: (a) pure science, (b) additional sciences, (c) applied arts, (d) technology, (e) humanities, (f) technical and vocational, (g) languages, (h) information and communication technology and (i) Islamic studies. Student admission into each elective subject is determined by both student choice and their achievement in the Lower Secondary Assessment Test.

Table 14. Statutory School-opening and Teaching Weeks per Year, Teaching Hours per Week, 1996

	School opening days per year	Teaching weeks per year	Teaching hours per week
Lower secondary	Minimum 190 days	Minimum 38 weeks	29 hours
Upper secondary	Minimum 190 days	Minimum 38 weeks	30 hours

Source: Curriculum Development Division, MOE. 1996.

Vocational Subjects for Academic Schools (MPV)

Since 2002, some general upper secondary schools have begun offering vocational subjects for less academically-inclined students to help them prepare for skilled jobs or related careers after graduation. MPV covers a wide range of fields including the service industry, building industry, home science, agricultural technology and computer applications.

Table 15. Number of General Secondary Schools offering MPV, 2002-2009

	Urban		Rural		Total	
	Number of schools	Number of workshops	Number of schools	Number of workshops	Number of schools	Number of workshops
2002	57	111	47	89	104	200
2003	52	84	51	83	103	167
2004	65	79	69	84	134	163
2005	52	53	47	47	99	100
2006	67	67	49	49	116	116
2009	...	...	...	...	818	1041

Source: Special Education Division, MOE. 2009.

4. Private Education

The Government encourages and facilitates private sector investment to establish educational institutions at all levels by exempting tax for capital costs and the purchase of instructional materials from other countries. Non-public educational institutions are generally either: government-aided schools or private schools. In the case of government-aided schools, buildings and land are owned by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or private organizations and managed by individual school boards with the MOE providing teachers and the recurrent budget, including per capita grant and teacher salaries. Government-aided schools can apply to become full government schools if they wish. According to the National Education Act of 1996, all non-public institutions have to be registered with the MOE and are subject to the rules and regulations set out in the Act. More specific guidelines can be found in the *Government Circulars* (2007), which is a compilation of circulars issued by the Private Education Division, MOE pertaining to rules and regulations that private institutions in Malaysia must adhere.

There are three types of non-public secondary education institutions in Malaysia with different curricula: (a) private schools with national curriculum, (b) private independent Chinese schools with Dong Xiao curriculum and (c) international schools with international curriculum. Private schools and private independent Chinese schools provide alternatives for parents who do not wish to send their children to national schools. International schools provide education to children from foreign countries and expatriates living in Malaysia as well as Malaysian citizens who wish to enrol in such schools. As part of its effort to promote Malaysia as an education hub, the MOE is planning to provide boarding facilities in reputable international schools to attract more students from overseas. In order to maintain the national standard set by the MOE, private schools with national curriculum must also comply with the MOE's standards for national examinations, teachers, buildings and facilities.

Table 16. Percent of Enrolment in Private Institutions, 2000 and 2005

	2000			2005		
	All	General	TVE	All	General	TVE
Secondary education	5.81%	6.18%	-	3.21%	3.40%	-
Lower secondary	5.67%	5.67%	na	2.81%	4.17% ⁺¹	na
Upper secondary	6.02%	7.12%	-	3.73%	4.11% ⁺¹	-

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2010.

Note: The percentages were calculated by UNESCO Bangkok on the basis of UIS Statistics.

5. Secondary Level Technical and Vocational Education

In Malaysia, technical and vocational education (TVE) begins at the upper secondary level. The programmes are offered in Grade 10 and 11 (Form 4 and Form 5). Grade 12 (Form 6) as well as lower secondary levels do not offer TVE programmes. At present, the majority of TVE students are enrolled in secondary technical schools (STS). Aside from the MOE, the Ministry of Defence offers secondary level programmes in Armed Forces Apprentice Trade Schools (AFATS), leading to further studies and semi-skilled jobs in the army. The Ministry of Entrepreneurial and Co-operative Development (MECD) also provides vocational training at the upper secondary level in MARA Junior Science Colleges.

In addition, vocational subjects are also offered in several general upper secondary schools and other types of schools throughout the country. (Further information on vocational subjects for academic schools (MPV) can also be found in *Section 3.5: Curriculum*)

The development of TVE in the Malaysian education system is supported by the Education Act of 1996, the Ninth Malaysian Plan 2006-2010 and the Education Development Master Plan 2006-2010. More specifically, the Government aims at expanding the TVE system at the secondary level both in terms of enrolment and number of secondary institutions offering technical and vocational subjects.

Students who enrol in TVE institutions/programmes can freely switch their fields to general education or to other TVE streams after completing the programme.

Table 17. Percent of Enrolment in TVE Programmes, 2002-2008

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Secondary education	33.7%	30.9%	31.9%	32.8%	31.1%	30.8%	29.9%
- Lower secondary	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
- Upper secondary	33.7%	30.9%	31.9%	32.8%	31.1%	30.8%	29.9%

Source: EPPRD, MOE. 2009

Note: Table 17 shows a general decline in the enrolment rate of TVE programmes in MOE schools. This is due to an increase in the overall enrolment rate compared to the enrolment in TVE programmes. Under the policy of educational democratization, students are allowed to choose elective subjects besides the mainstream subjects. Furthermore, there are limited numbers of TVE classes in the regular schools.

Types of TVE Programmes in STS

Secondary technical schools (STSs) under the purview of the MOE offer technical, vocational and skills-based education to students who have been streamed into TVE based on the results of the Lower Secondary Assessment (PMR) examination and their inclination towards these studies.

Technical education programmes provide students with a strong foundation in technical and science subjects to enable them to pursue higher education in the technical field or to seek employment. It also provides the same core general subjects as in general secondary schools. Vocational education programmes provide students with basic knowledge and skills for employment (IBE, 2007). Upon completion of the two-year programme, students in the technical track will take the examination for the Malaysian Certificate of Education (MCE) along with students in general secondary schools. Students in the vocational tracks sit the Malaysian Certificate of Education – Vocational (MCEV). MCEV graduates may seek to study in the polytechnics, community colleges and other higher education institutions or opt for the job market. Skills-based education programmes set up within technical secondary schools provide continuing education to PMR holders wishing to pursue skills in specific areas.

Table 18. Enrolment in Secondary Technical Schools by Programme, 2008

	Enrolment	% of enrolment
Technical education	37,058	53.9%
Vocational education	29,978	43.6%
Skills training	1,719	2.5%

Source: MOE. 2008.

6. Teachers in General Secondary Education

Table 19. Number of Teachers and Key Indicators, 2009

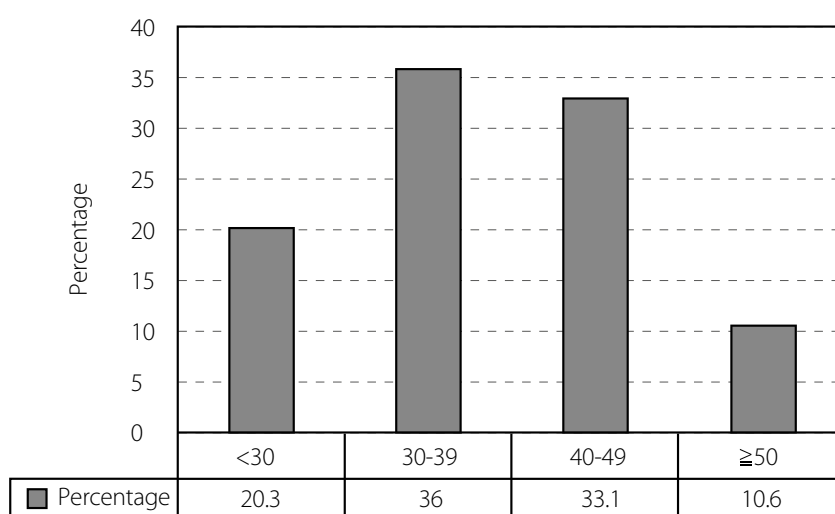
	Number of teachers	Percent of female teachers	Percent of trained teachers	Pupil-teacher ratio
Secondary education	159,019	66.8%	95.8%	14.5
- Lower secondary	...	...	...	...
- Upper secondary	...	...	...	...

Source: Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD), MOE, 2009.

Note: The figures refer to teachers with a degree.

Table 19 shows that two-thirds of the teaching workforce is comprised of female teachers. This corresponds to the intake of students to higher education in recent years, which is also dominated by females. Generally, female students achieve better academic results and therefore are able to fulfil the entry requirements for higher education, including teacher training institutions.

Figure 9. Age Distribution of Teachers, 2008



Source: Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD), MOE, 2009.

Note: Figures include Form 6 teachers.

The age distribution of teachers represents all teachers in all government secondary schools, lower and upper and Form 6. Figure 9 shows a higher proportion of younger teachers, which corresponds with the higher intake of new teachers in recent years to match increasing enrolment.

Table 20. Minimum and Maximum Salary for Teachers, 2009

	Minimum salary		Maximum salary	
	Amount per month	% of GDP per capita (annual)	Amount per month	% of GDP per capita (annual)
Lower secondary	MYR 1,967.20	99.1%	MYR 5,777.12	290.9%
Upper secondary	MYR 1,967.20	99.1%	MYR 5,777.12	290.9%

Source: MOE; Salaries as percent of GDP per capita were calculated by S.E. Mokshein.

Note: The figures refer to teachers on a regular salary scale. Appointed super teachers can receive up to MYR 7,338.35 and super principals up to MYR 8,247.94.

6.1 Teacher Management

The MOE holds overall responsibility for developing and managing teachers from pre-school up to the secondary level. Within the MOE, several departments and divisions share responsibilities in regard to teacher management: the Education Policy Planning and Research Division (EPPRD) is responsible for projecting teacher demand for each level; the Teacher Education Department (TED), in collaboration with Teacher Training Institutions (TTIs) and local public universities, handle the teacher training; the Human Resource Division (HRD) is in charge of recruitment and appointment of teachers including promotions, reassignment and temporary transfer, termination of service and resignation as well as other service-related matters. In regard to deployment, the School Division of the Department of Preschool, Primary and Secondary Schools, together with four other departments, namely the Technical Education Department, the Islamic and Moral Education Department, the Special Education Division, and the Sports and Physical Education Department, takes responsibility with the cooperation of the State Education Departments (SEDs).

6.2 Qualifications and Pre-service Training

There is no difference in academic entry qualifications for lower and upper secondary teachers in Malaysia. All secondary teachers are required to hold a bachelor's degree in education or a post-graduate diploma in education/teaching.

The Teacher Education Department (TED), MOE is responsible for teacher training in cooperation with teacher training institutions (TTIs) and local public higher education institutions (HEIs) under the Ministry of Higher Education. Although both TTIs and HEIs offer programmes leading to bachelor degrees, the four-year programme offered at HEIs is the most common choice for a secondary teacher qualification. In contrast, primary-school teachers generally obtain their qualification from TTIs. For those who have obtained bachelor degrees in a specialized area or in a school subject, both types of institutions offer post-graduate diploma programmes. It takes one year to complete the full-time programmes and eighteen months for school-based programmes. The latter are intended for uncertified teachers who are serving on a temporary basis.

As part of their pre-service training programmes, student-teachers are also required to complete practicum training. The duration depends on the programme and the institution (i.e., 12 weeks for a bachelor programme in HEIs and 24 weeks in TTIs and 12 weeks for students in post-graduate diploma programmes).

Although Malaysia does not have a licensing system for public-school teachers, they are required to pass a highly competitive screening process before entering the pre-service teacher training programme. During this process, the results of their examination and Malaysian Certificate of Education (MCE) or High School Certificate (HSC) will need to meet certain standards. Candidates should pass the Malaysian Teacher Selection Test and an interview conducted by the Education Service Commission, prior to the pre-service programme. Upon completing the programme, only those who obtain certain cumulative grades in the training and have successfully passed the interview will be appointed as permanent teachers. Private-school teachers, however, have to apply to obtain a teaching license before they start teaching. A private-school teacher's license is regulated and provided by the Private Education Division, MOE through each educational institution.

6.3 In-service Training

Several training opportunities are available for in-service teachers to upgrade their qualifications and for their continuous professional development. The TED in collaboration with TTIs and HEIs is responsible for providing such training. In principle, all teachers are required to attend continuous professional development courses for a minimum of seven days per year as it is a prime focus in the new remuneration system. However, the total number of hours depends on the needs of individual teachers and the curriculum. The Government also encourages teachers to participate in qualification upgrading courses by providing scholarships.

Apart from TTIs and HEIs, different departments and divisions within the MOE offer professional development courses in different areas: the Curriculum Development Center offers courses to assist teachers in the adjustment to the new curriculum; courses on computers and ICT are offered by the Educational Technology Division. Additionally, the *Aminuddin Baki* Institute (IAB) offers courses on school management. The SEDs and the DEOs also provide training focusing on teaching for optimal learning and curriculum reform at the state and district levels.

7. Recent Reforms

Teaching of Science and Mathematics in English (ETeMS) 2003-2009

In 2002, a decision was made by the cabinet to introduce English as the medium of instruction to teach science and mathematics in both primary and secondary schools beginning in 2003. Later that year, the MOE officially announced its introduction.

The policy was first launched in 2003 for Grade 1, 7 and one-year post-secondary education (Form 6). It was fully implemented for all grades in primary and secondary education in 2008.

Support programmes for ETeMS include providing training, ICT equipment (i.e. laptops, LCD projectors) and teaching courseware for teachers involved in ETeMS. A special allowance is given to English teachers and science and mathematics teachers who are teaching these subjects in English. In addition, a peer-coaching system, known as the "buddy system" involving English teachers helping their peers teaching mathematics and science, has also been established in each school.

Evaluation findings reveal that the policy was not implemented as successfully as envisaged, especially at the primary level and in rural schools. In 2009, the Government decided that the policy shall only cover the post-secondary level, i.e. at the sixth form and matriculation courses. The teaching of science and mathematics will thus once more be taught in the Malay language in secondary and national primary schools. Nonetheless, the respective vernacular languages will be the medium of instruction in vernacular schools, to be implemented in stages beginning 2012.

Vocational Subjects for Academic Schools (MPV)

Since 2002, Vocational Subjects for Academic Schools, (MPV), have been offered in general programmes at the upper secondary level. MPV targets students who are less academically-inclined and who have not performed well in the Lower Secondary Assessment Examination. It prepares them for semi-skilled jobs, a career as an entrepreneur or further training in TVE programmes. Since its introduction the MPV has expanded to include 22 courses in the service industry, building industry, home science, agricultural technology and in computer applications.

8. Involvement of Development Agencies

Below is the list of major projects relevant to secondary education (either current or recently completed) that receive support from external development agencies (as of January 2010):

Project Title	Agency (type of assistance)	Level of Education	Implementation Period	Links
Education Sector Support Project	World Bank (Loan)	PE, SE, Polytechnic	1999-2004	http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=64283627&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P058681
Technical Education Project	ADB (TA/Loan)	SE, Polytechnic	1997-2005	www.adb.org/projects/project.asp?id=29331

TA = Technical Assistance; PE = Primary Education; SE = Secondary Education

Note: Implementation period: from the year of project approval to the [estimated] project completion year.

The projects and information listed here are taken from agency websites.

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Background Statistics: Development Indicators

Geography

1	Area	328,550 sq km ² (land)
		1,200 sq km ² (water)

Source: Central Intelligence Agency. 2008.

Demography

2	Total population, 2005	25.7 millions
3	Population growth rate, 2000-2005	2.0 %
4	Life expectancy at birth, 2000-2005	73.0 years (total)
		70.8 years (male)
		75.5 years (female)
5	Total fertility rate, 2000-2005	2.9

Source: United Nations Population Division (UNPD). 2007.

Social and Economic Indicators

6	Population below the national poverty line, 1990-2004	15.5 %
7	Population below the absolute poverty line, 1990-2005	...
8	GDP, 2005	USD 130.3 billion
		USD 275.8 billion (PPP)
9	GDP per capita, 2005	USD 5,142
		USD 10,882 (PPP)
10	GDP per capita annual growth rate, 1990-2005	3.3%
11	Human Development Index, 2005	0.811

Source: UNDP. 2006.

Education Indicators

12	Adult literacy rate (ages 15 and above), 2007 ⁽¹⁾	91.9 %**
13	Youth literacy rate (ages 15-24), 2007 ⁽¹⁾	98.3 %**
14	School life expectancy, 2005 ⁽¹⁾	12.7 years (total)
		12.4 years (male)
		13.1 years (female)
15	EFA Development Index, 2005 ⁽²⁾	0.945

Source: (1) UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2008. (2) UNESCO. 2007.



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