

Forum on Parents and Schooling

Thursday, 31 August 2017
Ballroom 3, Level 3
Orchard Hotel Singapore

PANEL I
Every School a Good School – Myth or Reality?

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Some offbeat definitions of the notion of a good school

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The idea of “good” schools: implications (1)

Saying that all schools are “good” schools implies that all have met some kind of **threshold**, but some are **better**, and a **few** are best.

However, best is just relative to one another.

But best is never good enough, because “**the best is yet to be**”.

Implications (2)

- We can't be “good” parents, but we can be “**good enough**” parents.
- By the same token, we can't be “good” schools, but we can all be “**good enough**” schools for our students?
- This produces less anxiety, makes us more restful, and empowers us to be “good” schools as a **by-product**.

Implications (3)

- A good school is one which meets the needs of students.
- Their needs are not homogeneous.
- A good school is one that can meet the needs of the majority of its students, and able to cater to a wide of students with different ability, aptitude, interest, and motivation level.

Implications (4)

- I am being hypothetical here. Any resemblance to any institution dead or alive is purely coincidental.
- I will refer to universities (not in Singapore or anywhere in the world).
- Some universities are seen as **best only because they focus on the top students. “Top” is defined narrowly.**
- Others are seen as best because they have **top professors** who don't teach or are travelling the world making a name for themselves, and leaving the teaching to an **academic underclass.**
- Sending your children to such universities means getting a poor education, while paying top dollars.

In short, good schools ...

- are student-centric
- see student development as an end in itself
- bring out the best in their students
- recognize their strengths
- motivates and affirms them
- Pay more than lip service to the idea that there are different pathways to success
- Have a vast majority of students who actually enjoy going to school

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