

## **Many parents say PSLE necessary, but helping kids study is stressful**

**Amelia Teng**

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The Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) is still seen by many parents as necessary.

A slight majority of those surveyed by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) did not agree that it should be postponed to a later age.

There had been calls to do away with or postpone the exam, which some say leads to unnecessary pressure for young pupils who are sorted into secondary schools and academic streams.

But IPS senior research fellow Mathew Mathews said the survey results show there is "no clear consensus" on the PSLE. Less than half of respondents agreed or strongly agreed it should be postponed.

"Most people are not against the idea of high-stakes exams, a good proportion of Singaporeans still accept that," said Dr Mathews.

Last year, the Ministry of Education announced that come 2021, the PSLE would use wider scoring bands, instead of a precise aggregate T-score, to reduce the obsession with academic grades.

Meanwhile, schoolwork, exams and the syllabus were common concerns for parents in the IPS survey.

About 71 per cent of parents said helping their child with numerous tests and exams was stressful, while almost 60 per cent felt anxious as they did not know how to help their child with the challenging syllabus.

About half of the parents said they were concerned their child could not keep up with what was taught or was not achieving the grades he was capable of.

Ms Jamie Chan, 36, a corporate communications officer, said her Primary 2 daughter has good teachers, but she also hopes the school syllabus will not get too tough.

"Her Chinese teacher, for instance, is doing a good job in capturing her interest in the subject, but the syllabus looks harder than what I recall from my time.

"I am concerned that it will get exponentially harder in the years ahead," said Ms Chan.