



## MEDIA ADVISORY

### SOTA UNVEILS PLAN TO NURTURE FUTURE-READY CITIZENS

Singapore, July 30, 2018 – Today, the School of the Arts Singapore (SOTA) shared the recommendations from its 10-Year Review, conducted together with the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) and National Arts Council (NAC).

2 SOTA is committed to *make arts education more accessible*. Artistically inclined youth, regardless of their background, will enjoy more opportunities to pursue their interests through programmes and initiatives by the School. There will also be *stronger and deeper bonds with the community* through more sustained partnerships for greater impact and benefits. In addition, SOTA will continue to pursue *arts and academic excellence* for its students.

The following are some of the key recommendations from the Review.

#### **(A) Refreshed Vision and Mission for the Next Phase of Development**

3 SOTA's revised vision and mission reflect the School's intended focus in the years ahead.

Vision: "*Creative citizens for the future*"

Mission: "*Nurturing artistic and creative learners who positively impact Singapore and the world, through a vibrant learning environment that is anchored in the arts*"

#### **(B) Access and Opportunities for Arts Education**

4 In-line with its revised mission to nurture more artistic and creative learners, SOTA will launch an ***enhanced outreach programme*** to Primary schools, to identify and nurture students with artistic talent.

5 SOTA will also ***make an arts education at the School more accessible*** through the introduction of the ***Arts Development Award (ADA)*** and ***SOTA Buddy Programme*** funded by Temasek Foundation Nurtures.

6 SOTA's current financial support scheme will be further enhanced.

### **(C) Deeper and More Sustained Partnerships with the Community**

7 SOTA will deepen networks within the arts and cultural ecosystem. It will expand on art-form specific partnerships with other local arts groups to create more authentic learning opportunities for students.

8 In addition, SOTA will establish formal partnerships with local community service providers to develop sustainable community projects.

### **(D) Continued Excellence in the Arts and Academics**

9 SOTA will continue to leverage on its strengths to develop a unique curriculum that incorporates the arts within academic subjects to enable students to make connections across different disciplines. This will be complemented by new opportunities and pathways for its students.

10 SOTA will further develop the professional expertise of its teachers and establish a strong, values-based professional culture.

11 SOTA will collaborate with other schools and organisations on its Arts Integration approach.

12 SOTA is committed to developing and implementing the above initiatives arising from the Review recommendations.

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## **About The School of the Arts, Singapore**

The School of the Arts (SOTA) is Singapore's first national pre-tertiary specialised arts school with a six-year integrated arts and academic curriculum, leading to the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma or Career-related Programme, for youths aged 13-18 years old.

Under the ambit of the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY), SOTA offers a dedicated development path for those who have interest and show early talent in the arts, providing a learning environment where both the artistic and academic potential can best be realised.

With a vision to nurture creative citizens for the future, SOTA aims to identify and groom artistic and creative learners who positively impact Singapore and the world, through a vibrant learning environment that is anchored in the arts.

A school of the future, SOTA embraces a holistic educational philosophy that celebrates experimentation, expression and discovery.

## ANNEX A

### Key recommendations arising from the Review

Building on the strengths of SOTA's achievements in the last decade, the review identified areas of focus that chart the School's future direction and seek to strengthen its role as a provider of an arts-enhanced education. The School will continue to nurture future generations of artists, creative professionals and champions of the arts who are:

- a) Dedicated to growing Singapore's arts and cultural landscape;
- b) Prepared for the Future Economy; and
- c) Confident, resilient and committed to Singapore and building a caring and cohesive society.

### (A) Refreshed Vision and Mission for the Next Phase of Development

2 SOTA's revised vision of "*Creative citizens for the future*" reflects the desired outcome for a SOTA graduate – a creative citizen who is equipped to meet future challenges, shape the future of Singapore, and give back to society.

3 Its revised mission, "*Nurturing artistic and creative learners who positively impact Singapore and the world, through a vibrant learning environment that is anchored in the arts*", reflects the desired role that the School should play – a specialised school that seeks to nurture youth who will positively impact society, through an arts-enhanced education.

### (B) Access and Opportunities for Arts Education

4 In-line with its revised mission to nurture more artistic and creative learners, SOTA will ***make arts education more accessible***.

5 SOTA will launch an ***enhanced outreach programme*** to Primary schools, to identify and nurture students with artistic talent. At present, SOTA conducts outreach programmes to Primary schools to raise general awareness of SOTA and its DSA application process. SOTA intends to enhance its existing outreach to introduce targeted and intensive arts enrichment programmes for pupils with an aptitude in the arts.

6 To facilitate early access to training for artistically-inclined Primary school pupils, including potential future SOTA students, the ***Arts Development Award (ADA)*** has been officially launched today. The Award is offered to Primary 4 to 6 pupils from low-income families who show artistic potential. The Award, funded by Temasek Foundation Nurtures (TFN), seeks

to create opportunities for young pupils who demonstrate an interest or potential in dance or visual arts to be exposed to and benefit from an early arts education. A total of 23 Primary school pupils received the awards this year.

7 Complementing ADA is the **SOTA Buddy Programme**. The Buddy Programme creates opportunities for ADA recipients to be supported by SOTA students in academic, artistic, and personal growth. Concurrently, the programme provides opportunities for the character and leadership development of SOTA students.

“Although it has only been six months, I have learnt much more than expected. I learnt new techniques and various forms of art. I look forward to learning more from my mentor and wish to become an artist in the future, not just to sell my artworks but to pass my passion for visual arts to children as well,” said Joseph Ng, a Primary 4 pupil at Wellington Primary School.

*“We are thankful for the support from Temasek Foundation Nurtures, which has helped us make this programme possible. SOTA has always provided artistically inclined youth, regardless of financial ability or background, the opportunity to develop their artistic talent while enjoying a holistic education. With this Award, we hope that more Primary school pupils will benefit from an early arts education, and be able to realise their creative potential,”* said Ms Lim Geok Cheng, Principal, SOTA.

Please refer to Annex B for more information on the ADA.

8 To make an education at SOTA even more accessible to students with financial needs, SOTA’s current financial support scheme has been enhanced to provide additional funding to cover more items provided for needy students. These enhancements include allowances for transportation, meals, school uniforms, textbooks and art materials

### **(C) Deeper and More Sustained Partnerships with the Community**

9 SOTA will seek to deepen networks within the arts and cultural ecosystem by taking into consideration key events in the arts and heritage landscape when planning the School’s calendar of activities. The School wants to expand on art-form specific partnerships with other local arts groups to create more authentic learning opportunities for students.

10 Currently, there are memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with established industry partners such as Orchestra of Music Makers (OMM), The Human Expression Dance Company (T.H.E), Checkpoint Theatre, National Gallery Singapore and The Esplanade. Moving forward, the School will

continue to seek long term, mutually beneficial relationships with industry partners that will provide value-add to its students' learning.

11 In addition, SOTA will establish formal partnerships with local community service providers to develop sustainable community projects. Students are encouraged to apply their academic learning and artistic talents to the community service projects, to benefit the community and enhance their development as creative and compassionate leaders.

12 SOTA will also consider a sustainability plan when identifying community service partners. Such projects will allow students to develop a deeper understanding of the real needs of the community being served, build relationships with that community, and develop a sense of agency and understanding of their roles in relation to Singapore and the world.

#### **(D) Continued Excellence in the Arts and Academics**

13 SOTA will continue to leverage its strengths to develop a unique curriculum that incorporates the arts within academic subjects to enable students to make connections across different disciplines.

14 The School will develop **Arts Integration** as a signature pedagogy to enhance student learning and engagement.

15 SOTA will share its Arts Integration approach with other schools, and embark on research collaborations with other organisations that are also interested in this pedagogical approach.

16 SOTA will also intensify the harnessing of technology to engage students in their learning, strengthen communications skills and enhance art-making process. For example, students are better able to understand concepts such as the volume of revolution and Pythagoras Theorem with visual impact through the use of technology.

17 At the same time, technology will also be used in art-making. They will be equipped with knowledge to create digital content – from using digital technology to create original music compositions, to leveraging technology and interactivity in creating art installations. On top of that, digital platforms used during arts-making help students refine their works collaboratively. Google Classroom is often used to extend learning beyond the classroom. This creates a learning environment that encourages students to be receptive to giving, and receiving honest feedback.

18 To nurture resilient, caring and contributing students, SOTA will adopt Design Thinking and Problem-based learning to support students' understanding of current local, regional and global issues and concerns.

19 SOTA will provide increased opportunities and pathways for its students to engage in the arts and academic subjects which best suit their interests and learning needs.

20 SOTA will enhance its teachers' training to deepen their professional expertise and establish a strong, values-based professional culture. SOTA will equip and empower its teachers to be effective educators and role models.

## **ANNEX B**

### **About the Arts Development Award**

Funded by Temasek Foundation Nurtures (TFN), SOTA will offer Arts Development Award to primary school pupils from low-income families from 2018.

The award aims to increase exposure to the arts, and complement primary schools' efforts to develop students' talents. Through the awards, Primary 4, 5 and 6 pupils with interest and potential in dance or visual arts can benefit from consistent exposure and training in basic techniques through participating in extracurricular programmes offered by arts organisations.

#### Funding Information

Awardees will be provided a quantum of \$2,000 per annum. This will cover expenses in learning more about either dance or visual arts from approved arts organisations. The award may be used for:

- (a) Registration
- (b) Course fees
- (c) Materials and costs of other learning resources such as costumes and shoes
- (d) Transportation for the pupil and one caregiver

#### Eligibility

To qualify for the award nomination, primary schools must ensure that nominees fulfill the following criteria at the point of application:

- i. Singapore Citizen or Permanent Resident
- ii. Gross Household Income (GHI)  $\leq$  SGD\$8,000 or Per Capita Income (PCI)  $\leq$  SGD\$2,000, whichever is lower

Schools may nominate 2 or more pupils who are either in Primary 3 or Primary 4 in the current year.