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History of the 4 junior colleges moving out of their current sites



(Clockwise from top left) Innova Junior College, Tampines Junior College, Serangoon Junior College and Jurong Junior College. ST PHOTO: DESMOND WEE, LIM YAOHUI, ST FILE

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SINGAPORE - Junior colleges will be affected by school mergers in 2019 for the first time, the Ministry of Education (MOE) announced on Thursday (April 20).

Serangoon Junior College, Innova Junior College, Tampines Junior College and Jurong Junior College will move into Anderson Junior College, Yishun Junior College, Meridian Junior College and Pioneer Junior College respectively.

MOE said the history and heritage of the schools that will move will be preserved in a dedicated space at the merged schools.

The Straits Times looks at the history of the four colleges ahead of the move:

1. SERANGOON JUNIOR COLLEGE



Facade of Serangoon Junior College. ST PHOTO: DESMOND WEE

Merging with: Anderson Junior College

Founded in 1988, Serangoon Junior College (SRJC) is Singapore's 14th junior college. And it has made a rapid rise through the years. In 1989, its cut-off points was 20. Last year, this improved to 11.

In 1994, SRJC graduate Paul Khoo was the first winner of the Angus Ross Prize to come from a neighbourhood school. The prize from Cambridge International Examinations is for the top A-level English literature student outside Britain.

SRJC is known for the tight bond between teachers and students. A thanksgiving concert, performed by teachers for the students, has become a biennial tradition.

In July, the school also has its Will Run. It started in 2008 as a 10km run, but evolved to be an activity in which students and teachers run as far as they can within an hour.

The students start training three months before the run and increase their mileage progressively. They also run in groups to spur each other on.

Alumni includes Mediacorp actresses Ya Hui and Paige Chua, and mixed martial arts fighter Tiffany Teo.

2. INNOVA JUNIOR COLLEGE



Facade of Innova Junior College. ST PHOTO: CHEW SENG KIM

Merging with: Yishun Junior College

This school was seen as "a new blazing star", according to Miss Yeo Hong Mui, Innova Junior College's (IJC) first principal. There is no such word as Innova, but Nova means new in Latin and supernova means blazing star.

Located in Champions Way in Woodlands, two of IJC teachers have been in the news in recent years for their sporting endeavours.

Former physical education teacher Muhammad Shah Feroz left the school last year to train for the SEA Games in August this year, while general paper teacher Renuka Satianathan was nominated for an award recognising outstanding teacher-coaches in 2014.

Alumni of the school Ashik Ashokan and Ashok Kumar also made the news for climbing expeditions in support of the Society for the Physically Disabled in 2014 and the Children's Cancer Foundation in 2015.

The school also introduced a partnership with the neighbouring Singapore Sports School in 2007. Students from the sports school who go on to do their A-levels at the college were assigned teacher mentors and a more flexible timetable.

The school was innovative in its approach to learning: Where most students wrote essays for General Paper, the IJC students made documentaries as well.

The college's "hands on" foray into new media arts has paid dividends. It was designated a Centre of Excellence in the area.

3. TAMPINES JUNIOR COLLEGE



Facade of Tampines Junior College. ST PHOTO: LIM YAOHUI

Moving to: Meridian Junior College

True to its name, much of Tampines Junior College's (TPJC) history is tied to locations in Tampines.

Pioneering teachers of the college held their first meeting in Tampines Primary School, while the first batch of students studied in a building which became Tampines Secondary School.

In December 1986, TPJC moved into its own building, which received the Best Designed College Building Award for 1988.

Students continue to keep this same building clean with Project Kirei, which began in 2014. First-year students spend the last five minutes of each class cleaning up, and also shadow the school's cleaners.

Earlier this year, The New Paper reported on teachers at TPJC going the extra mile for former student Eugene Ng, who has an eye disorder called Leber's congenital amaurosis.

His teachers obtained a Braille keyboard, a talking graphic calculator and an embossing machine. Notes were also printed in Braille for him.

His chemistry teacher, Mr James Wong, even learnt how to write Braille and used fabric paint to make notes for Mr Ng.

4. JURONG JUNIOR COLLEGE



Entrance of Jurong Junior College. ST PHOTO: CHEW SENG KIM

Merging with: Pioneer Junior College

Jurong Junior College (JJC) is hailed as one of the birthplaces of xinyao, the music movement of Mandarin Singapore songs during the 1980s.

Singer-songwriter Eric Moo was performing his own composition at a school concert in 1983 when he was talent spotted by a radio deejay. He gave up his A levels for music, and the song became the first Singapore composition to top the Chinese pop charts later that year.

Last year, JJC, together with Singapore Press Holdings' Chinese-language daily Lianhe Zaobao and music event company TCR Music Station, organised the National Schools Xinyao Singing and Song Writing Competition.

Established in 1981, JJC is also one of five schools in Singapore offering the Chinese Language Elective Programme.

Students in the programme take Chinese language and literature classes at the H2 level in place of a fourth A-level subject.

Another alumnus of the school is Kenneth Sng, who delivered the opening remarks for the second US presidential debate last year as Student Union president of Washington University in St Louis.

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