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Necessity of name tags for students to be looked into

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The Education Ministry will meet with the Selangor Education Department to discuss the department's recent decision to make name tags compulsory for schoolchildren.

Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today the ministry did not know the reason for the decision as it originated from the State Education Department.

The department had issued a circular dated April 3 to all primary and secondary schools in the State making the use of name tags compulsory "to overcome the various problems of students".

According to a Malay Mail report, the circular, signed by department director Zainul Abidin Awang, had provoked an outcry from parents who questioned its efficacy and necessity and criticised the lack of uniformity in its implementation.

Najib said he did not know whether the name tags were truly necessary to combat social ills among students.

He also did not know the name of the private company to be awarded the contract.

"I cannot answer these questions until we meet with the department and get an explanation," he said, although he did not name a time for the meeting.

He told reporters this after witnessing the passing over of duties from retiring Education director-general Tan Sri Wan Zahid Noordin to his successor, the current deputy director-general Datuk Matnor Daim at the ministry today.

Among those present to express their gratitude for Wan Zahid's contributions and to wish him well were leaders from teachers' organisations nationwide as well as a student from Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan (C) Tsun Jin in Kampung Pandan.

Najib said he would discuss with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on how Wan Zahid could continue contributing to the education field.

He added that Wan Zahid would remain as president of teachers' welfare organisation Yayasan Guru Bhd.

Wan Zahid's successor Matnor was described by the teachers' organisations officials as a highly approachable and down-to-earth leader who would remain in touch with grassroots-level issues.

Matnor, who was born in Sibul, Sarawak has served the ministry for 37 years in various capacities including in teaching and administrative posts, as well as Deputy Director and, later, Director of the Sarawak Education Department.

He was appointed Education Deputy Director-General II in May 1993 and Deputy Director-General I in December of that year, before becoming Deputy Director-General (Schools) in November 1995.

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