

Ministry to continue considering feedback on English-medium schools

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — The Education Ministry will continue to consider public feedback on the establishment of English-medium schools and wants the people to send in e-mails or write to newspapers.

Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad confirmed that constructive opinions from the public would still be considered by the Ministry.

On whether such schools would be established if there was overwhelming public support, he said the Government would decide as it was a matter of policy.

Many parties have urged the Ministry to continue receiving feedback despite Umno supreme council's decision last week that it was unnecessary for such schools to be re-introduced.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said earlier that the Government would consider reintroducing English-medium schools if that was what the people wanted.

According to the Surfers Survey that the NST Online ran from last Tuesday to Saturday, 72.08 per cent of 1,089 votes polled supported the move while 23.69 per cent defended the current system, with 4.22 per cent unsure.

Many parties have also written to

newspapers to express their views.

Musa said while the Ministry was not conducting an official poll on the issue, it had received a lot of feedback via e-mail.

"Some are for it, some are against. We also have those who want certain subjects to be in English," he said after the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry and German Academic Exchange Service.

On the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English, he said a committee headed by Education director-general Datuk Abdul Rafie Mahat was looking into it. "It is still too early to say how or when it will be implemented."

On claims that the Ministry was not being transparent in the allocation of public university places under the merit system, he said the claims were ridiculous.

"I find it very strange. Whenever something affects a particular race, then all kinds of problems will crop up. People should only make accusations if they have proof. It is not proper to simply make accusations because when it happens, all kinds of racial connotations will be made." He advised all parties to stop making unhealthy allegations.

(Education Ministry's Higher Education Department director)

Professor Dr Hassan Said will explain how the merit system works, how matriculation holders and those with the Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia are matched. Wait until then to comment."

The basis of the new merit-based selection system has been questioned by various groups.

They have wanted clarification on the special formula used to match STPM and matriculation grades for university entry.

The STPM examination, although run by the Malaysian Examination Council, is accredited by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate. The matriculation examination does not have an external moderator.

Parents wanted to know how the two could be comparable as they were not similarly accredited.

For the coming intake at public higher educational institutions, Bumiputera students secured the majority of places, higher than under the previous race-based quota system.

Musa said entry into public universities could be through various avenues, not just matriculation and STPM. He said entry could be via A levels, associate degrees and other ways depending on the university Senate.