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Pay increase likely for language-proficient Maths and Science teachers

By GAVIN GOMEZ

PETALING JAYA: Teachers who are willing to teach Mathematics and Science in English and have the language proficiency to do so can expect a significant salary increase as an incentive.

This is among the proposals being drawn up by a special committee of the Education Ministry to study how best the two subjects can be taught in English, sources told *The Star* yesterday.

A source revealed that teachers "can expect very good pay hikes" if they volunteer to teach Science and Mathematics in English.

"The incentive will also depend on teachers' proficiency in the language," he added.

National Union of the Teaching Profession Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam said that based on the current provisions, teachers are eligible for a 10% critical allowance on top of their salary. Anything more would have to be approved by the Public Services Department.

Another proposal to be submitted to Cabinet is to introduce bilingual public examinations from next year as a short-term measure.

"The bilingual examinations, however, will only be an interim step until the first batch of students who study Science and Maths in

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Exams for Science and Maths will be in BM for now

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English enter Year Six, Form Three, Form Five and Upper Six," said another source in reference to the UPSR, PMR, SPM and STPM examinations.

This is because the ministry is expected to recommend to the Cabinet that the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English be confined to Year One, Form One and Lower Six next year.

At all other levels, only certain topics will be taught in English to introduce the new language element.

In other words, it will be another six years before the UPSR Maths and Science tests (Year Six) will be in English while it will be three years for the PMR (Form Three) and five for the SPM (Form Five) examinations.

But after that, said the source, all examinations for the two subjects will be entirely in English.

The source added that the ministry had concluded discussions with various parties, including academics and unions, and all parties had agreed to the proposals.

"We are now in the process of writing out the recommendations," he added.

The special committee is headed by Education Director-General Datuk Abdul Rafie Mahat and has representatives from various divisions in the ministry.

It is also learnt that the scheduled presentation to the Cabinet on July 16 and the Cabinet decision on July 17 on the matter have been postponed due to the Pendang parliamentary and Anak Bukit state by-elections on July 18.

Earlier this month, Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad said all questions would be answered and details regarding the introduction of the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English would be revealed after a special Cabinet meeting to be chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.