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English consultants to be placed in districts next year

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - English language consultants will be placed in all district education departments in the country from next year in a move to help beef up the teaching of the language in schools.

Comprising retired teachers, these consultants, who will serve as resource personnel for English teachers, will also be placed in some "big schools". They will work part-time and be paid RM100 an hour.

Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad said the consultants would be "very experienced and have excellent qualifications".

"We will place them in all district education departments and in some big schools like Victoria (Institution) to serve as a resource for other teachers. They will not teach, but give guidance," Musa said after the ministry's post-Cabinet meeting today.

The appointment of language consultants was one of the moves recommended by a special committee established last year to improve the standard of English among schoolchildren.

Clarifying earlier reports that the ministry would pay retired teachers RM100 per hour to teach Science and Mathematics in English, Musa said the RM100 per hour was for these language consultants.

"They will only concentrate on English. They have nothing to do with the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English. They will act as consultants and not teachers."

Musa said retirees would also be recruited to teach English.

"They will work on a full-time contract basis and will be paid monthly. Their pay will be the same as existing teachers.

"We have not recruited them yet. At present, there are already about 300 contract teachers."

Musa said the ministry had also recruited 23 teachers from the United Kingdom to act as English consultants. Four, he said, were already in the country.

On the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English, Musa said from this month, the ministry would start training between 500 and 1,000 teacher trainers.

"These trainers will go on to train other teachers. There will be a cascading effect," he said, adding the ministry planned to train 20,000 primary and secondary school teachers by the end of the year.

The teachers will attend a five-day training course this year, and another six days next year.

Musa also gave an assurance that textbooks for the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English would be ready on time.

He said Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka was publishing Science and Mathematics textbooks for primary schools while private publishers would help out for the secondary level.

"The textbook draft for Standard One is ready. The draft for the first few chapters for the Form One text-books is also ready."

It was earlier announced that Science and Mathematics would be taught in English in Standard One, Form One and Lower Six next year, although Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad later said that some adjustments might be made.