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More Chinese apply for MRSM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The number of Chinese students who applied for Form Four in Mara Junior Science Colleges (MRSM) this year has risen by at least 200 per cent compared with last year following MCA Youth's aggressive campaign.

The movement's education bureau chairman, Dr Wee Ka Siong, said more than 300 Form Three students this year applied for MRSM through MCA. The number was about 100 last year.

"This number excludes those who applied on their own. Our drive to get more non-Malays to enter MRSM has been successful but we must work harder," he said.

He was responding to a statement by Mara chairman Datuk Wira Abu Seman Yusop who had expressed disappointment yesterday over the small number of non-Bumiputeras applying to study in Form One in MRSM.

There are about 300 non-Bumiputera applications for the 260 places but not all who applied qualify.

Abu Seman did not reveal the number of Chinese applicants for Form Four.

Wee, who is Johor Baru MCA Youth chief, said from feedback received, Chinese parents were reluctant to enrol their children for Form One in MRSM.

"The idea of enrolling their children for Form Four seems more agreeable to the parents. Parents are worried that their children would not be able to cope in a fully-residential school with different races. Generally, those who are older can cope better."

Wee said although MCA Youth's campaign had instilled greater awareness among the Chinese, more work needed to be done as many Chinese parents did not know that non-Bumiputera students could enrol in MRSM.

Last year, the then Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad had announced that 10 per cent of the places in MRSM would be allocated to non-Bumiputera students to improve racial unity.

Wee said the colleges were well-equipped and had good teachers and a conducive environment for students to excel in their studies.

"Students admitted into MRSM are generally good in their studies. Having different races mixing together is good for the country. Malaysia needs leaders like that in the future," he added.