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Incentive payments for all, says Musa

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Incentive payments will be made available to all English teachers as well as Science and Mathematics teachers teaching in English, not just those who teach a certain number of periods a week, Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad said today.

Clarifying earlier confusion surrounding a Public Service Department circular stipulating that only those who taught 20 periods a week would qualify, Musa said the ministry, after getting the green light from the PSD, had decided that "all Science and Mathematics teachers teaching in English, and English teachers, will get the critical allowance, as long as they fulfil the minimum weekly requirement of periods.

"This means, in effect, all will be getting the incentive payment. Circulars were issued to all department heads on Feb 6 and eligible teachers will have their allowances backdated to Jan 1. The same applies to teachers at national-type schools," he said after the ministry's post-Cabinet meeting.

According to a Dec 28 PSD circular which was to have come into effect on Jan 1, Science, Mathematics and English teachers in primary schools must teach the subjects for at least 20 periods a week and secondary school teachers for 15 periods to qualify for the incentive.

The monthly allowance for graduate teachers is five per cent of their basic pay and 10 per cent for those with diplomas from teacher training colleges.

Musa had said that all Science, Mathematics and English teachers should get the promised incentive and that the ministry would ask the PSD to review its set conditions.

He said teachers should be eligible for the critical allowance irrespective of the number of periods they teach.

The National Union of the Teaching Profession had said those teaching the three subjects to Standard One pupils in national and vernacular schools would lose out as they taught the subjects for less than 20 periods a week.

On the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English, Musa said everything was running smoothly.

"We have received some reports of problems like synchronising the use of television sets and technical hiccups, but all are minor.

"Not all schools have implemented the move yet, so I do not want to be too optimistic, but we will resolve whatever problems as they arise."

On the committee set up recently and headed by former Education director-general Tan Sri Murad Mohd Noor to make the national school system attractive to all races, Musa said it was a subcommittee working under the main committee headed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He also said the one-month invitation to Sekolah Agama Rakyat teachers to join national schools would not be extended after next week's deadline.