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Increase PE periods to five times a week

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IN NOVEMBER, the NST reported that our Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would personally review and re-invent our school system.

Persatuan Pendidikan Jasmani Sains Sukan Dan Kecergasan Malaysia (PPJSKM) would like to remind our Prime Minister not to forget Physical Education in our Primary and Secondary schools.

We would like him to be the first Asian leader to have the insight, wisdom and understanding to emphasise the importance of Physical Education as a subject in schools, by providing four-to-five periods a week, at least, for the subject and not one-two periods for all Primary and Secondary Schools.

By doing so, he would be the first Asian leader to have moved the importance of PE directly into centre stage of national concerns.

Persons who are physically active and lead reasonably healthy lives not only gain personal benefits but also contribute to important national goals.

The promotion of physically active and healthy lifestyles have become a major public health issue because of the enormous cost associated with health care, and health insurance.

With approximately 4,000 hours given to cognitive subjects and only 150 hours to PE on the present five-years Secondary School curriculum, the schools do not do enough to develop active and fit lifestyle.

Add to this the present computer - IT revolution, our children's lives will become more sedentary.

If Dr Mahathir changes the school system with much greater emphasis given to PE, the future of Malaysia will be brighter.

Below are some of the arguments:

\* A more active, fit, dynamic, action oriented people will be more productive at work because of fewer absenteeism, and we will be in a better position to compete with China.

\* Economically, we will cut costs because of reduction in medical care, health insurance and the building of hospitals.

\* A Malaysia, whose people are healthy, fit, united and happy must be educated physically through quality PE programmes in school.

\* As integrated human beings, if children are healthy and fit they will do better in all areas of life including examinations.

\* Malaysia strives to win medals at the international sports arena, and this depends greatly on the foundations, that are, the basic skills in specific sport and specific sport fitness. These can only be achieved through sound PE and sports programmes in schools.

\* The first teacher of our children are mothers. A physically active and fit mother greatly influences her children towards an active lifestyle.