

PPSMI: 'Give us the option, we'll give you your 2/3rds'
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Parent Action Group for Education Malaysia (PAGE) said both parents and children were "devastated" by the government's move to deny schools the option over the Teaching of Mathematics and Science in English (PPSMI) policy.

"After running this policy for nine years, all science and mathematics teachers, should be able to teach in either language so there is no shortage," said Page chairperson Noor Azimah Abdul Rahim.

Yesterday, Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Muhyiddin Yassin rejected the idea of giving schools the option of continuing the learning of Mathematics and Science in English as it would complicate matters.

"If (schools are allowed) choices, there will be a mess (kucar-kacir) in the education system. It will be hard for the ministry to plan. If a school chooses to teach in English, or in Bahasa Melayu, how will we provide teachers?" Muhyiddin had said.

Noor Azimah, however, explained that if the number of schools that choose English are small, then it would be even easier to provide the teachers.

"The reasons should be addressed head-on and not swept under the carpet after spending RM3 billion of the rakyat's hard-earned income. We want an explanation," said Noor Azimah in another statement.

The government speaks of '1Malaysia' but is yet to show us the '1Malaysia' school, she added.

"The education system has only succeeded in dividing children into race-based schools and now with the relaxation on international schools, dividing the children further through wealth ownership.

"The government speaks of, 'People First', but we feel that we are being treated as 'Parents and their Children Last'.

"There are 5.4 million school-going children and just as many parents who are voters," she said.

"The government says, 'The days the government knows best are over', but it continues to force down inferior education policies on to our children," she said.

She reminded that if the decision to abolish PPSMI was not political, parents should be given the option to choose.

"If it is political, give us the PPSMI option in national primary and secondary schools, and we will give you the two-thirds majority, which you are making increasingly difficult for us to do. Do not make us give the opposition our vote," she warned.

"PPSMI is not 'flawed'. The government made the right decision by introducing PPSMI and will continue to do the right thing if it allows the option," reiterated Noor Azimah.

Page will be seeking to hand over a memorandum to the Prime Minister's Department on the matter tomorrow.

Children, parents 'devastated'

DAP, meanwhile, wants the Education Ministry to allow for flexibility in the PPSMI policy to develop the human capital needed to achieve the high-income economy goal.

Tony Pua (right) stressed that reversal of the policy would not make the learning of the compulsory subjects easier.

“The reversal of the 10-year-old PPSMI policy should not be a complete one - one that throws out the baby with the bath water - but one which takes into account the advantages and disadvantages learnt over the past two decades.

“The new policy must incorporate the flexibility where PPSMI remains an option for schools in the country where parents express support for it,” said Pua, who is also the Petaling Jaya Utara MP.

More effort would be required to roll back the policy, as schools have been conducting Mathematics and Science lessons in English over the past 10 years, he added.

“Secondly, and more importantly, every effort should be made to ensure that our schools are able to produce the best human capital for Malaysia as we seek to be part of the knowledge economy, to become a high income nation.

“The important principle that the Education Ministry must adopt is that advanced students should not be held back because of students who lagged behind academically.

“If parents prefer English as the medium of instruction and the students are more than able to cope, then every effort should be made to allow such schools to continue with PPSMI,” he urged, arguing that reasons of administrative difficulties are “completely unacceptable”.

He called for the ministry to review its complete withdrawal of the policy and allow schools that can cope with the PPSMI policy to continue its efforts.

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