

## **Nail in the coffin for PPSMI, says Muhyiddin**

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**by Nigel Aw**

Education Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said today the decision to discontinue the teaching of mathematics and science in English (PPSMI) policy is final.

So, calls for the programme to be retained are two years too late, said Muhyiddin, who is also deputy prime minister.

NONE "In 2009, (when the abolition of PPSMI was announced) there was no negative reaction. The majority accepted it well.

"I presented it in the cabinet, everyone agreed, I brought it to Parliament and everyone, including the opposition at that time, agreed.

"But now, because there are some groups opposed to it, they (the opposition) want to jump on the bandwagon."

Muhyiddin was responding to calls by non-governmental organisation Parents Action Group for Education (Page) to allow certain schools the option to continue with PPSMI.

"Maybe it's like what (former prime minister) Dr Mahathir (Mohamad) said, that Malaysians forget easily. It was not raised then and a new policy has been implemented two years ago.

"Page doesn't know what is going on, maybe they are ketinggalan zaman (behind time)," he said after attending an English language training project ceremony for teachers in Kuala Lumpur this morning.

Muhyiddin added that the focus now is to create a "soft landing" for the transition from PPSMI to the new Upholding the Malay Language and Strengthening the English Language (MBMMBI) programme.

"I will explain tomorrow on the leeway and the process of transition that will take place," he declared, while acknowledging concerns by parents on how their children would cope with the change.

'Majority understands PPSMI abolition'

Commenting on Page's threat to vote for the opposition if the government remains adamant on this path, Muhyiddin brushed it aside as a minority voice.

“Even though they went overboard with political threats, the government will not bow to such threats. They are a small group, the majority understand (the abolition of PPSMI) .”

Responding to recent calls by MCA and MIC for the government to consider giving schools the option to retain PPSMI, Muhyiddin said that representatives from both MCA and MIC in the cabinet had agreed to its abolition in 2009.

Asked what would happen to the special allowance for teachers teaching PPSMI, Muhyiddin declined to comment, merely stating that it was “the government's affair”.

On a separate matter, Muhyiddin said the decision on appealing the Court of Appeal ruling that Section 15 of the Universities and University Colleges Act is unconstitutional would be left to the Higher Education Ministry.

“However if (Higher Education Minister) Khaled (Nordin) needs advise, he can bring it to the cabinet and we will discuss it.”

Earlier, Muhyiddin met some 200 teachers who have undergone English language training by foreign trainers under a project undertaken by SMR Group, trumpeting it as a better means of improving the command of English language among teachers and students.

“The question is whether the best way to learn English is to learn English in maths and science or to bring in professional teachers? I believe this is a better approach.”