

PKR is against PPSMI, says Nik Nazmi

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PKR is opposing calls to teach Science and Mathematics in English (PPSMI), saying that it is not part of Pakatan Rakyat policy.

The statement yesterday followed its ally DAP's statement on Oct 30 supporting PPSMI as an option for parents who want it.

PKR communications director Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad argued that PPSMI was not the way to master English nor to improve education.

NONEHe added that PPSMI was not mentioned in the Pakatan's Common Policy Framework, also known as 'Buku Jingga' (Orange Book).

PKR asserted that the best way to educate students is to use Bahasa Malaysia because it is familiar to all students and is enshrined in the constitution as the national language.

"Educating students in a language that is foreign to them except for families who are fortunate to come from English-speaking families (which is a minority) will benefit the English-speaking students at the expense of the rest, thus widening inequality," said Nik Nazmi.

He said the effort to master the English language should be done by upgrading the quality of the teachers and syllabus, as well as increasing class hours.

Our 'obsession' with English

According to Nik Nazmi, PPSMI's implementation in 2003 had resulted in teachers who were poor in English being forced to teach it, compounding the problems of non-English speaking students.

He said that Malaysia's "obsession" with English is out of place because the English-speaking world is learning Mandarin, French, Spanish and Arabic as second languages.

"We should be grateful of our diverse heritage where everyone is taught Bahasa Malaysia and English, and should be given the opportunity to learn languages such as Arabic, Mandarin, Tamil and other languages," he said.

The Parents Action Group for Education (Page) had long called for PPSMI to be retained as an option to parents.

"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 on Oct 30.

Yesterday, Education Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said that the decision to discontinue PPSMI was final, and calls for it to continue were two years too late.

The minister had previously said that allowing PPSMI as an option would complicate planning.

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