

Pakatan: Many concerns neglected in blueprint
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Pakatan Rakyat claimed the new National Education Blueprint 2013-2025 tabled by Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin on Friday neglected many concerns and recommendations by stakeholders.

As a result, the opposition grouping's Education Task Force claimed the blueprint does not inspire confidence that substantive renewal and reform of our education system will take place.

In pointing out several deficiencies, the task force said there was no mention of building new schools which are tailored to the need to the needs and demands of parents such as the Sekolah Agama Rakyat and the vernacular schools catering for the Chinese and Tamil communities.

"While we welcome the plan to recruit teachers from the top 30 percent of each graduating cohort, the final blueprint is silent on steps to ensure a more diverse teaching workforce," it said in a statement today.

It also pointed out that the Malaysian Independent Review Panel formed by the minister led by vice-chancellor of Albukhary International University, Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, expressing concern that the blueprint features incremental and administrative changes rather than much-needed reform.

Hence, it said the final product does not seem to have taken the advice of the panel itself.

During the tabling of the blueprint, the DPM, who is also the education minister, had among others said new education system will defend the vernacular schools.

Some of the highlights of the New Education Blueprint included increasing the compulsory schooling years from six to 11 years, and bridging the urban-rural socio-economic gap and gender achievement gap by 2020, and SPM English being made a must-pass subject.

NONEMuhyiddin's (left) tabling also received flak from Chinese education groups when they openly denied that they had agreed to increase the teaching of Bahasa Melayu to 240 minutes, and instead cited they had only agreed to 210 hours as highlighted in a meeting with him last Tuesday.

'Final concerns not addressed'

The opposition coalition said the minister was supposed to embark on a second round of intensive public consultations to gather feedback from different stakeholders to incorporate in the final blueprint.

"Unfortunately, the final document fails to address many of the concerns previously expressed by stakeholders after the release of the preliminary blueprint.

"Furthermore, what is 'new' in the final blueprint is not transformational and fails to give confidence that the state of the education system in Malaysia is making a turn for the better," the opposition claimed.

Pakatan said while the blueprint has given more decision-making power to education at the state and local levels, it made no provision to include state and local governments in the decision-making process.

It also pointed out that while emphasis had been made for vocational education, however it makes no mention of any efforts to streamline technical, vocational and skills training among the different ministries as presently such training are offered by the Human Resources Ministry, the Youth and Sports Ministry and the Education ministry itself.

The statement further said that many non-governmental organisations had requested the ministry not to rush to implement it but allow them to study the final draft, but noted that the minister had turned a deaf ear and had gone ahead with his announcement.

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