

## **Perkasa wants single-stream schools for unity**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**Sept 22<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

Malay rights pressure group Perkasa urges the government to implement single stream schools for the sake of unity.

The call comes after protestors demanded the abolition of Chinese vernacular schools at the rally to “defend Malay dignity”, Himpunan Rakyat Bersatu last week.

Perkasa education bureau chairperson Sirajuddin Salleh said race relations are poor in Malaysia because children are growing up in separate communities.

“They will only be able to make friends, practice tolerance and unite after they leave school. Isn’t that difficult?”

“Perkasa is confident that social stability and national harmony can be achieved through a single stream school, with Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of instruction. It should have been so since independence,” he said in a statement.

He said this should be supported by all peace-loving Malaysians who prioritise unity.

He added single-stream education does not mean that efforts to strengthen command of English as a second language should be shelved.

The call also comes in support of Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department Wahid Omar (photo) who lamented lack of integration at primary school level due to vernacular schools.

"One of the reasons why we lack integration is because our children studied in different schools during primary level.

"It is something we have to tackle so that our children can study in one school, one stream," Wahid was quoted as saying at a forum.

### **Youth Parliament member: Not a constitutional right**

The issue was also debated at Youth Parliament this week.

The motion debated was for the government to implement single stream schools at all levels to build a national identity.

“Those who accuse others of racism keep mum when asked how to deal with it.

“They ridicule 1Malaysia, but when we propose single stream schools, they disagree and claim it is their constitutional right – it is not,” Youth Parliament member Idzham Mohd Hashim Zahrain said on Facebook.

Idzham is a member of the Youth Parliament's socioeconomic committee.

Vernacular education has been a lightning rod for heated discussion, with non-Malay communities viewing abolition of vernacular schools as an attack on culture and identity.

Article 152 (1) (a) states that no person shall be prohibited or prevented from teaching or learning any other language besides Bahasa Malaysia.

However, former Court of Appeal Mohd Noor Abdullah said the constitution does not oblige the government to fund the schools.

Vernacular schools are now partially-funded by the government

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Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/313187>