

'POL will not be made compulsory'
Malaysiakini.com
June 15, 2010
Susan Loone

Education Minister Muhyiddin Yassin has denied that the ministry is planning to make the teaching of Mandarin and Tamil compulsory in schools.

NONEHe said the ministry is only planning to strengthen its current policy of teaching pupils' own language (POL).

The ministry, he said, is also planning to train teachers to teach mother-tongue languages so that even non-Chinese and Tamil students can benefit.

"There are currently 377 Mandarin and 163 Tamil teachers in schools and we want to make the languages available to all students," Muhyiddin told a press conference in Penang today, after opening the St George's 2010 Conference at Universiti Sains Malaysia.

"Whether they want to learn it or not is a different matter, but if the languages were provided, students would sign up for them."

He added that, in the past, there had been some dissatisfaction among non-Malay parents because POL was not provided in the school curriculum.

Muhyiddin, who is also the deputy premier, provided the clarification following a Bernama report yesterday that quoted him as saying that the government wants to make it compulsory for national schools to have Mandarin and Tamil language teachers

In a statement, meanwhile, the LLG Cultural Development Centre expressed its support for compulsory teaching of Mandarin and Tamil.

toh kin woon interview 160605 confidentIts president Toh Kin Woon had urged the ministry to draft the guidelines and implement these as soon as possible, since the matter has long been delayed.

Toh said the proposal would prevent schools from denying the students their right to learn their mother tongue, when there are fewer than 15 pupils involved.

"To emphasise its importance, LLG further suggests that mother tongue language be made a compulsory examination subject," Toh said in a press statement today.

"While preparing for the implementation of the new policy, the Education Ministry should help to solve the long-neglected multiple problems currently faced by mother tongue classes."

'Train more teachers'

Toh, who heads the economics centre in the Socio-Economic and Research Institute, asked the ministry to issue a circular to all schools to conduct mother tongue classes during school hours.

He said the ministry should train sufficient teachers, as the decrease in Chinese-language teachers in national secondary schools is worrying.

"We strongly suggest the government recognises and enrolls holders of the Unified Examination Certificate of Chinese Independent Schools and Malaysian graduates from China and Taiwan universities in teacher training colleges, to resolve the shortage," he said.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malysiakini.com/news/134597>