

20 elite schools to get additional RM700,000
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All the 20 High Performance Schools (HPS) will receive an additional allocation of RM700,000 a year each, Muhyiddin Yassin said today.

The deputy prime minister said the additional allocation could be used for improving teaching and learning, strengthening teacher training and the schools' uniqueness and funding curricular and co-curricular activities.

He said the allocation would be given in a lump sum as soon as possible and the expenditure would be governed by the existing financial regulations.

"Every school already gets an annual allocation but because they have reached the HPS level we give an additional RM700,000 which can be used to upgrade the capability of teachers, training and it's all up to the schools concerned.

"But there are set financial regulations and they cannot spend as they like.

"They must spend the allocation of what they need to raise their performance," Muhyiddin, who is also education minister, told reporters after a ceremony to accord recognition to the HPS at SMK Aminuddin Baki in Kuala Lumpur.

Muhyiddin said a meeting would be held with the principals and head teachers of the 20 HPS to explain the implementation of the HPS and fields which were suitable for them to maintain their status.

He also urged schools which had not been selected in the HPS group not to despair because the selection was an on-going process and they still had a chance to be picked.

"This is the first time where I said the HPS will become the model for all the schools to emulate.

"Maybe after this, we will link the principals and head teachers of the HPS with those who have yet to reach that level, or they can come and witness the teaching and learning of the HPS until they themselves obtain HPS status," he said.

Muhyiddin said schools which were not listed for HPS status should improve their performance in the rankings to be decided by the ministry soon.

"We will announce the rankings of all schools, their strengths and weaknesses. We will announce the rankings of the primary schools at the end of February and the secondary schools later for them to know where they stand.

"If there is anything wanting, they can look at the HPS example. At the same time, the HPS must maintain their status," he said.

Muhyiddin said the ministry would conduct seminars and screenings periodically to ensure that the schools were on the best rankings.

On autonomy for the HPS, he said that they would still had to follow the education policy set by the ministry.

He said every school came under the ministry and were not allowed to do anything that contravened the education policy, including that on the teaching of science and mathematics in English (PPSMI) which the cabinet decided to abolish last July.

"What we have announced will stay... with the HPS, it does not mean that we will change the PPSMI policy. A policy is a still policy. Any change, transformation, or improvement must be based on the policies that have already been announced," he added.

Earlier, in his speech, he advised parents and teachers to avoid placing too much stress on the students, especially those involved in the fast-track programme.

He said parents of brilliant students in the HPS could elect to speed up the learning process of their children in keeping with their ability and inclination.

Smart pupils who exhibit ability to learn quickly could complete 50 per cent of the Year 2 syllabus in Year one and if they could follow the lessons well, could go straight to Year 3, he said.

"However, I wish to stress that the fast-track programme must take into account the emotional quotient of the pupils. The best way is to guide the pupils in their lessons according to their ability and inclination," he said.

- *Bernama*

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