

ICT boost for schools

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Computer access for more students

PETALING JAYA: In a move to take schools in Malaysia fully into the information and communication technology era, the Education Ministry's target is to reduce the present computer to student ratio from 1:40 to at least 1:20.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the ministry planned to achieve this under its "Making Schools Smart" programme by building more computer laboratories and access centres in schools.

"And it is also our target to have a computer to teacher ratio of at least 1:2," he said. The existing computer to teacher ratio is 1:3.

According to Hishammuddin, the ministry has built 5,266 computer laboratories and 1,584 access centres - essentially cybercafes - in schools nationwide and 97% of schools have broadband access.

The ministry, he said, had originally planned to have another 2,000 access centres.

"But to ensure that students in rural areas are not left out, an additional RM72mil has been allocated to build a further 1,600," he said in a statement yesterday.

Other additional allocations made include:

- RM72.1mil to equip preschool classes with five desktop computers for every 25 pupils in one class;
- RM113mil for courseware for teachers and students; and
- RM82mil to provide schools with teleconferencing facilities, satellite telephones and wireless faxes.

"Under the programme, I hope we can transform the way teachers teach and students learn. This also includes the way teachers evaluate and assess their students and the way schools are managed," Hishammuddin said.