

**RM100 Student Aid Sourced From Consolidated Fund
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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 16 (Bernama) -- The RM100 assistance for primary and secondary school students is sourced directly from this year's Treasury Consolidated Settlement of Accounts Fund, said Deputy Education Minister Datuk Wee Ka Siong.

He said as the fund was approved by the Treasury, the Education Ministry does have to use next year's budget allocation for the purpose.

"After holding discussions with the Accountant-General's Department and the Finance Ministry, we agreed to set up a trust account and use the money, and not the money from next year's allocation," he said when winding up debate on the Supply Bill at the Dewan Rakyat.

Earlier, several opposition members disputed the government's decision to distribute the aid now as the allocation was approved for next year by the Dewan Rakyat.

Wee said the aid was being distributed to enable parents and guardians to make an early preparation before schools reopen next year.

The RM100 assistance for 5.3 million primary and secondary school students, which was announced in the 2012 Budget, was distributed since last week.

Wee said the ministry did not turn its back on Parliament in disbursing the handouts as claimed by Fong Po Kuan (DAP-Batu Gajah) and M.Kulasegaran (DAP-Ipoh Barat) or had violated the Constitution.

"After the debate at the policy stage at the Dewan Rakyat on Nov 1, the Education Ministry had an in-depth discussion with the Finance Ministry to look into the possibility of channelling the allocation to students as promised without breaching Parliament proceedings," he said.

He said although all students would be eligible for the assistance, parents and guardians could opt out from receiving it.

To another question from Kulasegaran, Wee said the decision whether such assistance would be continued next year and given based on family background would depend on the government's financial position.

On the proposed nine-hour work day pilot project which will be introduced in four states next year, he said Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin would make the decision soon.

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