

## **Plan to transform rural schools**

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URBAN STANDARD: Performance of 1,153 schools to be boosted within 10 years

KUALA LUMPUR: A MASTER plan to reduce the academic gap between urban and rural schools is in the pipeline.

Aimed at transforming rural schools and improving their performance, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said the Rural Education Transformation Plan aimed to lift the achievements of 1,153 rural secondary schools to be on a par with the National Average Grade within 10 years.

Muhyiddin, who is also education minister, said the ministry's director-general, Datuk Seri Abdul Ghafar Mahmud, had been tasked with preparing a report on the matter before the end of the year.

"I have decided to come up with a rural education transformation plan which will focus on rural schools and improve their academic standing," he said after visiting SM Sains Alam Shah to meet students collecting their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia examination results yesterday.

The rural education transformation plan will look into:

TEACHING STAFF: whether teachers' expertise can meet school needs;

FACILITIES: whether school buildings are comfortable with well-equipped labs and infrastructure;

QUALITY OF EDUCATION: how subjects, especially core subjects, are taught;

RESOURCES: the allocation for rural schools might be increased depending on the need; and,

PARENTAL ROLE: a study may be conducted on the students' home environment and the role of parent-teacher associations.

Muhyiddin expressed hope that the plan could be carried out by next year. He also said the ministry planned to bridge the performance gap between Bumiputera students and other races.

On the SPM results, Muhyiddin congratulated the students, parents and teachers for their hard work.

"This is the best results in five years," he said, while pointing out there was still room for improvement.

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