

**Parliament: Ministry Formulating Strategic Plan On Education System Direction
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 15 (Bernama) -- The Education Ministry is holding a series of national dialogues beginning next month till the end of the year to gather inputs for the preparation of an education development blueprint, said the Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

Muhyiddin, who is also the Minister of Education, told the Dewan Rakyat today that the plan would be used to formulate a roadmap to determine the future direction of the national education system.

"We expect the preliminary blueprint to be ready by the end of September and the final report would be out in December followed by the formulation and development of the new education strategic plan," he said at the question and answer session in Parliament here.

He was replying to a question from Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing (BN-Bintulu) who wanted to know if the ministry planned to review the current education system so that it balanced the development of pupils in terms of the knowledge, physical, spiritual and moral aspects.

Muhyiddin said the education assessment system would be implemented by the Project Management Office which was headed by the Education Director-general who would take into consideration nine fields of priorities that had been identified.

The nine fields are teachers, school leaders, school quality, curriculum and assessment, command of multiple languages, post secondary education opportunities, parents and communities, resource efficiency and effectiveness as well as education delivery system.

Muhyiddin said the government had appointed two panels to evaluate the results of the assessment carried out by the Project Management Office.

"For the national level panel, we have appointed several education experts to provide inputs on education and we have also appointed four foreign experts from several countries for the global aspects of education," he said.

Replying to a supplementary question by Tiong on whether the government would consider the aspect of school infrastructure development throughout the country under the Strategic Plan, Muhyiddin said this had already started, and there was no need to wait for the report to be completed.

He said according to an audit report received by a committee chaired by the Deputy Education Minister, there were 600 schools including those in Sabah and Sarawak that had been identified as being in very poor condition.

"From the development allocation provided by Parliament with the approval of the ministry, we spent a large portion for infrastructure development including the special allocation passed by Parliament with the goodwill of the Prime Minister where RM200 million were for schools in Sabah and Sarawak," he said.

Replying to a supplementary question by Saifuddin Nasution (PKR-Machang) on the need to introduce the component of mindmap under the I-Think system, Muhyiddin said it was required to encourage creative and critical thinking among school children.

"It does not mean that teachers are not skilful..they are trained. The outcome of this project is the students..their thinking skills may be limited. As such we tried this subject and from the feedback we received, they could understand better and were more creative in the subjects taught," he said.

About 700 teachers have been trained to undertake the I-Think system and 10,000 students were involved in the pioneering phase now being implemented in 10 schools.

Muhyiddin said the teachers taught would guide other teachers to enable the system to be implemented on more widely.

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