

**Government Concerned With Drop In Science Stream Students – Muhyiddin Bernama
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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 6 (Bernama) -- The Education Ministry will look at ways to encourage more students to take up Science subjects due to a drop in recent years.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said a special committee comprising experts and academicians was set up to assist the ministry in drafting an action plan to overcome the situation.

Muhyiddin who is also the Education Minister said only 20 percent of the 472,541 students who sat for Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) were science stream students.

"The less than 20 percent figure is nowhere near the ministry's projected 60 percent Science and technical and 40 percent Arts students. So, we have to increase it to 60 percent," he told reporters after visiting students who were sitting for SPM examination at SMK Taman Kosas, Ampang here today.

Muhyiddin who was accompanied by Education Ministry director-general Tan Sri Abdul Ghafar Mahmud and school head Jahani Kafi, spent about 30 minutes at the school where 483 students sat for their English 1 and 2 papers today.

The Deputy Prime Minister said the committee had yesterday, based on its initial study, made 15 recommendations that would be studied by the ministry to increase the number of science students.

Muhyiddin said the ministry viewed the drop in science stream students seriously, especially so because Malaysia was a developing country.

"Just like any developing nation, Malaysia need experts in the fields of engineering, science, medicine and other technological sectors. Drop in interest in Science subjects may stunt efforts to improve technological innovations to make Malaysia a high income nation," he said.

He said among factors that contributed to the drop was lack of support from parents, qualified teachers and lack of laboratories in schools while much effort would be channeled to improve teaching and learning methods, infrastructure, content and quality of teachers.

Muhyiddin said his ministry would strive to increase the number of science students by another 10 percent by 2014.

He said the ministry was considering giving incentives to students and parents to encourage them to take up Science subjects, including giving free books and grants for students, and tax relief for parents.

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