

**Muhyiddin should apologise for misleading statement on BM lessons, say DAP
Malaysian Insider
Sept 7 , 2013**

Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin should publicly apologise for claiming that Chinese education groups have agreed to the Education Ministry's blueprint proposal to have 240 minutes of weekly Bahasa Malaysia lessons in vernacular schools.

This demand from the DAP comes after three Chinese education groups denied they had agreed to Muhyiddin's proposal.

DAP vice-chairman Teresa Kok (pic) said the move to raise the current language lessons from 180 to 240 minutes had obviously ignored the wishes of the Chinese community and will be met with strong objections.

"It is obvious the Ministry's formula is a 'two-step forward, one-step back' strategy. The Chinese community must protest against the ministry's decision," she said in a statement today.

The United Chinese School Teachers' Association (Jiao Zong), Federation of Chinese Associations Malaysia (Hua Zong) and the National Union of Heads of Schools had issued a joint statement to deny Muhyiddin's claim that they had agreed to the revision, as their proposal has always been for 210 minutes a week.

"We are shocked and deeply regret the deputy prime minister's statement. It is not true at all," they said in a joint statement yesterday.

The three groups said their views were clearly conveyed in a meeting with Muhyiddin last Tuesday, in which Jiao Zong also submitted a memorandum jointly signed by 732 Chinese primary schools, 1,604 boards of directors, parents and teachers associations and alumni associations from 732 schools, asking the ministry to respect their wishes.

Kok said it was clear that Muhyiddin had misled the public.

"I don't wish to call Muhyiddin a liar but it is baffling how he could have made such a claim. He should immediately clarify the matter and tender a public apology.

"More importantly, he should comply with the wishes of the Chinese community and withdraw the 240 minutes a week formula," she said.

DAP assistant national publicity secretary Teo Nie Ching said having more Bahasa Malaysia lessons will not guarantee students' proficiency in the language.

"Though the intention of the government may seem noble, it is questionable if extra Bahasa Malaysia classes will indeed be the right approach and ultimate solution," she said.

She added what is more important are teacher quality and content of syllabus in determining students' proficiency. - September 7, 2013.

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