

## **PAS tells Education Ministry to postpone new school-based assessment system**

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**BY MUSLIZA MUSTAFA**

PAS has urged the Education Ministry to postpone implementing a new student-based assessment system (SBA) and engage the teaching fraternity which has complaints about the new system.

The Islamist party's information chief Datuk Mahfuz Omar said Education Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin should tackle the issue, rather than dismiss their complaints against it.

"A discussion and solution should be found before the teachers went on a protest, not after they protested," said Mahfuz (pic) today at a press conference.

Suara Guru Masyarakat Malaysia or Teacher-Community Voices Malaysia (SGMM), a pressure group representing teachers, is planning a protest in front of the Education Ministry in Putrajaya on February 22, despite the ministry's call to return to the dialogue table.

SGMM spokesman Mohd Nor Izzat Mohd Johari yesterday said the group was adamant about calling for an end to the three-year-old system before it was used on Form Three students this year. They hoped to attract about 200 teachers to join in what would be one of the rarest public shows of discontent by civil servants towards the government.

They fear that weaknesses in its implementation and the overall confusion by a majority of teachers and school administrators on how to implement SBA would affect those sitting for the lower secondary examination, or PMR.

Mahfuz urged Muhyiddin to respond to the teachers' plea.

"We need a solution. Find a better system or improvise the new system based on the discussion with the teachers. We do not want the system to be implemented in haste and later draw a barrage of criticism," said Mahfuz, and referred to the now scrapped Teaching of Maths and Sciences in English (PPSMI) initiative.

PPSMI drew criticism from various quarters over poor planning and lack of materials and teachers, causing many to leave the profession for not being able to handle the task.

Mahfuz said there should be a reasonable approach in solving complaints regarding the SBA.

"If there is a weakness in the system, then tweak it," he added.

On February 7, Education Minister II Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh urged the group to stop its plan to protest.

"There is no need (for a protest). In the past, it was this system that they wanted because the old system was too exam-orientated.

"They can tell the Exams Board, Education Department director or even me what the problems are. We hope that teachers do not rush into things and give us time to implement (improvements)," Idris said, as quoted by Bernama.

SBA was implemented in 2011 starting with Primary One pupils, and later extended to cover Form One classes in 2012.

The system, which does away with annual exams, is part of the government's efforts to produce more well-rounded students.

Under the system, teachers would grade pupils each day on a subject, based on a six-band spectrum, starting from band one "understand" (the lowest) to band six "exemplary" (the highest). Data is entered each day into a centralised computer system.

This year's Form Three students are the first batch who underwent two years of SBA starting from 2012. – February 10, 2014.

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