

DAP asks what went wrong with students' international performance
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MPs tell education ministry to provide report explaining the low response rate from schools sampled for the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) global rankings.

KUALA LUMPUR: Three DAP parliamentarians have called on the education ministry to issue a detailed report on how Malaysia was left out of the latest rankings in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

In a statement today, they asked the ministry to explain why the weighted response rate among the initially sampled Malaysian schools came up to only 51% – far short of the standard PISA response rate of 85%.

The statement by Petaling Jaya Utara MP Tony Pua, Serdang MP Ong Kian Ming and Bukit Bendera MP Zairil Khir Johari said the exclusion under the programme conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2015 had put Malaysia in an embarrassing situation.

“The Ministry of Education should not be boasting about Malaysia’s improvement in its PISA scores since the PISA report has clearly stated that our 2015 scores cannot be compared with past PISA scores,” they said.

They said the ministry should issue a detailed report on the sample of schools included in the PISA test and explain why the response rate of 85% was not reached.

The MPs noted that Deputy Education Minister Chong Sin Woon had said in December 2016 that such a detailed report would be released but that there had been none thus far.

The statement said the ministry had, in a written reply to Pua on March 22, cited the low response as due to students not being used to answering the questions using computers, resulting in their responses not being recorded.

It also said there were technical problems such as damaged data and data which was lost during the taking of the test.

Dismissing these as “excuses” the MPs said the ministry had at least two years, starting in 2013, to prepare for the 2015 PISA test.

“This is not the first time which Malaysia is going through the PISA process,” the statement said.

“In 2009, the response rate for the students selected was 99.3% and in 2012, it was 100%. How was it that in 2015, the response rate had dropped to 51%?”

The MPs stressed that prior to the release of the PISA report, the ministry had given assurances that both students and teachers had been adequately prepared for the taking and administering of the PISA tests.

“The admission of these technical failures shows that the Ministry of Education was grossly incompetent in administering the 2015 PISA tests,” the statement said.

“In doing so, it has put Malaysia in an embarrassing situation of not being featured in the PISA rankings.”

They also pointed to the poor performance of Malaysian students in the assessment in 2009 where Malaysia was ranked in the bottom third of all countries, as was highlighted in the National Education Blueprint 2013 to 2025.

They added that Malaysia’s performance in the 2012 PISA test did not show significant improvement.

They said Malaysia was not included in the 2015 ranking even though the country’s scores for Reading, Mathematics and Science showed an increase from 2012 to 2015 (from 398 to 431 for Reading, from 421 to 446 in Mathematics, from 420 to 443 in Science).

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