

We want to teach

By KAREN CHAPMAN

THE Education Ministry should look into how teachers' workload can be reduced. National Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP) secretary-general Lok Yim Pheng said teachers want to be able to concentrate on their core business of teaching and developing their students' potential.

“We hope that in conjunction with Teachers Day this year, the ministry will come up with some concrete measures to resolve matters related to paperwork such as processing of data and filling in forms and reports. Such ‘chores’ need to be reduced including the numerous trips in which teachers are required to accompany students for events held outside the school,” she said in an interview.

Lok said the union had received many complaints from teachers on the matter.

“The complaints we have received from our teachers is that much of the paperwork is last minute or done on an ad-hoc basis. Due to this, sometimes teachers let students do their own work in class so they can complete the paperwork to meet the deadline,” she said.

At the end of the day, she added, it is the students who have lost out.



LOK: The ministry should look into creating more posts such as teaching assistants to aid teachers in their paperwork.

To solve this perennial problem, Lok hoped the ministry would look into creating more posts such as teaching assistants who would be able to help teachers with the paperwork aspects or to hire more clerical staff.

Teachers are not just bogged down with paperwork, she said, adding that they also have added responsibilities.

They assume the role of ICT coordinators which means they have to deal with the school labs and maintain computers; assets coordinators where they have to record the school's assets or being put in charge of textbooks.

Lok said teachers were also required to accompany students for the various inter-school competitions.

“This means the students who are left behind in the school lose out because the relief teacher will not be able to teach the subject,” she said.

She said NUTP hoped that one of the first tasks newly-appointed Education Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin would look into was to reduce teachers' workload.

On another matter, Lok hoped the ministry would extend the cut-off age for teachers who want to upgrade themselves with Master's or PhD degrees to 45 from the present age limit of 40.

“These are requests from the teachers themselves,” she added.

The upgrading for primary school teachers should also be extended from 45 to 47 years of age.

“The union also hopes that the minister can be given the authority to decide on service matters and allowances related to teachers as he would be the best person to do so,” she said.

She also said that all future school heads should be trained before they are placed in schools.

“They should be trained in management and finance and in leadership skills because it is the school head's responsibility to come up with a proper plan or blue print for the school,” she added.