Blueprint on education reforms

> Ministry to engage stakeholders in a series of dialogues nationwide

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BANGI: A blueprint on national education reforms will be drawn up by August this year, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said yesterday.

Muhyiddin, who is also education minister, said the blueprint will be announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak after the first phase of the proposed reforms is completed.

In the first phase – which is the evaluation of the education system – the ministry will be engaging stakeholders, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), teachers’ unions and the public, in a series of dialogues to be held nationwide over the next three months.

“The first dialogue session is to inform ministry officers on the reasons for reforms, and to engage our officers for their ideas and opinions,” Muhyiddin told a press conference at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia here.

“It will be followed by another dialogue session with NGOs and teachers’ unions, and finally with the public and any other stakeholders.”

He said the ministry is open to all ideas, suggestions and opinions.

“Our priority now is to engage. If we feel that the idea is good one, and can be implemented but does not go against national interest, we will accept,” he said, adding the ministry would be “very open about the whole matter”.

“A full report will be also ready by the end of the year, following which it will be presented to the cabinet.”

Muhyiddin said he cannot predict what reforms would be in store, but the target areas of discussion have been determined.

However, the solutions to problems in vernacular schools, especially the shortage of teachers in Chinese primary schools, will not be a part of the reforms.

“That is a matter of administration, not policy. The problem here is shortage of teachers, so it is about implementation. With or without this series of dialogues the matter will be solved,” the deputy premier said.

Earlier during the launch of the first dialogue session among ministry officers, Muhyiddin also announced the addition of five new members to the National Education System Evaluation Panel, which was formed last December.

The new members are Tan Sri Kamal Hassan (Universiti Islam Antarabangsa), Datuk Dr Adi Badiazaman Tuah, Datuk Chuah Hean Telik (Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman), Dr N. Rajendran (Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris) and Dr Abdul Kadir Rosline (UiTM Sabah).

The panel, which is chaired by Albukhary International University vice-chancellor Tan Sri Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, comprises of six other experts from various sectors, including corporate leaders.

The panel is to provide advice and expertise, as well as obtain various perspectives on the national education system.