

No need for cluster schools, just smart HMs

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REFER to "Cluster school status for those with potential too" (*Sunday Star*, July 1) and "Consider study plan to surge ahead" (*The Star*, July 5).

From what I gather, the cluster school is not about the children. It's about the school administration, position of the school head and its powers.

While the intention appears noble, selecting certain schools that meet certain criteria, from the original release it can be seen that the schools that have been selected are actually already successful in their own right.

Most of the schools in Kuala Lumpur have a long successful and colourful history attached to them. Despite having the same limitations with other government schools, they managed to stand out among the crowd. In other words they have a proven recipe that has taken years to blend and developed.

Under the cluster school concept, the Ministry of Education is giving school heads additional powers and financial muscle.

This would probably see only very small changes made in such schools due to the proven recipe.

I suppose if you identify a very good school head and give him or her all the powers and move him or her to a not so shining school,

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he or she will definitely make major differences in the final outcome on what is being planned.

The point I am trying to make here is that it is not the school that should be labelled cluster or smart but rather the focus should be on human resource development.

The direction of the school very much lies in the hand of its executive. The focus then should be on performing school heads and getting them to share their knowledge, expertise and know-how with other school heads. Let them tell the others what their secret formula is.

The future challenges of this country are peace, tolerance and global changes. If we look at the situation today and compare it with that in the 50s or 60s I think, Malaysia was more Malaysian then.

There was greater peace, less social ills, greater tolerance and fantastic relationships between the people. Schools were flourishing. Past students got involved with alumnis. They grew old with the school. Why is it not the same today?

My assessment is that the school system currently is about producing students with greater numbers of As.

Success is being measured in the number of students producing 5As, 10As or 17As.

For the sake of the country I believe there is a need to review the direction of the education system.

The school should return to its basic form. It must create a strong bond with the community. It is where we produce human beings and not students with 10As.

The smart school has to some extent failed to live up to its desired expectations. Let's not make the same mistake again.

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