

## 'Disinterest' driving teachers' early retirement

AN average of over 5,000 teachers are opting for early retirement every year since 2022, and most of them cited lack of interest towards the profession as a reason, the Dewan Rakyat was told.

Deputy Education Minister Wong Kah Woh said 5,306 early retirement applications were approved in 2022, followed by 6,394 in 2023, 5,082 last year and 2,397 up till May this year.

According to Wong, 67.44% of teachers in their early retirement application forms stated that they are disinterested in the profession, 17.44% cited family problems, 7.69% cited health issues, 5.37% was due to the workload and 2.08% cited personal problems.

Wong said the Education Ministry is committed to addressing the manpower issue involving teachers, and that is why it

recruits full-time teachers twice a year, while the Education Services Commission (SPP) now allows applications for teacher posts throughout the year to expedite recruitment.

"This will allow SPP to have a huge talent pool, so we can attract more people to become teachers," said Wong in Parliament yesterday.

Wong also said that recently, on Aug 8, the Education Ministry through SPP has opened up recruitment of teachers for those without any certificate or diploma in education.

"We managed to recruit graduates from public, private and foreign universities," he added.

He also said that beginning last year, the ministry intervened in early retirement applications involving teachers in the age

group of 40-44.

"We held discussions with them and tried to persuade them to change their decision to retire early," added Wong.

Earlier, Datuk Mas Ermieyati Samsudin (PN-Masjid Tanah) asked about measures taken to reduce the workload on teachers, as many have complained of the workload and overlapping duties.

Wong said that to ensure teachers remained motivated on the job, the ministry has implemented seven measures to reduce the workload of teachers, among them hiring non-teachers as invigilators for the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination.

"We aim for at least 20% of invigilators to be non-teachers. But we still have not achieved that target yet."

According to Wong, there were

7,211 volunteer invigilators in 2023 and 5,780 last year.

"We also have another approach to appoint MyStep teaching assistants at schools with above 1,500 pupils," he said.

"These assistants can help reduce the workload of teachers by taking on non-instructional or administrative work," he added.

Wong said that 282 schools have benefited from this programme, where each school will have two MyStep teaching assistants.

"This brings it up to a total of 564 (MyStep teaching assistants). This effort will be expanded to other schools in the near future," he added.

Education activists have said that the teacher shortage and overburdened teachers are issues that could worsen if the ministry fails to take complaints seriously.