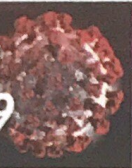


Boost for digital learning at Chinese independent schools

RM1.5mil from Johor govt to also benefit non-profit university college

Battling Covid-19



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THE Johor government's RM1.5mil allocation for 10 Chinese independent schools and a non-profit university college comes as a great relief to the institutions in their efforts to help financially strapped students and move digital learning to the next level.

Johor Chinese Schools Committees Associations chairman Tan Tai Kim said the Covid-19 pandemic was a test to the education sector as they were forced to be quick on their feet in effectively adapting to the new normal of conducting online classes.

He thanked the state government, saying that the allocation would greatly help independent schools as fundraising efforts and programmes had to be put on hold due to the pandemic.

"The pandemic has affected all aspects and industries since last year and independent schools, which are not funded by the government, are among those affected.

"Many families are facing financial constraints as a result of job loss and pay cuts.

"With the state's funding, the schools can continue to offer dis-



Tan (right) handing over a letter of appreciation to Tee for the RM1mil allocated to the 10 Chinese independent schools in Johor.

counted fees and other aids to help reduce parents' burden," he said in an interview in Johor Baru.

Tan, who is also educationist group Dong Zong president, said on average, the annual fees for a student of an independent school was RM4,859.

Datuk Tee Siew Kiong, who is adviser to the Johor Mentri Besar, had announced that RM1mil would be channelled to the 10 independ-

ent schools in the state while RM500,000 would go towards Southern University College (SUC).

Tan said with RM100,000 given to each of the 10 independent schools, including two Foon Yew High School branches in Kulai and Seri Alam, the schools could improve their facilities to offer better quality online classes and vocational courses.

He lauded the state government's move, as the allocation reflected its recognition of Chinese independent school education.

"The RM1mil, made possible with Tee's assistance, is considered a breakthrough as Johor independent schools did not receive any allocation in 2020.

"In 2019, the schools received an RM540,000 allocation and in 2018, it was RM450,000.

"Independent school education is part of the national education system and has played a part in producing talents and leaders that contribute to the nation.

"However, the schools continue to face funding challenges every year, and we hope that the government can include these non-profit institutions in its budget to assist them as education providers," he added.

Tan also said that Johor has a total of 21,481 students at the 10 independent schools, which is around 26.7% of the country's student population.

Meanwhile, SUC chairman Datuk Vincent Tan said the RM500,000 allocation was the first government fund received by the higher education institution this year.

"The funding comes at a time of need to maintain the campus facilities and ensure that classes can continue without disruption.

"I hope that other elected representatives can continue to assist in the development of Chinese education, including matters such as the tax exemption for donations to the university college," Vincent added.