砂拉越華校董事聯合會總會
The Sarawak United Association of Chinese School Boards of Management

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Sarawak Dong Zong Statement
13 October 2025

2026 Federal Budget Perpetuates Inequity Federal Government Lacks Sincerity and Resolve in Advancing Mother-Tongue Education

1. The Sarawak United Association of Chinese School Boards of Management (Sarawak Dong Zong) expresses deep regret and serious concern over the lack of meaningful progress in funding for Chinese education under the 2026 Federal Budget.

2. Despite the Ministry of Education (MoE) receiving RM66.2 billion, representing 21.5% of the total national budget and an increase of RM2.1 billion from the previous year, there remain no concrete policies or dedicated allocations for Chinese primary schools (SJKCs) and Independent Chinese Secondary Schools (ICSSs).

3. Sarawak Dong Zong maintains that genuine educational equity requires the restoration of the pre-2017 practice of explicitly itemising allocations for SJKC maintenance and the establishment of a permanent, transparent funding mechanism. The current "unified application" system has resulted in excessive bureaucracy, uncertainty, and administrative barriers, thereby undermining fairness and efficiency.

4. The requirement for schools to submit three separate quotations when applying for maintenance funds imposes an unnecessary administrative burden, particularly on rural schools with limited resources. Moreover, the concentration of approval authority within district and federal agencies has led to inefficiency and a lack of transparency in decision-making.

5. In recent years, several major SJKCs in Kuching and all SJKCs in Bintulu received no maintenance allocations, reflecting systemic flaws and administrative bias. Official data indicate that total maintenance allocations for SJKCs over the past few years amounted to less than RM50 million—a figure grossly disproportionate to the overall education budget.

6. Sarawak Dong Zong calls on the federal government to explicitly list dedicated maintenance allocations for SJKCs in the national budget and to delegate approval authority to the Office of the Deputy Minister of Education to enhance transparency and accountability

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7. It is deeply disappointing that, despite repeated assurances from the Prime Minister regarding support for Chinese education, no tangible measures have been implemented. In contrast, the Sarawak Government has consistently provided direct financial assistance to both SJKCs and ICSSs, demonstrating genuine commitment to mother-tongue education. The disparity between federal rhetoric and action underscores a lack of political sincerity and administrative resolve.

8. Long-standing issues such as SJKC establishment and relocation continue to face bureaucratic resistance and delays. The “10+6” SJKCs construction and relocation plan approved in 2017 remains largely unimplemented and is repeatedly revived during election periods as a political tool, revealing the federal government’s opportunistic attitude towards Chinese education.

9. Sarawak Dong Zong reiterates its long-standing call for the establishment of an Independent Chinese Secondary School Education Development Fund under the federal budget to provide sustainable support for facility upgrades, campus development, teacher training, and curriculum enhancement.

10. While the MOE receives the largest departmental allocation, mother-tongue education—an essential pillar of Malaysia’s multicultural education framework, continues to be marginalised. Continued administrative delays, ambiguous allocations, and politicised handling of Chinese education issues threaten not only educational equity but also the foundations of social harmony and national unity.

11. Sarawak Dong Zong urges the federal government to review its education resource distribution policies with fairness, transparency, and reason. True reform requires political courage and principled governance; without these, public confidence will continue to erode, and the nation’s long-term cohesion and trust will be gravely undermined.

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