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## Free SPM tuition scheme a hit

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Minister hopes other YBs will start theirs

# Free SPM tuition scheme a hit

### Samantha Sulit

KOTA KINABALU: Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Sabah and Sarawak) Datuk Mustapha Sakhmud (pic) said a free tuition initiative for SPM students in Sepanggar parliamentary constituency, which began with a small group of 120 students at the MP's office, has now expanded.



"Due to increasing demand, there are now satellite tuition centres at SMK Bandaraya and SMK Telipok, and later extended further to SMK Tebobon," he said during the 'Jom Masuk Universiti 2026' carnival held at University Malaysia Sabah (UMS).

Mustapha, who is also Sepanggar Member of Parliament, said the success of the initiative reflected strong community response and sustained interest from stu-

dents and parents seeking additional academic support.

"Many of the students targeted by the programme are not academically weak, but rather students who initially lack motivation or direction. With structured guidance and free tuition support, many have shown significant improvement," he added.

He shared that tracking efforts indicate that a notable number of participants have successfully progressed to university admission in recent years, with results continuing to improve annually.

He hoped that other parliamentary constituencies will follow suit, introducing initiatives that will help students improve academically.

"The government is also strengthening its support system for students from lower-income households through a wide range of financial aid schemes aimed at improving access to higher education," he said, highlighting a few key schemes including the Dermasiswa B40 TVET pro-

gramme under the Ministry of Higher Education (KPT).

The support covers full tuition fees and related educational expenses, helping reduce the financial burden on families while encouraging more students to enter skills-based and industry-relevant fields.

Other initiatives include Program Sulung, prioritising students from B40 families who are the first in their family to attend university, as well as Tenaga Nasional Berhad's (TNB) "My Brighter Future" scholarship programme where students are offered financial support along with university placement opportunities.

He also noted that the National Higher Education Fund Corporation (NHEFC) has expanded its support model to include scholarship-based assistance for underprivileged students.

"This initiative targets students from poor households, particularly those listed under national poverty databases, and fully funds their studies without repay-

ment obligations," he said.

Meanwhile, Mustapha stressed the role of the "Jom Masuk University" carnival as a key platform in connecting students with higher education institutions and helping them make informed academic choices.

"This programme helps bridge the information gap between institutions and students, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas," he said.

He explained that this year's programme also introduced the "Dreams X" theme, emphasising three core elements – Experience, Explore and Excel, intended to guide students through a more structured decision-making process as they prepare for higher education.

"I hope that both students and parents will fully utilize the 'Jom Masuk Universiti' programme to obtain accurate and comprehensive information about courses and opportunities before making decisions about higher education pathways," he said.