The Star

Brunei King Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah announces that compulsory schooling to begin at age five

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Brunei King Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah (right) announces that compulsory schooling to begin at age five. - Borneo Bulletin/ANN

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (Borneo Bulletin/ANN): Brunei king Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah consented to the amendment of the Compulsory Education Act Chapter 211, pertaining to the compulsory age for children to go to school, from six to five.

His Majesty said this in a titah during the 33rd Teacher's Day celebration yesterday.

"The amendment aims to strengthen early childhood education, which is a key aspect in building the foundation for children's cognitive, social and emotional development," the monarch said.

His Majesty also consented science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) subjects being made core electives to support a high-quality education system aligned with current needs and developments.

The monarch said, "It can no longer be denied that STEAM skills can enhance students' creative and innovative thinking, thus preparing them to face the increasingly complex world."

In addition, Sultan Hassanal applauded the initiatives in ensuring that STEAM skills are not only being implemented into regular curriculum, but also in co-curricular activities.

On inclusivity and equality in education, His Majesty welcomed the efforts made by the Ministry of Education in caring for the well-being and education of students with special needs.

The monarch also remarked on the establishment of the first special needs school in the country. His Majesty said it was an achievement that could act as a catalyst to involving the community in caring for students with special needs.

His Majesty believes that with policy changes and increased expectations on the teachers, “it is now time for relevant bodies to review and streamline the Teachers’ Service Scheme (SPG).

“Aside from tasks such as improving the workflow of teachers and recruitment, the ministry must also consider additional tasks taken on by the teachers as essential components of the appraisal”.

The monarch also expressed the hope that all the educational plans will bring the country closer to the goals of Brunei Vision 2035.

His Majesty also noted and recognised the crucial role that technical and vocational education institutions and higher education institutions play in developing human capital. – Rokiah Mahmud (Borneo Bulletin/ANN)