

DPP cities reject new curriculum

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History and civics teachers yesterday protest in front of the Ministry of Education in Taipei to back calls for it to postpone implementation of new high-school curriculum guidelines.

Photo: Wang Min-wei, Taipei Times

The six cities and counties governed by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) are uniting to refuse to adopt the Ministry of Education's plan to revise the national high-school curriculum, which they said ran counter to regulations, customary procedures and the historical truth, the party said yesterday.

A meeting of the party's Central Standing Committee drew up three countermeasures against the ministry's textbook outlines that critics say are an attempt to "de-Taiwanize" the nation's history, DPP spokesperson Lin Chun-hsien (林俊宏) said.

Greater Kaohsiung, Greater Tainan and Yilan, Yunlin, Chiayi and Pingtung counties will not adopt the new curriculum — and the party's first step is to join forces with academics and civic organizations to speak out against the ministry's "illegitimate" plan and the "erroneous" historical perception it seeks to instill, and to mobilize the resources at its disposal for any protests against it, Lin said.

He said the DPP caucus plans to pressure the ministry into rescinding the proposal in the next legislative session, which starts on Feb. 21.

"The party reached a consensus with the leaders of all six DPP-governed cities and counties to boycott the ministry's curriculum adjustment plan, which is a result of backroom deals," Lin said.

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The ministry's adjustments were proposed less than two years after the implementation of the current outlines, which is four years before the legally regulated interval of six years between national curriculum revisions, he said.

"The planned adjustments are set to 'de-Taiwanize' high-school textbooks and make them more China-oriented, which the DPP strongly opposes," Lin said.

The ministry announced on Jan. 27 that it had approved a new curriculum for Chinese literature and social sciences that it said contained "slight adjustments" based on the Constitution. History textbooks would see the era of Tokyo's rule referred to as the "Japanese colonial period" and China as "Mainland China."

Dozens of civics and social studies teachers from the Civics Teachers Action Alliance (公民教師聯盟) yesterday rallied outside the ministry in Taipei, urging it to halt the implementation of the new curriculum planned for next year and restart the hearing process.

Chou Wei-tung (周偉通), a teacher from National Taitung Girls' Senior High School and the alliance's convener, said the ministry had not only violated the principle of procedural justice and the spirit of deliberative democracy in its deliberations, but also failed to respect the professional opinions of grassroots teachers.

National Academy of Educational Research deputy director Tseng Shih-chieh (曾仕成) received a petition from the teachers, without making any response.

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