

Students stage flash protest in Taipei

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Members of the Northern Taiwan Anti-Curriculum Changes Alliance yesterday afternoon stage a flash protest at the Taipei First Girls' Senior High School in the hope of drawing more public attention to their opposition to the Ministry of Education's changes to high-school curriculum guidelines.

Photo: Wang Yi-sung, Taipei Times.

Scores of student organizations from various high schools in Taipei staged their first flash protest at the Taipei First Girls' Senior High School yesterday in the hope of drawing more public attention to the issue of their opposition to the Ministry of Education's controversial changes to the high-school curriculum guidelines.

Northern Taiwan Anti Curriculum Changes Alliance spokesman Chu Chen (陳楚), a student at Taipei Municipal Jianguo High School, criticized the process under which the ministry decided to adjust the high-school curriculum guidelines as overly rash and hasty, saying that even the Taipei High Administrative Court had ruled that the ministry had broken the law.

Chu was referring to the Feb. 12 High Administrative Court ruling that the ministry must make its information more transparent and complete for public scrutiny.

If the ministry does not change its mind and insists on implementing the changes in August, the students' demonstrations would continue, Chu said, adding that students would hold talks and seminars, and work with their peers in central and southern Taiwan to organize larger demonstrations next month.

Yesterday's protest was the first and it was experimental in nature, Municipal Neihu Senior High School second-year student Huang Mao-shan (黃毛山) said, adding that the alliance would

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be holding flash protests at each school in Taipei to let everyone know the widespread discontent over the ministry's changes.

Taipei First Girls' Senior High School was chosen because it is opposite the Presidential Office Building, Huang said.

Minister of Education Wu Se-hwa (吳思華) appeared on the Executive Yuan's "open microphone" YouTube broadcast last night to explain the guideline adjustments, reiterating that the ministry has decided that both the new and old versions of textbooks would be allowed.

The difference in material between the new and old versions would not be included in the college entrance examinations, Wu said, adding that the ministry was starting an immediate review of the changes.

Students yesterday urged Wu to answer questions about the controversial guidelines "sincerely," or risk seeing students take to the streets in protest.

The first of the ministry's planned meetings on campuses for students to communicate with the ministry over the guidelines was held at National Taichung First Senior High School on Tuesday night last week.

It ended with scuffles at the entrance to the campus, when several dozen students stood hand-in-hand to block a car carrying Wu from leaving after the two-hour meeting.

At 8:30pm on Friday, the ministry announced that it was postponing the remaining three hearings.

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