

Minister refuses to withdraw curriculum guidelines

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Debates over high-school curriculum guidelines should not be decided by which side shouts the loudest, Minister of Education Wu Se-hwa (吳思華) said yesterday, rejecting demands to withdraw the ministry's new guidelines before the expiration of a student protester-imposed deadline today.

"Although it is undeniable that there is controversy, this controversy should not become something in which one side always wins out over another side," Wu said.

He said that there is controversy over the curriculum guidelines every time revisions are made because differences in personal and family background cause people to have differing stances on historical events and national identity.

Arguments decided by which side's voice is loudest do not meet the spirit of academic discussion and cannot resolve controversy within society, he said, adding that an attitude of mutual respect should be established through rational classroom discussion.

Wu said the vast majority of the controversy over the new curriculum guidelines derives from the wording of certain phrases, and promised the ministry would publicize a full list of controversial portions that would not be tested by the end of next month.

He added that three additional information sessions for students would be held next month.

Sessions planned for last month were canceled after the first saw Wu confronted by angry students.

Student protesters have called for the guidelines to be withdrawn due to an allegedly "China-centric" orientation and have threatened to escalate the protests if the ministry fails to provide a "positive and effective" response by the end of today.

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Northern Taiwan Anti-Curriculum Changes Alliance convener Chu Chen (許) said that Wu's remarks did not constitute a "positive and effective" response because there was no shift in the ministry's position on withdrawing the guidelines.

He added that ministry calls for discussion of the controversial issues in the classroom were hypocritical because the proposed guidelines would limit discussion.

Promises not to test controversial issues were also not new because this was in line with previous ministry practice, he said.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2015/07/10](#)