

Wanted – English coaches to bring out the best in our students

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PETALING JAYA: A nationwide language coaching programme is being mooted to boost students' command of English.

The Parent Action Group for Education (PAGE) is hoping to assemble a "dynamic team" of coaches to improve the proficiency of the country's 300,000 primary and secondary school students.

The group's chairman Datin Noor Azimah Abdul Rahman said it wants a robust English coaching programme to guide and inspire

targeted students to become confident listeners, speakers, readers and writers of English.

So, all coaches must be a "proficient user" based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) benchmark.

As a first step, an online survey to gauge the public's interest in participating was recently launched.

The survey, she said, would show if qualified people were willing to coach small groups of students so that every child is given the opportunity to be proficient in the language and pursue his full potential.

"We understand teachers need help with the weakest of students," she told *Sunday Star*. "So, we're gauging to see if the public is willing to help for a nominal fee under a semi-voluntary arrangement."

She said if the response was promising, a proposal would be presented to the Education Ministry.

"If we can show that the exercise is sustainable, we hope the ministry can create a budget for it," she said, adding that PAGE would capitalise on the expertise of remedial models used in other countries.

The plan, she said, was to run the pro-

gramme in a few pilot schools to test its feasibility.

To participate, log on to www.pagemalaysia.org.

Noor Azimah said the public has been concerned and critical of the low level of English language taught in schools.

"Over 50% of fresh graduates are unemployed because of their poor command of the language and their weak communication skills," she said.

"This affects us all as a nation aiming towards being highly educated and globally competitive."