

## PRESS RELEASE

**DepEd exploring options to address needs of kindergarten teachers.**

As part of the thrust to push for universal kindergarten in all public schools, the Department of Education is currently exploring avenues to provide the required number of teachers for the targeted more than 2.4 million five-year olds in S.Y. 2011-2012.

At present, DepEd is serving about 1.5 million kindergarten pupils in its public schools and another 435,574 are in private schools. The move to reach 100% participation in five-year olds numbering to more than 2.4 million in June requires that the ideal number of kindergarten teachers be filled.

“With the number of kindergarten teachers needed, we are in serious business of exploring various means to address this requirement as we start our universal kindergarten program in June,” said Education Secretary Armin Luistro.

DepEd acknowledges the resource gaps that continue to haunt the Philippine basic education system. Among these is the limited number of permanent teaching positions available prompting the department to find alternative means to fill the gaps.

“We understand the concern of those who will be hired under contract of service. The bill on universal kindergarten will allow DepEd to allocate funds for permanent positions that is why we are working closely with our legislators to ensure teachers will get the compensation they deserve,” explained Luistro.

Luistro furthered that, “the department is looking at several options to help maximize the benefits we can possibly extend to kindergarten teachers. The current P3,000 allowance is per four-hour shift and we are exploring ways to provide them up to at least P12,000.00 in monthly compensation.”

Legislative measures are being sought by members of Congress to help DepEd meet its requirements for kindergarten teachers. “We are very thankful for this and we know that with their continued support, we hope to have the bill enacted to law soon,” added Luistro.

“While it is true that the current planned solution is a ‘band aid’ solution, it also serves as an assurance to teachers that they will not be under contract of service for too long,” Luistro told.

As the department carries on its commitment to reach all children of school age, Luistro appeals to other stakeholders saying that, “we are continuously counting on our partners specifically the local government units who also provide additional compensation to kindergarten teachers.”

Based on the department’s data, 27,000 new items are needed for kindergarten teachers. At P17,999 compensation per teacher, an additional P5.7B funding is needed for annual salaries.

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