

## PRESS RELEASE

**DepEd goes full throttle in closing resource gaps and expanding basic education cycle**

Buoyed by its 19-percent budget increase, DepEd is all systems go in implementing President Noynoy's ten point education agenda, with special focus on closing the resource gaps in two years as its short term goal and pursuing a 12-year basic education cycle as its long-term target.

DepEd Secretary Armin Luistro said the department has segmented its priorities into short, medium and long-term based on the urgency of need and availability of resources.

"For our short-term plan, we are looking at school year 2011 to 2012 as the time to close resource gaps. This means building more classrooms, hiring and training enough teachers, acquiring quality instructional materials and coordinating with other government agencies to improve teachers' welfare," said Luistro.

Corollary to this, DepEd will start doing the spade work for the 12-year basic education cycle. "As we plug shortages, we will also start coordinating with the Departments of Science and Technology, Social Welfare and Development and the Commission on Higher Education, TESDA, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the National Book Development Board in coming up with an Enhanced Basic Education Curriculum (EBEC)," added Luistro.

Starting school year 2011, DepEd will institutionalize kindergarten in all public schools as part of its mandate to provide a free universal pre-school.

"Introducing kindergarten in public schools will enable our less financially capable students to avail of pre-school instruction that will give them the proper preparation in basic education. In a way, this move is the government's way of democratizing access to quality education for all," explained Luistro.

As DepEd puts more resources in basic education, it is also raising its standards by ensuring that all pupils are able to read by the time they finish Grade 1.

For its medium term plan which it targets to implement in school year 2012 to 2013, DepEd will prepare the transition to a 12-year basic education cycle. This is an undertaking of great magnitude and therefore needs a thorough social preparation for the most affected sectors. "We will ensure that before the 12-year cycle is implemented, all loose ends would have been tied up," Luistro said.

As the country sees a growing Muslim population, part of DepEd's medium term goal is to integrate Madaris education into the national education cycle. "We need this kind of a specialized curriculum that is culturally sensitive and Islam friendly within the education system," pointed out Luistro.

Also about this time, DepEd will start purchasing new, quality instructional materials suited to the new curriculum.

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DepEd's long term plan, covering school year 2015-2016, means implementing a two-stream senior high school program under the new 12-year basic education cycle. One stream is for students desiring technical education under TESDA and the other is for students who want an academic pre-university education in cooperation with CHED.

"We will engage the local government units and private schools in order to meet the need for classrooms and teachers for senior high school," Luistro disclosed.

On 2018, the first products of the new curriculum will graduate from senior high school. The first group to complete the cycle from Kindergarten to 2nd year senior high school will graduate on 2024.

**END**

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