

PRESS RELEASE

**League of Provinces completes LGU commitment to help DepEd build schools**

Now the cast is complete.

The signing today of an agreement between and among the Department of Education (DepEd), the League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has formalized the commitment the LPP has put forward during their 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly on August last year.

During the first months of Br. Armin Luistro FSC as Education Secretary, LPP convened to express their support to the department in bringing hope for a better education system in the Philippines.

The idea raised during the August convention of LPP was adopted by municipalities and cities through the Leagues of Municipalities and Cities, respectively, which have earlier entered into a covenant with DepEd to address shortages in school buildings and classrooms. With this, DepEd has the full support of local government units in building more classrooms for public school children.

As with agreements earlier signed with the League of Municipalities and League of Cities, the LPP will shoulder fifty percent of the total cost of school building. The other 50% is DepEd's share.

Based on the MOA, the three LGU groups are expected to execute legal documents to vest DepEd with full ownership of the classrooms and the land on which they stand after completion of the classroom construction.

According to Luistro, the commitment of the three LGU groups has given him the confidence that the classroom shortage will be addressed soon.

"Education being the great equalizer, this partnership will be the concrete embodiment and manifestation of democracy in action at the grassroots level. Kung maraming provincial, city at municipal governments ang lalahok sa programang ito ng bayanihan sa eskwelahan, malamang mabibigyang solusyon natin ang kakulangan sa silid-aralan sa lalong madaling panahon," Luistro said.

While the MOA does not guarantee 100% participation of LGUs, it nevertheless gives DepEd a certain level of assurance that it can bridge the school building gap knowing that many LGUs have chosen education as their advocacy.

"The very idea in this partnership is that it does not only adopt a point in the 10-point Education Agenda outlined by President Benigno Aquino III during the campaign but more importantly, this partnership with LPP, as well as those with LCP and LMP, may prove to be the decisive factor in closing the yawning gap between mere intention and actual execution. It is a win-win proposition for everyone," Luistro furthered.

PRESS RELEASE

Currently, classroom shortage in the country stands at over 152,000 on a single shift to meet the 1:45 ideal classroom-students' ratio.

Luistro said the 50/50 approach to addressing classroom shortage is very laudable and can be compared to modern-day "bayanihan."

"Sa pagpasok ng LPP, kumpleto na ang hanay ng LGU sa sama-sama nating pag-ako sa responsibilidad sa pagpapatayo ng mga silid-aralan," Luistro explained. For DepEd, this will afford a fast track toward fulfilling its mandate of providing quality basic education to all Filipinos.

The LPP represented by its National President, Governor Alfonso Umali, Jr. of Oriental Mindoro shall formulate together with the DBM and DepEd, the guidelines and procedures for the effective implementation of the program.

Also attending for LPP are Ilocos Sur Governor and National Chairman Luis Chavit Singson; Camarines Sur and Executive Vice-President Luis Raymond "L-Ray" Villafuerte; Zambales Governor and Vice-President for Luzon Hermogenes Edbane, Jr.; Occidental Mindoro Governor and Secretary-General Josephine Sato; Ilocos Norte Governor and Deputy Secretary General for Luzon Imee Marcos; RizaL Governor and LPP Treasurer Casimiro Ynares III; Palawan Governor and Publication and Public Information Officer for Luzon Abraham Kahlil Mitra; Northern Samar Governor and Publication and Public Information Officer for Visayas Paul Daza; Albay Gov. Jose Clemente Salceda; Romblon Gov. Eduardo Firmalo; Leyte Gov. Carlos Jericho Petilla; Lanao del Norte Gov. Mohammad Khalid Q. Dimaporo; Surigao del Norte Gov. Sol F. Matugas; Davao del Norte Gov. Rodolfo del Rosario; and Kalinga Province Gov. Josel Baac.

"We will closely monitor the performance of participating local governments to ensure the attainment of program objectives," added Umali.

The agreement shall take effect on the date the parties affix their signatures and shall remain valid for six years unless mutually revoked by the parties.

While DepEd budget allocation for 2011 increased by some 19%, it could hardly keep pace with the resource requirements of at least one million new entrants to the public school system every year. Add to that the new batch of pupils in kindergarten which has become compulsory beginning school year 2011-2012. Kindergarten is now mandated in all public schools to give 5-year olds better preparation on the rigors of regular schooling.

DepEd has to build new classrooms each year to keep up with increasing student population and replace ageing school buildings and those that were destroyed by calamities.

Under the counter-parting program, the initial 50% of the building cost will come from participating LGU. The release of DepEd's 50 percent counter-part funds will be made upon receipt of certification from LGUs that their 50% share has been fully spent and that the construction is 50% complete as certified by DepEd's schools division superintendent.

PRESS RELEASE

The LMP shall encourage the full participation of its member LGUs in the school building “bayahinan” program to make it a truly cooperative endeavor nationwide.

The league will also pass appropriate ordinance or resolution voluntarily committing portion of its special education fund (SEF), local development fund (LDF) and internal revenue allotment (IRA) and other possible sources to come up with the 50% counterpart funding for the school building project.

The DBM, for its part, will assist the DepEd in identifying the appropriate funding sources under its budget and facilitate the release of allotment upon submission of required documents.

**END**

**PRESS RELEASE**