

PRESS RELEASE

Teachers surprised by DepEd chief's unannounced visit in Batangas

In line with his desire to see the present condition of public schools in the provinces, DepEd Secretary Armin Luistro conducted a surprise visit in several schools in Batangas recently.

Among those he visited was Padre Valerio Malabanan Memorial School (PVMMS) in Lipa City, his hometown, where he first taught as a catechist in 1975. Luistro was in second year high school at De La Salle Lipa when he volunteered to teach in a public school.

"This trip was so memorable for me because Padre Valerio Malabanan Memorial School was my first teaching experience in public school. My experience there inspired me to teach, it was then I first thought of becoming a teacher," Luistro recalled.

The school's principal, Ines Andal, was astounded to see the Education chief as he entered the school premises. Andal said she was in the middle of printing Luistro's photos for posting in each of their classrooms as a way of introducing him to the students.

"Nagulat po ako. Nung dumating po siya, muntik ko na po itanong kung ano po ang kailangan nila kasi akala ko po magulang. Tapos hawak ko pa 'yung maraming litrato n'ya na hinanap namin sa internet. Tapos biglang pumasok si Sir, sila daw ay makikipanood lang ng klase. Sabi ko, naku ito na yata 'yung hawak nating picture," narrated Andal.

Andal confessed she could not find the right words to describe how honored the school was for having Luistro over as he was the first DepEd Secretary to pay them a visit.

"Hindi ko po maipaliwanag yung nararamdaman ko dahil unang beses pa lang pong nabisita ng kalihim ng DepEd ang aming paaralan. Tapos kung makipag-usap po s'ya, para s'yang pangkaraniwang magulang na lagi kong kausap at mga opisyal ng barangay na nagpupunta sa opisina. Kaya sabi ko totoo ba ito?" Andal furthered.

During his visit, Luistro was also reunited with Venus Mendoza, a former student who now teaches grade 5 students in PVMMS. Luistro sat down in her class and observed her teaching skills.

Mendoza said the Education chief was her teacher in English and Religion in the 1980s. She considers him an inspiration in her career.

"Masayang masaya ako at ipinagmamalaki ko pong naging guro ko sya at ngayon, kalihim na siya ng DepEd. Nung malaman ko nga na s'ya ang bagong DepEd secretary, pinagsabi ko sa amin, kahit sa mga pinsan ko, na naging guro ko yan," Mendoza shared.

Luistro has visited a total of 12 schools since he assumed his post under the new administration. Aside from Lipa, he has also conducted random visits in some schools in Metro Manila and Nueva Ecija.

The DepEd chief announced he is very happy with what he's seen so far and is very impressed with the teachers who manage to find ways to make their classes very engaging despite the challenges faced by the country's basic education system.

"The most common thread that I've seen are very dedicated teachers. I remember one school I visited where the teacher was teaching about 65 pupils. The room was packed, with insufficient lights and only two electric fans. But the teacher was very engaged in her lesson and students were very interactive."

Luistro said his surprise visits have allowed him to see the real challenges in terms of basic input in Education - addressing the basic needs of teachers being the most important one.

"Although the department takes this as a big challenge, this is part of our reform efforts to address backlogs in education resources within two years. With the support of education stakeholders both in government and outside, we will be able to achieve this," assured Luistro.

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