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## Teaching Scholarships: DepEd's weapon to improve public education

The Department of Education continues to send elementary and secondary teachers to scholarships to the country's top universities to boost their teaching competencies and upgrade public school instruction.

For 22 days, selected teachers undergo academic studies in the University of the Philippines, Philippine Normal University, and other universities known for their expertise in key learning areas under DepEd's Integrated Short-Term Scholarship Program (DISP).

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said the scholarships offered to teachers are meant to improve their teaching skills and competencies in an academic, face-to-face environment.

"Our teachers' continuous education to upgrade their teaching skills has a direct impact on the kind of public school graduates we produce," Lapus added.

Scholars of DISP are entitled to their salaries, course tuition fees and a P5,000 living allowance subsidy during the scholarship. DepEd also provides for the travel expenses and per diem of the scholars.

The focus of the October 2008 DISP for elementary teachers shall be the development of higher order thinking skills in the teaching of HEKASI, Edukasyong Pantahan at Pangkalusugan (EPP) and Filipino.

These topics were based on the training needs assessment conducted by Bureau of Elementary Education on the competencies of teachers vis-à-vis trainings conducted on the said subject areas.

Selection of the topics/areas for training are based on the various thrusts of the Department including improvement of performance in core subjects like English, Science and Mathematics – all of which have a bearing on the annual National Achievement Test.

DepEd also noted that teachers have a difficulty integrating topics among component subject areas of MAKABAYAN (HEKASI, EPP, MAPE). As a result, achievements in these areas are not as pronounced as areas like English, Science and Mathematics.

"The learning is not confined to a few people since teachers who benefit in DISP are expected to empower their fellow teachers as well," Lapus added. Trained teachers are expected to mentor other teachers in their schools after their training.

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Teachers selected for the DISP have at least three years work experience under permanent status and with performance rating of very satisfactory (VS) or better. They also possess leadership potential and positive attitude to mentor other teachers in their schools/divisions.

Scholars of DISP are required a return service of two years as well as develop and implement relevant re-entry programs in their schools.

Last May, 13 teachers participated in the DISP Teaching Effectiveness Course for Chemistry and Physics Teachers at the UP College of Education.

**END**

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