

PRESS RELEASE

DepEd's unliquidated advances down to 29%

Consolidated reports from the central office, regional offices, foreign-assisted projects and attached agencies of the Department of Education (DepEd) reflect that only about P467M or just 29% of the P1.6B remain unliquidated as of August 19, 2010.

After the department has been notified on this matter by the Office of the Ombudsman, Education Chief Armin Luistro, through the Offices of Undersecretary for Legal Affairs and Legislative Liaison Atty. Albert Muyot and Undersecretary for Finance and Administration Francis Varela, has directed all responsible personnel to provide him the details on the status of liquidation and use of the cash advances.

"As a general policy, all expenses should be liquidated at the time required by accounting and auditing rules. I already instructed responsible officials and employees to submit a status of their liquidation," said Luistro.

Luistro assured that a response to the letter of Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez will be sent before week's end. Gutierrez gave DepEd ten days to respond. The letter was received August 5.

A draft of the reply is now with Usec. Varela for his review. Once finalized, the department will immediately send this to the Office of the Ombudsman with necessary documents like the field offices' respective liquidation reports indicating aging of liquidation and status of unliquidated cash advances.

The cash advances identified in Gutierrez's letter were used for payroll, expenses for official travel, and seminars, trainings, or workshops.

"We are already reviewing the reports so that appropriate plans of action can be done," said Varela. He also said he has instructed the field offices to provide the central office copies of their justification for downloading their maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) and school-based management funds which may be part of the unliquidated advances.

While actions are being taken to liquidate the remaining balance of the department, DepEd sees the number of unliquidated advances to be further reduced as soon as all reports from the field offices are submitted. The Office of the Ombudsman will be updated on this.

"The government is serious about its fight against corruption. We want to lead by example being the biggest bureaucracy of the country," told Luistro.

The department is closely coordinating with its resident ombudsman, Atty. Ruby Gonzales, on this concern. **END**

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