

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DepEd to include Spanish language in high school curriculum

The Department of Education and the University of Alcala (Alcalá de Henares, Spain) recently signed an agreement to strengthen the education and cultural ties between Spain and the Philippines.

DepEd Secretary Jesli Lapus signed the agreement along with University of Alcala Rector (President) Professor D. Virgilio Zapatero Gómez.

The University of Alcala in Madrid is one of the oldest universities in Europe with more than 500 years of history. The university is known for its ctive efforts to promote Spanish language in both studies and the Cervantes prize -- an award given by the King and Queen of Spain for lifetime achievement of an outstanding writer in Spanish language. The university was also declared by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site due to its contribution to arts and sciences.

DepEd and University of Alcala have agreed to implement programs that will strengthen the academic, educational and cultural activities that will benefit both parties. One of these is the inclusion of Spanish language in the curriculum of 15 pilot secondary schools in the Philippines.

The program seeks to develop students' skills in listening, reading, writing, speaking, and viewing as fundamental to acquiring communicative competence in a second foreign language.

"With this agreement, our students and teachers will not only learn to master the basics of Spanish language, but will also be exposed to more opportunities of interaction in the international arena," Lapus stressed.

Lapus added that "bringing back the Spanish language in the school curriculum would help us understand and connect with our past. Many of the works of our forefathers, including our national hero Jose Rizal, which were written in Spanish, remain significant up to this day."

Last June 2009, the Spanish language was included in the curriculum of secondary schools as an elective. The 15 pilot schools were selected by DepEd regional offices based on Mean Percentage Score in English, ability to provide substitute teachers to take over the classes of teachers in training, and availability of classrooms and support facilities and equipment.

The schools implementing this program are Ilocos Norte National HS (Region I), Lemu National HS (Cagayan, Region II), Honorato Perez Memorial Science HS (Cabanatuan City, Region III), Cavite Science HS Region IV-A), Dolores National HS (Marinduque, Region IV-B), Naga City Science HS (Region V),

Capiz National HS (Region IV), Don Pablo Lorenzo Memorial HS (Region IX), Gusa National HS (Region X), Davao City special School (Region XI), Tupi National HS (Region XII), Agusan National HS (CARAGA), Ifugao Provincial Science HS (CAR), Quezon City Science HS (NCR), and ARMM Science HS (ARMM).

Selected teachers from these schools were also trained under the supervision of Instituto de Cervantes and the Bureau of Secondary Education to effectively implement the program.

Lapus stressed that “learning Spanish will give our students an edge in career and job opportunities both here and abroad.”

“As member of the UNESCO, we believe that this step will contribute to peace and security by promoting international collaboration through education, science, and culture,” Lapus said.

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