

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
01 February 2008

Public school students say *Ni Hao Ma!*

Filipino students may soon have access to free Mandarin lessons – one of the most widely-spoken languages of business.

Members of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industries Incorporated (FFCCCII) and representatives from the Chinese Ministry of Education (MOE) recently visited the Department of Education (DepEd) to propose teaching Mandarin in public schools.

The Volunteer Program for International Chinese Teachers managed by the MOE's Office of Chinese Language Council International will send language instructors every year to the Philippines.

"We may offer it (language class) as an elective in high performing schools," DepEd Secretary Jesli Lopus said. "This will help broaden our children's understanding of China and its culture."

Other foreign languages taught in schools today are Spanish and French. English, on the other hand, is being used as a medium of instruction and is one of the core subjects in basic education.

According to MOE representatives, they presently have over 100 Chinese-language teachers in Filipino-Chinese schools in the cities of Bacolod, Iloilo, Tarlac, Cebu, Davao, and Quezon. The delegation is set to provide DepEd with a complete list of their deployment in the country.

The language instruction is planned for implementation when public high schools open this June.

FFCCCII is a strong supporter of DepEd in improving the quality of education in the public school system. To date, FFCCCII has constructed 2,503 classrooms nationwide through DepEd's Adopt-a-School Program.

China is a historical partner of the Philippines with deep social, economic and ethnic ties dating back to the 10th century.

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