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## DepEd to Release Grants for School Improvement

The Department of Education is set to release in school year 2008-2009 a total of P230.5 million to selected 5,000 elementary and secondary schools nationwide to pursue their respective school improvement plans that will result to better student performance.

Each recipient school – 4,000 elementary and 1,000 secondary – will be granted P46,100 to fund activities outlined in the school's annual implementation plan which has been consolidated by schools division office (SDO).

"This initiative to implement School-Based Management under the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA) will hopefully result to a much improved education indicators and better school performance of our students," Education Secretary Jesli A. Lapus said.

The school grant must be used for school-based capacity-building especially in English, Filipino, Science, and Mathematics, among others. The fund can also be used to reproduce classroom assessment tools, purchase of supplementary instructional materials and purchase/reproduction of training materials. Based on the guideline, no single item shall cost more than P10,000.

BESRA is a project of DepEd which aims to systematically improve nationwide basic education outcomes. Its key component, School-Based Management (SBM) empowers school heads to make localized decisions based on their own unique needs. As part of SBM, school heads are required to come up with School Improvement Plan (SIP) that also includes creating linkages with the local government and the private sector for the improvement of their schools.

According to Lapus, the 5,000 elementary and high schools which qualified for the grant met the following criteria: 1) The school has a school improvement plan prepared in cooperation with the school's internal and external stakeholders; 2) The school is addressing one or more problems involving poor student performance, high drop-out rate, and low completion rate; 3) The school has a school head either a principal or a head teacher; 4) It has a strong school-community partnership.

Among the regions which will receive the grant, Region IV-A tops the list with 499 elementary and secondary schools, followed by Region III with 488 and Region V with 463 recipients. Completing the top five are Region I with 447 and Region VI with 436.

PRESS RELEASE

DepEd has been stepping up its efforts to improve the quality of public education by earmarking more funds especially in the area of teaching- learning process. In 2007, government and private sector spending to improve basic education rose 16 percent from P121.9 billion in 2006 to P141.3 billion in 2007.

For 2008, the House of Representatives has endorsed P151 B for DepEd budget for the bicameral conference.

Lapus said the 2007 funding support to basic education included the 14% increase in the national government appropriation and was augmented by unprecedented level of infusion from the private sector which by year-end amounted to P4.05 billion worth of interventions, donations and pledges.

DepEd's share of P137 billion represented 20% of the 2007 national budget net of internal revenue allotment and debt service allocation. It comprised of personal services at P110 billion, maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) at P18.6 billion and capital outlay at P8 billion.

The budget distribution is an improvement from prior years – 88%:12% in 2004-2005 to 80%:20% in 2007 -- implying that more resources were made available in 2007 to directly improve the teaching-learning process as seen from the allocation in personal services vis-à-vis MOEE and capital outlay.

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