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## Search on for the best school forest park

A high school campus which can come up with the best forest park is set to win a new school building with full computer laboratory, the Department of Education announced.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said that the new school building equipped with 20 personal computer units will go to the winning school in the first National Search for the Best School Forest Park.

“The search is in line with our thrust to promote environmental consciousness and raise the level of awareness of students in preserving our environment which is in distress,” Lapus said.

The search, to be launched on February 5 is a joint project of the Department of Education and Luntiang Pilipinas led by Senator Loren Legarda.

“We bring environmental issues right where our students are and through the search, we are actually encouraging our youth to take full responsibility for the environment,” Lapus added.

The nationwide search for the best school forest park is a competition among all public high schools nationwide which are enjoined to establish forest parks in their respective campuses. Deadline of submission is on February 27.

The Education Chief has been encouraging public school students to engage in tree-planting and tree-caring activities that will make public schools clean and green. “This is for their future – several years hence, they will benefit from this initiative.”

If the interested school, due to its limited campus size, is not able to designate a specific area for a school forest park, it may choose an area within 100 meters of its campus where a forest park may be established.

Participating high schools may undertake tree-planting of fruit-bearing trees, hard wood species, or any other appropriate species as determined by the Municipal Agriculture Resource Officer of Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer. The forest park should be at least 50 square meters and that the seedlings to be planted should at least be 2.5 feet in height.

Aside from planting trees, students are also enjoined to use their creativity and originality in designing and maintaining their forest park.

Schools may include proper supervision, control and management of these forest parks in its curricula for all secondary levels. Participating schools should regularly document the progress of the forest park in the form of photos or video to be submitted quarterly to the DepEd Central Office Secretariat.

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Criteria for judging are sustainability, number of trees planted based on the site, creativity and aesthetics, and community involvement.

Only one school forest park shall be chosen to represent the region which also becomes a national finalist. Regional winners will win a computer laboratory with 20 personal computer units.

Interested high schools should send their accomplished participation forms by facsimile, email or post to the DepEd Secretariat, Department of Education Central Office, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City. Forms may be downloaded from the DepEd and Luntiang Pilipinas websites.

**END**

*For more information, please contact the office of the Assistant Secretary for Special Projects and Legislative Liaison at (02) 6337224.*

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