

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Lapus urges schools to practice year-round *Brigada Eskwela*

Brigada Eskwela need not take a backseat now that schools have opened.

The Department of Education (DepEd) plans to expand Brigada Eskwela -- an annual nationwide campaign that seeks to prepare public schools for school opening -- by addressing other pressing school concerns year-round.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said, "The 44,000 partnerships between our schools and their respective communities should be harnessed not only during Brigada Eskwela or National Schools Maintenance Week.

"These partnerships can do so much more for our schoolchildren," he noted. Brigada Eskwela aims to include significant interventions that will improve the academic performance of public school students.

He added, "Beyond cleaning and maintenance of classrooms and school furniture, let us make the community work for the improvement of our students' performance in school."

Lapus lauds one school --- Paranaque's La Huerta Elementary School --- for transforming the annual week-long Brigada Eskwela to a year-round exercise that benefits public school children by initiating remedial classes that aim to improve their academic performance.

"This is an example worthy of emulation. But ultimately, this is a concrete manifestation of the Bayanihan spirit working to improve public education," said Lapus.

La Huerta Elementary School goes beyond minor masonry works and maintenance of school furniture and class rooms two weeks before school opening. Aside from the week-long Brigada Eskwela, parents of pupils aged five to seven are encouraged to send their children to school to participate in summer classes.

To help young learners develop reading skills with confidence, volunteer teachers are assigned to focus on slow readers and help improve their reading skills before the school year starts.

More than 300 learners have benefited from these remedial classes. They also benefit from the use of free reading materials such as Abakada booklets, practice writing booklet, reading practice book and other supplementary materials that teach basic literacy and numeracy.

Instructional materials are donated by Parent Teacher Associations, the local government, and other non-government groups. Five classrooms in the said elementary school are being used as learning centers.

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