

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JULY 8, 2009

The real challenge of Education For All (EFA)

Almost is not good enough –Lapus

“Education is not for a few or for some. It is for all.”

Thus, declared Education Secretary Jesli Lapus during the 5th Mindanao Educators Congress in Butuan City where he expressed confidence that DepEd can meet its target of making basic education accessible to all by 2015.

DepEd since 2006 has instituted many reforms that have contributed to the steady improvement of education indicators. “Still we have a lot of work to do, if we really want to achieve Education For All (EFA) goals in 2015.”

The EFA goals, particularly on Universal Primary Education, state that all children should have access to educational opportunities. “All means 100%. Anything less than 100% by 2015 constitutes a failure in reaching our EFA commitment,” he explained.

He stressed, “This is the real challenge of EFA: almost is not good enough.”

Lapus leads educators in beefing up its Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA) to meet EFA goals. BESRA aims to systematically improve nationwide basic education outcomes. Its key component – School-Based Management -- (SBM) empowers school heads to make localized decision 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.

“Our success in implementing BESRA in the short term can translate to achieving our EFA commitments in the long term,” Lapus said.

By next year, the department aims to reach 94% participation rate for elementary and 72% for high school; a cohort survival rate of 81% for elementary and 90% for high school.

“DepEd also aims to reach completion rate of 79% for elementary and 85% for high school and to reduce our dropout rates to 4% for elementary and 2% for high school,” Lapus added.

He noted that DepEd will be coordinating closely with UNESCO, “so that the two institutions can share information better, leading to a more accurate assessment of the country’s standing in terms of the EFA goals.”

He said, “We expect that in simultaneous and coordinated change, we would produce better results than the fragmented and pilot-based initiatives that were abundant in the past.”

PRESS RELEASE

He urged the heads in the region to, “to make sure that all your initiatives are anchored on the key reform thrusts of BESRA.”

“If your teachers and parents do not understand the full implications of BESRA yet, I implore you to invest in making them understand and support our reform initiatives,” he added. He stressed, “If we are all on the same page, starting from the Central Office to the PTAs, our chances for success will be very high.”

During the congress, DepEd’s existing programs and projects will be revisited as they correlate to the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) and EFA Targets for the six regions in Mindanao.

The best practices in Education will be presented and benchmarked. Resource persons on SEDIP, BESRA, Madrasah Education, Project STRIVE in Visayas, Mindanao Peace Initiatives, Project BEAM, ICT and Project EXCEL will discuss their projects during the plenary sessions.

Participants included education leaders in six regions in the Mindanao area: Region 9, 10, 11, 12, 13-Caraga and ARMM.

First hosted by the Caraga region, the biennial event ensures sustainability and relevance of basic education programs and projects in Mindanao. The congress started in 1995, with Region IX-Zamboanga City as host.

END

PRESS RELEASE