

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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House commends DepEd, Sec. Lapus' performance

In a rare gesture, the House of Representatives adopted Resolution No. 249, commending the Department of Education under the leadership of Secretary Jesli A. Lapus for its outstanding performance in vastly improving the delivery of basic education to the country.

House cited DepEd's numerous achievements since Lapus was appointed by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to the post in August, 2006.

Lapus has been working for the improvement of the working condition of teachers and non-teaching personnel of the DepEd since his lawmaking days in the Lower House. He exposed and streamlined the anomalous multi-billion peso automatic payroll deductions for onerous teacher loans, which adversely affected the net take home pay of some 300,000 public school teachers.

Through Lapus efforts, teachers are now allowed by the Civil Service Commission to teach for only six hours instead of eight hours a day. He also created a mechanism to address teachers' benefits and loans with the Government Service Insurance Corporation.

Moreover, Lapus is credited by teachers organization for securing a substantial increase in DepEd budget allocation – from P112 billion in 2005 to P149 billion in 2008.

The House also recognized the DepEd chief's relentless efforts at building the capability of teachers. Lapus "worked and contributed to upgrade the capability of teachers". He intensified the training program for teachers to advance their competencies in teaching English, Mathematics and Science, the resolution said.

DepEd's efforts to improve student performance were also cited in the commendation. During the incumbency of Lapus, the National Achievement Test yielded an impressive increase of 10 percent in mean percentage score (MPS) of Grade 6 public school students. From only 55 percent MPS in the 2006 NAT, it rose to 65 percent in 2008 or a remarkable improvement of 18 percent.

The lawmakers also cited increases in classrooms and school teachers. Some 30,102 classrooms have been built during Lapus' watch. Some 5,890 head teachers and principals and 23,571 new teacher items were created.

Private sector support to public education recorded a P4 billion increase in 2007 as Lapus successfully re-launched the Adopt-a-School program. Parallel to this is the increase in government assistance to private high schools hosting

students subsidized by the government. This reached P3 billion and accounts for 48 percent of the total number of students enrolled in the private high schools in 2008.

The House Resolution also took notice of the DepEd's efforts to improve school attendance among students. Through DepEd's feeding program the attendance of school children had increased from 85 percent in 2006 to 95 percent in 2007. This is attributed to the increase in the feeding program by over 300 percent in 2007 which benefited some 27 million children. This also reduced the proportion of children with low nutritional status from 21 percent in 2006 to 17 percent in 2007.

DepEd instituted innovations in the procurement of textbooks, lowering the cost of books by as much as 60 percent. DepEd's practice has earned the commendation of the World Bank as a "best practice" even as the procurement process is being replicated in Southeast Asian countries and Europe.

The Resolution noted that DepEd got the highest approval rating among government agencies with its 61 percent rating in the last quarter of 2007 Pulse Asia Survey.

Lapus is ranked first in the Pulse Asia and SWS surveys in terms of performance among officials under the present administration.

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