

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 30, 2009

Lapus: it's all systems go for school opening on Monday

"DepEd and our Balik Eskwela convergence partners are ready for the opening of classes tomorrow and we are confident that our school opening this year will run smoothly and orderly," said Education Secretary Jesli Lapus as he assures the public of DepEd's readiness for the coming school year.

As in previous years, the Department of Education (DepEd) tapped the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Health (DOH), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC), Department of National Defense (DND), Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services and Administration (PAGASA) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), PNP-National Capital Region Police Office, Manila Electric Company (Meralco), Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), Manila Water and Maynilad.

DepEd officials and schools division superintendents recently met with officials from the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) and Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to finalize security measures that will be put in place to keep public schools free from crime and reduce traffic problems.

Lapus also instructed all DepEd NCR officials and schools district superintendents to work with other education stakeholders and the DepEd Central Office to solve all problems in their respective schools before school opening.

The 'no collection' and 'no uniform' policies are being strictly enforced in public schools to ease the parents' financial burdens. "The president's directive to allow schoolchildren to go to public schools without having to wear their uniform lessens the expenses parents incur before school opening," added Lapus.

Together with representatives of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, Lapus monitored the prices of school supplies in Divisoria and reported that the prices are stable and "should not hinder parents from sending their children to school."

While Lapus recognizes the public concern on the Influenza A(H1N1) virus, he stressed that "DepEd is constantly being updated by DOH, and we are following their expert advice on this health concern."

He added, "All our efforts are not only geared towards preparing for school opening, but also to encourage more parents to send their children to school.

PRESS RELEASE

We remind our parents that public education is free and that there is absolutely no collection of fees during the entire month of June at all levels.”

DepEd’s Balik Eskwela Command Center at the DepEd Central Office in Pasig City is open until June 5 to handle walk-in queries and complaints from the public.

The public may also forward their queries and complaints to DepEd through its Balik Eskwela Command Center Hotlines 6361663, 6331942, 6340222, 6359817, 6363602, 6364880, 6366550, 6387529, 6387530, 6387531 and 7065332. This center is open from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm.

The public may also contact DepEd through SMS by sending their name, address and query to 09194560027 or by texting DEPED FDBK name, address and query and sending it to 2622.

“We are optimistic that all our preparations – as we have witnessed in previous Oplan Balik Eskwelas – are in place, and that our public schools are ready for the 13.1 million elementary students and 5.6 million high school students that will go to school on Monday.”

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PRESS RELEASE