

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 10, 2008

Schools open today

The country welcomes today over 20 million students as public elementary and high schools nationwide open their doors for schoolyear 2008.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus and other key DepEd officials led school opening activities in Bataasan Hills National High School in Quezon City and Highway Hills Integrated School in Mandaluyong City where they observed the readiness of schools for the deluge of students.

“With the full support of schools and communities in Brigada Eskwela, I am confident that today’s opening of classes will proceed smoothly,” Lapus said.

The teacher-student ratio for this school year is 1:36 bolstered by some 480,433 teaching force. There are 10,868 new teaching positions with hiring priority given to teachers in English, Math, and Science. DepEd also reported a 1:1 textbook-pupil ratio in five core subjects, namely Science, Math, English, Filipino, and Makabayan.

Secretary Lapus reiterated the department’s no collection policy in pre-school up to Grade 4 during the enrolment period and at anytime during the school year as contained in DepEd Order No. 19 series of 2008.

He added that for grade and year levels beyond Grade 4, there should be no collection during the enrolment period and the first month of classes. Starting on the second month, however, contributions for BSP, GSP, PTCA Red Cross, Anti-TB Fund, school publication and membership in student publications may be collected but only on a voluntary basis.

In a related development, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo ordered that the wearing of school uniforms shall not be required in public schools. The identification cards of public school students shall also be given at no cost to the child or parent. This is an effort to increase school participation of school aged children by removing any obstacles to enrolment particularly those financial in nature.

DepEd Order No. 45 s. 2008 stated that public elementary and secondary schools are not required to wear school uniforms.

The Department intensified its partnerships with other education stakeholders to make sure classes on the first day run seamless. DepEd held its annual Oplan Balik Eskwela to address the problems commonly experienced during the start of the school year. “OBE is DepEd’s effort to avert the usual difficulties related to school opening,” said Lapus.

DepEd and DTI officials recently went to Divisoria with the price monitoring team tasked to inspect the prices of basic school supplies.

Meanwhile, Dr. Teresita Domalanta, NCR Regional Director and 24 superintendents from NCR met with the PNP and MMDA officials to firm up preparations for the opening of classes.

DepEd continued its Oplan Balik Eskwela Information and Action Center (DepEd IAC) to respond to queries and complaints attendant to the opening of the school year. The public can call in their questions or complaints through its hotline numbers 636-1663, fax number 638-8641 or by text through DepEd's Text Messaging Service with number 0919-456-0027 or by texting DEPED FDBK <NAME> <MESSAGE> and sending it to 2622 for both Globe and Smart or through email at action@deped.gov.ph

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