

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DepEd enlists community support for school opening

The Department of Education is once again enjoining all public schools to rally community support for the National Schools Maintenance Week (NSMW) or Brigada Eskwela set on June 2-7 in time for the nationwide opening of classes on June 10 for both elementary and high schools.

Brigada Eskwela was launched in 2003 and has since captured the imagination of the private and public sectors all over the country. The excitement for this annual program has swelled the number of participating schools from 12,533 during its first run five years ago to 36,000 schools in 2007.

Brigada Eskwela is a nationwide schools maintenance program that draws all education stakeholders – including the private sector -- to contribute their time, efforts and resources to ensure that public schools are physically ready for the opening of classes.

While no cash donations are accepted, materials for cleaning, repair and beautification can be contributed. In 2003, P153.16 M were generated through donations, services and volunteer hours. In 2007, some P2.3B worth of support from the community were documented.

“Such substantial amount of assistance indicates the willingness of stakeholders in education to be part of the improvement of our schools. They took note of the need and tried to address them the best way they can,” Education Secretary Jesli Lapus observed.

In San Jose, Batangas, the Taysan National High School generated enough support from local and overseas benefactors to spruce up the school buildings and its premises.

“We were able to put tile floors in 21 classrooms from P189,000 worth of tiles we solicited from Mariwasa,” said the school’s PTCA president Richard Perez. They were also able to fix the roofs, secure school fences and clean the school premises.

According to Cristina Perez, principal of Dacanlao G. Agoncillo National High School in Calaca Batangas, a school will miss out a lot if they do not rally the community to help prepare classrooms for the school opening.” We are making preparations and organizing committees for Brigada Eskwela as early as February,” she said.

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In Pasig City, Dr. Milagros Vargas, the principal of Maybunga Elementary School expressed her appreciation to Brigada Eskwela as pupils need not allot an extra day to clean the room and surroundings. “Since Brigada Eskwela became part of the annual school activity, we can hold classes at the opening of the school year and our students are inspired to maintain the cleanliness in our school,” said Dr. Vargas.

Through DepEd Order no. 24 issued in March 2008, Brigada Eskwela is considered a permanent part of the school calendar. Starting next school year, it will be held two weeks before classes start.

Lapus said, “The public support generated by this activity will assure our students that the whole community is ready to welcome them at school opening.”

Lapus directed all public elementary and secondary school heads to organize local school maintenance support from parents, local businesses, school board, LGUs, socio-civic groups, private individuals and organizations and to get them actively involved in the NSMW.

Regional and division offices are likewise instructed to synchronize the implementation of the School-Based Repair and Maintenance Scheme (SBRMS) with the Brigada Eskwela program to ensure maximum impact of these two support programs initiated by DepEd.

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