

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Lapus to school heads: Don't collect fees

"Bring all school aged children to schools and make sure they don't shell out a coin because education for public elementary and high school is guaranteed free by our Constitution," thus assured Education Secretary Jesli Lapus as the June 1 opening of classes draws near.

Lapus ordered school heads to strictly enforce the prohibition of collection of any fees from school children enrolling in pre-school up to Grade 4 during the enrolment period and at anytime during the school year.

"Any violation will subject the erring DepEd personnel to administrative sanction," he added.

The prohibition covers the authorized but voluntary contributions to the Boy Scouts of the Philippines (BSP), Girl Scouts of the Philippines (GSP), Red Cross, Anti-TB fund and Parents Teachers Community Association.

Lapus has issued directives to school heads reiterating the no collection policy. He also reminded that the wearing of school uniform is not required in public schools.

Moreover, identification cards will be provided to students at no cost to them. The school administration will fund these from their Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses.

The government is doing all it can to make education accessible to the average Filipino, waiving even the wearing of school uniform to unload the parents of additional expenditures. "We know that sending our school children to school, even if it is free has become a burden to many families in the light of the global economic crisis," Lapus explained.

Based on DepEd Order No. 48, for grade and year levels beyond Grade 4, no collection of any type should be undertaken 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.

He added, PTCAs may start collection only after presenting to members and to the school administration a report on the utilization of the previous school year's collections. The amount of PTCA contribution shall be agreed upon in a general assembly of the PTCA.

He reminded the public that only pupils entering first grade, students entering first year high school and transferees from another public school or a private school need to enroll during the enrolment period.

Lapus also stressed that pupils/students who are promoted to the next grade or year level are considered automatically enrolled for the coming school year in the same school. Returning pupils/ students shall report only for sectioning purposes or any other pre-opening preparations as determined by the school administrators.

Schools division superintendents are directed to release Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) funds to schools without fiscal autonomy in the form of cash advance. This is to ensure that operating funds are available at the start of the schoolyear.

DepEd expects over 13.1 Million elementary students and 5.6 Million high school students in public schools for SY 2009-2010.

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