

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
20 MAY 2008

## DepEd's Oplan Balik Eskwela gears up for school opening

It's all systems go when classes start on June 10.

The Department of Education (DepEd) today launched the annual Oplan Balik Eskwela (OBE) along with partner agencies from the government and the private sector to ensure the smooth opening of classes nationwide.

Oplan Balik Eskwela addresses the problems commonly experienced during the start of the school year and coordinates efforts of other government agencies towards the same end. It also makes sure that students are properly enrolled and able to attend school on the first day.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said the support of partner agencies is integral in the hassle-free opening of classes. "OBE's success is an indication that the whole community is ready to welcome our student come school opening," Lapus added.

A convergence meeting kicked off this year's OBE with DepEd partner agencies which include the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC), Manila Electric Company (Meralco), Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), Manila Water Company, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services and Administration (PAGASA), and Philippine National Police (PNP).

DepEd Undersecretary for Regional Operations Ramon Bacani who is also OBE Action Officer, led the meeting where partner agencies outlined their respective commitments in this year's OBE.

According to Nelly Guinid, Assistant Chief of DTI, her office is assuring the public of steady supply of school needs even as they intensified price monitoring activities. DTI has also warned traders against profiteering and reminds them to put price tags on school supplies.

Chief Superintendent Samuel Pagdilao of PNP-NCRPO, committed police visibility to deter criminal activities and ensure the safety of the school children. He added that the PNP will maintain peace and order at school vicinities while intensifying the prevention of commonly committed crimes in schools.

PRESS RELEASE

Nestor Sarmiento, AVP/Head of Central Distribution Service of MERALCO said they have ongoing inspection and maintenance of facilities serving schools which they intend to finish before classes start.

MMDA Director Lito Vergel De Dios reported that they have been fast tracking the completion of major works in EDSA and C-5 to ease traffic in these major thoroughfares. He assured schools that his office is willing to assist in putting up signages to ensure road safety.

For her part, Local Government Operations Officer Yolanda Dumlao of DILG said they have drafted a memorandum calling on LGUs to actively support OBE activities.

Meanwhile, DPWH representative Engr. Federico Mobo reported that DPWH is continuously undertaking pothole patching, clearing of curbs and gutters, and the removal of obstruction along all national roads, including sewerage de-clogging.

PAGASA Officer-in-charge Dr Prisco Nilo assured DepEd of regular weather updates to guide school officials.

MWSS Project Manager Officer Nestor Luwalhati shared their efforts to assist schools through technical supervision of water systems.

In a related development, an Inter-agency Command Conference with President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and other members of her cabinet will be held on May 26.

DepEd will also have an OBE Information and Action Center at its Central Office from June 2-13 to serve as information and complaints processing and routing mechanism.

All regional directors and school division superintendents are directed to designate from their senior staff at least two action officers who will oversee regional and local concerns and coordinate these concerns with the central office.

DepEd's DETxt facility will provide a link between the Department and the general public.

**END**

PRESS RELEASE